

# Montreal Jesuit school proud alumnus is Canada's newest cardinal

A Jesuit high school in Montreal is bursting with pride that one of its own is now a new cardinal in the Catholic Church.

"The school is very proud and happy for him and for his life of service and commitment to social justice," Loyola High School communications director Heather Dubee told the Canadian Catholic News.



Cardinal Michael Czerny

Jesuit priest Rev. Michael Czerny, who is from Montreal's Loyola High School class of 1963, was installed as a cardinal in the Catholic Church on Oct. 5, by Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square in the Vatican.

While the elevation of Czerny into the ranks of Catholic Church cardinals surprised many when it was announced by Pope Francis on Sept. 1, Czerny's character and accomplishments are no surprise to the school that helped form his dedication to social justice over the years since he left Loyola High School.

"He is a wonderful and outstanding role model for all our students," Dubee said, adding that he has attended reunions at the school in the past. "I know he remains very close to his classmates from his time here."

"It is very special for all of us at the school," Dubee said.

The school's Facebook page celebrated the news that Pope Francis was making Czerny, who is Czech-born but grew up in the Montreal area, a cardinal when it was first announced, and has since also posted a story about Czerny from the Jesuit magazine *America* that included a quote about how his time at Loyola High School has impacted his desire to be a Jesuit priest and serve others.

"Because I went to a Jesuit High School and I admired the Jesuits who taught us ... I wanted to serve God and others like they did, and I appreciated ...the community life. In some ways the high school participated or was an extension of the community life," Czerny told *America* magazine.

In fact, Loyola High School long ago honoured Czerny as well by inducting him into the school's Hall of Merit in 2006. The purpose of Loyola's Hall of Merit is to pay "tribute to Loyola graduates and associates who contributed significantly to society in the Loyola spirit of 'living for others.'"

With Czerny added to the roster of cardinals, he becomes the fourth Canadian cardinal in the Catholic Church at this time.

Winnipeg Archbishop Richard Gagnon, who at the end of September became the new president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, told the Canadian Catholic News that any time a new cardinal is installed from Canada it is an important achievement for the Canadian Catholic Church.

"It's an important moment (for us)," Archbishop Gagnon said. "Cardinals play a very important role within the Church."

Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, who also attended Loyola High School in Montreal, has known Czerny since then and is happy to see his old friend, who has been based out of the Vatican in recent years, take such a high profile role in the Church.

"Naturally, the Canadian Jesuits are very proud of the recognition Pope Francis has given his ministry by naming him a cardinal," Prendergast said. "It is a signal honour for the Church in Canada."

He said Czerny's work over the years in Latin America and with migrants and refugees has been an inspiration to others.

"At one of our recently CCCB plenaries he touched us Canadian bishops deeply with his presentation on outreach to the poor and marginalized, including migrants and refugees. Most likely, his influence now will be mainly on the universal church in the way of Cardinal (Marc) Ouellet rather than more directly on the Church in Canada," Prendergast added.