

An Encouraging Message from the Apostolic Nuncio



The Bishop Speaks

“The Holy Father Pope Francis cares about you and prays for you.” This was the message that the Apostolic Nuncio, the Pope’s representative in Australia, brought to the people of our Diocese recently. His Excellency Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana visited the Diocese of Armidale from the 22nd to the 26th October.

Unlike visits from previous Apostolic Nuncios who have come to be present for specific events such as the Ordination of Bishops, this was a pastoral visit in which Archbishop Yllana visited several parishes, schools, and nursing homes and met with many of the priests and religious sisters as well as some of the parishioners in their homes.

As well as conveying to us the love and prayers of the Pope, Archbishop Yllana shared another message with us. He said that before coming to Australia he had heard that we were a very secular and irreligious nation. But as he makes his way around Australia gradually visiting all the dioceses and meeting many of the people, he says that he has found the exact opposite to be the case.

He has discovered that our parishes and schools are filled with many good people of deep faith and enduring hope. He has found that the Church in Australia is undertaking many great works of service for those in need through our various ministries, works, and agencies. He said he has found deep faith





and strong love in our land. That doesn't sound very irreligious to me!

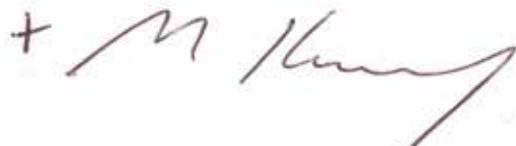
The Apostolic Nuncio is a diplomat, with the same diplomatic rank as an ambassador so he has to keep some things to himself. But he did share with us that when he conveyed this same message to Pope Francis he responded "I'm very happy to hear that." I'm very happy to hear it too.

Hearing these encouraging words from the Pope's official representative surprised me a little. He reminded me that I may be listening too much to what some elements in the media say about our Church and our country. It's time for us to tune out from this negative message, this "fake news" and to take notice of each other and pay attention to

the faith, hope, and love in those around us in our families, parishes, schools, and workplaces. Perhaps we are at the forefront of a "silent revolution" that we have not yet noticed!

I am sure all those who met the Apostolic Nuncio or heard him speak will remember his visit: The parishioners of Armidale, South Tamworth, and Inverell; the students and staff of O'Connor Catholic College Armidale, Saint Nicholas' Primary School East Tamworth, and Holy Trinity Central School Inverell; the residents of Nazareth House Tamworth and McLean Care Inverell. He related so personally to everybody he met and was interested in what they had to say. He delighted in the musical performances of our school students and was impressed by their manners and knowledge. He visited many of those who work for the Diocese in the Catholic Schools Office, the ADIG, Centacare New England North West, Saint Alberts College, and the Diocesan Chancery and learnt about the work and mission carried out by each for the good of the Church and the people who live in our area.

Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia. This ancient Latin quote attributed to Saint Ambrose means "Where Peter is, there is the Church". In other words, we find the Church wherever we find people united in faith and love with the successor of Saint Peter, the Pope. I sensed the closeness of Pope Francis to us during the pastoral visit of his official representative archbishop Yllana, and I asked him to convey back to the Pope the love and the prayers of the people of the Diocese of Armidale.


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Pope Tweet: Pope Francis@Pontifex·17 Nov

Nobody can delude themselves by thinking, "I'm fine because I'm not doing anything wrong". To be a follower of Jesus it is not enough not to do wrong, because there is good that we must do!