



## Ad Limina Apostolorum

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Recently, I was blessed to join my brother bishops of our California Region, Region XI, including the Bishops of Nevada and Hawaii, in Rome for our Ad Limina Apostolorum (“at the threshold of the Apostles”) visit with our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

This time together, included a pilgrimage to the holy and historic sites of the four major basilicas of Rome. These visits were highlighted as we were privileged to celebrate Mass.

A major part of our time was committed to our visits to several Vatican Offices within, and near, Vatican City. The visits were insightful and interesting. It was a great experience of which we were warmly welcomed and where positive dialogue took place.

Below I have included a brief overview of the Ad Limina experience. I, and my brother Bishops, thank you for your prayers during our time away.

Sunday, January 26

We settled in at our lodging provided by the North American College. We were graciously taken care of by the staff and seminarians. That evening, we were given a brief orientation, followed by dinner.

Monday, January 27

Mass was celebrated at the Tomb of St. Peter. Archbishop José Gomez from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles was the main celebrant. Together, we stepped down the spiral marble staircase which led us below St. Peter’s Basilica to the crypt where we anticipated the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. At one end of the crypt, directly under the main altar of the Basilica, was the Tomb of St. Peter. Only a few yards away from this site, his Successor of Peter, Pope Francis, was preparing to meet with us. To realize, as bishops gathered as the Successors of the Apostles, in order to celebrate Mass at the Tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, was a moving experience. Joining us were the accompanying clergy, including our Fr. Larry Machado. There we celebrated and encountered the Good Shepherd, Jesus, in the Eucharist.

Before we departed the crypt, we approach the protective glass partition separating the tomb from the crypt, where we venerated St. Peter and his resting place. Now, celebrating Mass in that environment, with my brother bishops, just doesn't happen every day!

The Mass was followed by a unique three-hour visit with Pope Francis. Our Region XI set the record with the Pope! Pope Francis stressed that the main priority for Bishops is: prayer - time with the Lord. As Shepherds, we must be - before, among, behind the flock. We must, especially, in this day and age, heal/overcome factions outside the Church and "in house" - the goal -unity!

He empathized that we must strive to offer the pastoral approach in all that we do, even in the midst of confrontation with the secular world and the persecution that entails. In the uncertainty of our time, we are to teach what the Church teaches. We are to be cautious not to cross the line that would convey any inclination of favoring a political stand. As a guideline, we should state that which we preach and teach is the Teaching of the Church; and it has nothing to do with politics. It is simply the faithful Teaching - the Truth handed down to us. Our time with the Holy Father was a once in a lifetime experience. It was a graced time of true "fatherly" dialogue with the Successor of St. Peter.

After our time with Pope Francis, we began our visits to the Vatican Dicasteries, Congregations, Councils and Commissions. The first was scheduled at 4pm with the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. This visit affirmed what we are envisioning for our diocese. I am pleased we have created a diocesan department of Marriage and Family Life, and "as one," works hand-in-hand with Respect Life. We are in the right track!

Tuesday, January 28

We celebrated Mass at the Basilica of St. John Lateran- the Cathedral of Rome. The main celebrant was Bishop Larry Silva from the Diocese of Honolulu. The immensity, beauty and history of this basilica is a marvel. After Mass, we processed to the "cathedra," the bishop's chair, to venerate it and to offer prayers.

The Mass was followed with meetings with Congregation of Bishops; followed by the Congregation for Catholic Education. After lunch, the vans were loaded up and we were off to the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

Wednesday, January 29

We began our day by visiting with Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith followed by a visit to the Congregation for Divine Worship. Our visits with these two Congregations were interesting and informative.

On this day, Mass was celebrated with the seminary community of the North American College at the main chapel of the Assumption on campus. The main celebrant for the evening Mass was Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Following the Mass, we had an Ad Limina reception and great dinner with the faculty of the seminary college. It was a good fraternal time shared by all.

Thursday, January 30

We began with an early Mass at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the oldest church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The main celebrant was Bishop Kevin Vann, Bishop of the Diocese of Orange. After the Mass we processed to the crypt under the main altar to reverence the relics of the Manger of Jesus where we offered prayers and a time of silence.

Then, we were off to three visits: Congregation for Consecrated Life; Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization; and later in the evening, the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

The meeting with the Pontifical Commission for the Promotion of the New Evangelization was engaging and affirming for us as a diocese as we continue promote the New Evangelization. The closing prayer that was used is the same prayer we are utilizing throughout the diocese!

Of course, the visit for the Protection of Minors was very timely. We were affirmed in all we are doing in this area throughout all of the Dioceses in our Region XI as we continue to pray and reach out to the survivors of sexual abuse.

At the end of this busy, and full day, we were invited to attend a reception hosted by the Villa Stritch. This is the residence of the U.S. priests who are working and serving the Church in the many different Offices of the Vatican, including those we visited. The evening's hospitality at the Villa was a great way to unwind at the end of a long day.

Friday, January 31

Our morning began with Mass with our pilgrimage to the fourth major basilica of Rome, St. Paul Outside the Walls. Our main celebrant was Bishop Michael Barber of the Diocese of Oakland. After Mass, we, in procession, venerated the tomb of St. Paul located below the main altar of the Basilica. Together, we offered prayers and spent some time in silence at the holy site.

Following Mass, we were transported to our first meeting of day to the Congregation for the Clergy. Later in the day, we visited with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Then, that evening, we headed to our final meeting, which was with the Secretary of the State, Cardinal Parolín. It was with this time with the Secretary that we officially concluded our Ad Limina Apostolorum visit to the Eternal City.

A few of us remained in Rome for several days to relax, take in the sites, enjoy the good food and to reflect on the experience of the week. All in all, it was a great experience and another first for me as a bishop. It was a blessing to be with my brother bishops to share the experience of the "ad limina visit" along with the great fraternity, prayer and worship we shared in City of Rome, the City of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul.

Thank you for your prayers while away from the diocese. Please keep us, the Bishops of Region XI, in your continued prayers as we follow the Lord's lead in our episcopal ministry.  
Mille grazie!

In the Peace of Christ,

Bishop Myron