

## ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP PRAYS WITH CATHOLICS IN FLOOD-AFFECTED LISMORE

The Archbishop of Canterbury visited Lismore as part of his two week Australian tour last Friday.

25 days after presiding at the Queen's funeral, The Most Reverend Rt Hon Justin Welby found himself giving comfort to a vastly different audience that included families of the Northern Rivers of NSW, whose lives were devastated by the biggest floods in living memory earlier this year.

Archbishop Welby and his entourage also made time to visit St Carthage's Catholic Cathedral, which flooded for the first time in its 115-year history. The Archbishop was accompanied by his wife Mrs Caroline Welby, the Anglican Bishop of Grafton Dr Murray Harvey and clergy from the local Diocese and from the United Kingdom.

He was received by the Most Reverend Gregory Homeming OCD, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lismore, Bishop Emeritus Geoffrey Jarratt DD and Rev Fr Bing Monteagudo, Cathedral Administrator.

Bishop Greg warmly welcomed the Archbishop in an ecumenical midday prayer service, led in part by senior students from Catholic schools of the Diocese of Lismore.

"We stand together, two bishops with a common experience of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one that we love, the one that we follow, but the one that we share our experience of with others. And so, I welcome you here. I thank you for being with us in our difficult times, and I hope and pray that the ecumenical spirit that you so wonderfully represent will continue and blossom, and I think the foundation of the blossoming of ecumenism is indeed real friendship with Jesus Christ, which makes real friendship with each other, " Bishop Greg said.

Archbishop Welby was gracious in his response, acknowledging how Catholicism has helped form his spiritual discipline.

"One of the greatest influences on my ministry has been that of Catholic social teaching from *Rerum Novarum* onward. And basically, it's a series of encyclicals - pastoral letters by Popes - which talked about some very basic principles of what it is to live in this world. One of them is the principle that we care about the common good," he said

"We care for justice. And we believe that all things God gives us are for all people. Walking around the basin of this town today I feel overwhelmed with the grief that people have suffered, deeply moved by their courage, their loyalty to one another and their resilience. We have much to learn from you. I will take it back and make sure that we do that. I'm so grateful to be here. And on behalf of everyone with me, I say thank you. We will pray for you, speak of you, testify to your faith and love in Christ, and seek to emulate and imitate you."

The Archbishop met with principals and student representatives from St Carthage's Primary School, Trinity Catholic College Lismore, Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School South Lismore and St John's College Woodlawn, all of which sustained damage in the flood.

The Archbishop's Australian itinerary has also included meetings with First Nations communities and Karen refugees who fled conflict in Myanmar. Stops on the tour included Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and the Torres Strait Islands. Towards the end of his time in Australia, the Archbishop will ordain two Aboriginal women as priests near Cairns.

**ENDS**