



Office of the Bishop  
Diocese of Knoxville

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September 8, 1998

Dear Friends,

I extend the warmest of Southern welcomes to each of you to this celebration of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of our beloved Diocese of Knoxville. God has truly blessed us in these ten years and so it is appropriate that we take this time as a local Church, in the company of so many of you, our special friends, to thank our bountiful God for his great love for us manifested in so many wonderful ways.

A most special welcome to the representative of our Holy Father, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Agostino Cacclavillan, Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States, on his first visit to East Tennessee. His presence here tonight is an expression of our solidarity in Peter.

Our much-loved Metropolitan, the Most Reverend Thomas C. Kelly, O.P., honors us (as he did ten years ago) as our homilist. Welcome back, dear Archbishop.

The Most Reverend James D. Niedergeses, retired bishop of Nashville, was proclaimed "grandfather of the diocese" by Cardinal Pio Laghi when he erected the new diocese in 1988. A very hearty welcome to him and to the Most Reverend Michael F. McAuliffe, retired bishop of Jefferson City, who was my bishop for seventeen years and is still a very dear friend and mentor.

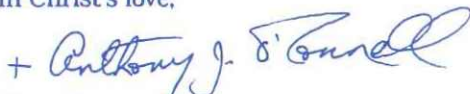
Likewise, I welcome each of the archbishops, bishops and abbots who honor us by their participation today.

Welcome to the major superiors of religious communities, to the rectors of seminaries, to the many priests, religious, deacons, seminarians and laity from so many dioceses and from our own. A warm *Céad míle fáilte* to the members of my family from Ireland and this country.

Special greetings and thanks to those of you from the ecumenical and inter-faith communities as well as to those who serve us in public office.

Let us bless the Lord and give Him thanks!

In Christ's love,

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Most Reverend Anthony J. O'Connell  
Bishop of Knoxville