

Communiqué from the meeting of ARCIC III in Villa Palazzola

5 May 2015



The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) is the official body appointed by the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion to engage in theological dialogue in order that they may come into visible unity and full ecclesial communion. It held the fifth meeting of its current phase (ARCIC III) in an atmosphere of shared prayer and friendship at Villa Palazzola, the summer residence of the Venerable English College in Rome, 28 April–4 May 2015. Members of the Commission are grateful to the staff of Villa Palazzola for the warm welcome extended to them.

The mandate for this third phase of ARCIC is both to promote the reception of the previous work of the Commission by presenting this as a corpus and to explore “The Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching”. To this end the Commission’s work centred on examining two draft texts which had been prepared by sub-committee drafting groups since its previous meeting in Vuleka Centre, Botha’s Hill, South Africa.

The first of these draft texts considered was material to present the five agreed statements of ARCIC II so that they can be received by the respective Communion. This consists of individual introductions to each statement, whose text is included, and a brief consideration of the responses each document engendered, short essays concerning theological method and themes running through the documents, suggesting directions for future work. This work has made good progress and it is hoped that it will shortly be ready for publication.

The second text considered was a draft document responding to the ecclesiological element of the mandate, that is, an examination of the structures of our two traditions which facilitate communion within and among the local and regional and universal dimensions of the Church.

On Thursday 30 April the Commission travelled to Rome for a [private audience with Pope Francis](#). The Pope encouraged the Commission in its work, and in the context of contemporary persecution of Christians noted, “There is a strong bond that already unites us which goes beyond all divisions.” Archbishop Bernard Longley thanked Pope Francis for the inspiration and leadership given by both him and Archbishop Justin Welby, “especially by your common commitment to seek justice for those who suffer exploitation or neglect.” Archbishop David Moxon cited the draft ARCIC II volume, and acknowledged with gratitude Pope Francis’s emphasis on the preaching of the Gospel, the simplicity of his personal lifestyle, his stress on ministry to the poor and marginalized, the positive role he has played in international reconciliation. He concluded by saying that all of these have “played their part in commending the ministry of the Bishop of Rome to Christians throughout the world”.

Later that day they celebrated the Eucharist at the Anglican Centre in Rome, which generously hosted the Commission for lunch and for two working sessions, during which it heard a paper on *sensus fidei* (the sense of faith) of all the baptised, and case studies on slavery. From there the group visited the Venerable English College, where presentations of the Commission’s work were made to the student body with time for questions and answers. Members then participated in Vespers and much appreciated the opportunity to join students and staff for dinner.

On Friday 1 May members welcomed Bishop Mark Santer and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, Co-Chairs at the last time ARCIC met at Palazzola. The special guests led an informal session in which they recounted some of the narrative of ARCIC II under their leadership. They remained until the end of the meeting.

The Commission welcomed Canon John Gibaut as the new Anglican Co-Secretary, succeeding Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan. The Commission also extended its thanks to Fr Norman Tanner SJ, who participated as a consultant.

The next meeting will take place near Toronto in May 2016, when the Commission will take up a reworked draft of an ecclesiological statement comparing the instruments of communion of each tradition.

APPENDIX

Members of ARCIC III present at the meeting

Co-Chairs

- The Most Revd Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, England
- The Most Revd Sir David Moxon, Archbishop of Canterbury’s Representative to the Holy See

Roman Catholics

- The Revd Robert Christian OP, St Albert Priory, Oakland, California, USA
- The Revd Canon Adelbert Denaux, Professor Em., Brugge, Belgium
- Most Revd Arthur Kennedy, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, USA
- Professor Paul D. Murray, Durham University, England
- Professor Sister Teresa Okure SHCJ, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Nigeria
- Professor Janet E. Smith, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, Michigan, USA
- The Revd Professor Vimal Tirimanna CSsR, Alphonsianum University, Rome, Italy
- The Very Revd Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB, Ampleforth Abbey, England

Anglicans

- Dr Paula Gooder, The Church of England
- The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Hill, The Church of England
- The Rt Revd Nkosinathi Ndwandwe, The Anglican Church of Southern Africa
- The Revd Canon Dr Nicholas Sagovsky, The Church of England
- The Revd Canon Dr Peter Sedgwick, The Church in Wales
- The Revd Dr Charles Sherlock, The Anglican Church of Australia Consultant
- The Revd Father Norman Tanner SJ, Roman Catholic Church

Staff

The work of the Commission is supported by the two Co-Secretaries

- The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut (Anglican Communion Office)
- The Revd Anthony Curren (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)

and

- The Revd Neil Vigers (Anglican Communion Office)
- Ms Silvana Salvati (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)