

Communiqué from the meeting of ARCIC III in Bildungshaus St Ursula, Erfurt



The Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) held the seventh meeting of its current phase (ARCIC III) in Erfurt, Germany, 14–20 May, 2017. The Commission met at the St Ursula Educational and Catechetical Centre of the Diocese of Erfurt. The Centre is on a site which has been home to communities of consecrated life for over 800 years. A community of Ursuline sisters occupy part of the site and continue this tradition. The Commission is grateful to the director of the house Frau Carla Riechel, the guesthouse team, and the Ursuline sisters for making its stay so comfortable and for the context of prayer and spirituality in which it was able to conduct its work. The Commission also thanks Professor Myriam Wijlens for making so many of the arrangements for its time in Erfurt.

The Erfurt meeting marks a considerable step forward. In response to the first part of its mandate, to examine “the Church as Communion, local and universal” the Commission completed an agreed statement, the first of its current phase, entitled, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be Church – Local, Regional, Universal*. That the text was agreed owed much to an extensive process of redrafting over twelve months.

Walking Together on the Way employs the method of Receptive Ecumenism to examine the structures by which Catholics and Anglicans order and maintain communion at the local, regional and universal level. It examines common theological principles that Anglicans and Catholics share, and the differentiated structures, based on these principles, by which they make decisions. This method invites both traditions to repentance and conversion, by looking at what is underdeveloped or wounded in themselves. It is also predicated on the belief that in our dialogue partner we meet a community in which the Holy Spirit is alive and active. We can therefore ask firstly, where our communities are in need of reform, and, secondly, what we can learn from our dialogue partner to help us in this growth. The Commission described this process as “receptive learning”.

| The text prepares the way -for the next ARCIC statement on the second part of its mandate, “how in communion the local and universal Church comes to discern right ethical teaching.” The Commission took time to review its work to date on this theme and proposed a schema to be approved at the Informal Talks in October. Building on the ecclesiological text, the schema will guide the next phase of the work of ARCIC III.

The Commission had decided to meet in Erfurt to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Erfurt is a significant city in the life of Martin Luther. It was here that he studied, decided to enter the Augustinian order, made his vows and was ordained. On Wednesday 17 May the Commission visited the Augustinerkloster where we were guided by the minister, the Revd Dr Irene Mildenberger. Afterwards the Commission was given a guided tour of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Mary’s by Dr Markus Schnauß. On Thursday 18 May, the Commission was privileged to meet the Catholic Bishop of Erfurt, the Most Revd Ulrich Neymeyr, who spoke about the pastoral challenges faced by Christians in his diocese.

ARCIC III was particularly glad to complete its first agreed statement, and the first ARCIC statement since 2005, in this significant location and in this auspicious year. It hopes that *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be Church – Local, Regional, Universal* will also be known as “The Erfurt Document”. The published text is expected to be available in 2018.

Appendix: Members of ARCIC III present at the meeting

Co-Chairs

Most Revd Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, England

Most Revd Sir David Moxon, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See

Roman Catholics

Revd Robert Christian, OP

Revd Canon Adelbert Denaux, Professor Em.

Most Revd Arthur Kennedy

Professor Paul D. Murray

Professor Sister Teresa Okure, SHCJ

Professor Janet E. Smith

USA

Revd Professor Vimal Tirimanna, CSsR

Very Revd Dom Henry Wansbrough, OSB

St Albert Priory, Oakland, California, USA

Brugge, Belgium

Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, USA

Durham University, England

Catholic Institute of West Africa, Nigeria

Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, Michigan,

Alphonsianum University, Rome, Italy

Ampleforth Abbey, England

Anglicans

Dr Paula Gooder

Right Revd Dr Christopher Hill

Right Reverend Linda Nicholls

Revd Canon Dr Nicholas Sagovsky

Revd Canon Dr Peter Sedgwick

Revd Dr Charles Sherlock (Consultant)

Revd Dr William Adam

The Church of England

The Church of England

The Anglican Church of Canada

The Church of England

The Church in Wales

The Anglican Church of Australia

Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury

WCC Observer

The Revd Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus

Director of the Commission on Faith and Order

Staff

The work of the Commission was supported by the two co-secretaries

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut

The Revd Anthony Currer

Unity)

(Anglican Communion Office)

(Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian

and

The Revd Neil Vigers

The Revd Canon Jonathan Gough

(Anglican Communion Office)

Minute-taker