



Press Release

Anglican and Catholic Bishops make pilgrimage to St Peter's Basilica for Anglican Choral Evensong as part of the 'Growing Together' Ecumenical Summit

Pairs of Anglican and Catholic bishops from across the world have made a pilgrimage to St Peter's Basilica today as part of a weeklong ecumenical summit called Growing Together, run by IARCCUM (International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission). It aims to strengthen bonds of friendship between Anglicans and Roman Catholics as they explore their joint witness and mission.

On the evening of January 23, set within the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the bishops participated in Anglican Choral Evensong in the Choir Chapel of St Peter's. This was an important occasion in ecumenical relations. Traditional Anglican Evensong was celebrated previously in St Peter's in 2017.

As one of the most important Christian places of pilgrimage, St Peter's is believed to have been built over the burial site of the Apostle Peter, the head of the twelve Apostles of Jesus and, according to tradition, the first Bishop of Antioch and later the first Bishop of Rome, thus the first Pope.

The service was sung by a specially assembled choir drawn from the two Anglican churches in Rome, All Saints (Church of England) and St Paul's within the Walls (Episcopal Church). The Revd Canon Robert Warren, Chaplain of All Saints' Anglican Church in Rome, officiated.

Commenting on the service, Fr Martin Browne at the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome said:

"A big focus of the 'Growing Together' Summit is to celebrate the richness of our traditions and to strengthen our bonds. The rhythm of daily prayer based on the psalms and other scriptural texts is a precious treasure which Catholics and Anglicans share. It's useful to recall that the Catholic Church's Ecumenical Directory says that the experience of participating in one another's liturgical celebrations helps Christians to share more deeply in traditions which often have developed from common roots. Sharing in the service of Evening Prayer as it has traditionally been celebrated by Anglicans is an opportunity for Catholics to do just that and to give thanks for their shared tradition of prayer. Choral Evensong is a particularly beautiful expression of our shared tradition and we can be very grateful that we have this opportunity to experience it together in St Peter's."

Dr Christopher Wells, Director of Unity, Faith and Order at the Anglican Communion Office said:

"IARCCUM has, since its appearance in 2000, broken new ground on the ecumenical landscape, as it seeks to apply all that the theological dialogue between Anglicans and Catholics has achieved since 1967. The pairs of bishops, as they commit to shared ministry in every way possible, serve as pioneers on the way to the fullness of unity in faith, order, and witness, which



is the Lord's will. That both of our communions are investing in this practical, experimental work shows the depth of our commitment to the unflagging pursuit of full, visible unity in the body of Christ. As we pray, study, teach, and serve alongside other Christians, the Holy Spirit reshapes our hearts, and what seemed remote or unimaginable becomes real and normal. Unity is not as hard as we think. It begins and ends with love of God and one another and subsists in common prayer."

Ends

Notes to Editors

About IARCCUM

- IARCCUM aims to foster closer co-operation between the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions and put into practice progress made in theological conversations.
- It works through pairs of bishops in particular countries, one Anglican and one Roman Catholic, meeting together and promoting shared mission.
- It was established in 2000, by Archbishop George Carey and Cardinal Edward Cassidy, the then President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.
- IARCCUM's work is co-chaired by Bishop David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese in Europe, and Archbishop Donald Bolen, the Catholic Archbishop of Regina, Saskatchewan. It is supported by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome and the Anglican Communion Office, Secretariat to the Anglican Communion.

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Press photos are available here and will be uploaded during the week:

<http://tinyurl.com/iarccuspressphoto>

Password (lower case) iarccum@press

News releases

The Anglican Communion Office will share a series of new releases, social media commentary, photos and short film clips during the week. Channels used will include:

The Anglican Communion office website:

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/communications/press-and-media.aspx>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/TheAnglicanCommunion>

X: <https://twitter.com/AnglicanWorld>



Anglican Communion News Service:

<https://www.anglicannews.org/>

X: <https://twitter.com/AnglicanNews>

Some news and stories will also be shared on:

IARCCUM website: <https://iarccum.org/>

The Archbishop of Canterbury / Lambeth Palace:

<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/ArchbishopofCanterbury>

X: <https://twitter.com/JustinWelby>