



Press Release

It's time to 'walk together, pray together, and seek justice together', say Anglican and Catholic Bishops as they share their commitment and call for Christian Unity.

Anglican and Catholic bishops participating in the ecumenical summit *Growing Together* have shared their post-conference 'Call' today. Entitled *Our Common Witness, Calling and Commitment*, it comes after a weeklong gathering (22-29 January) that saw the bishops meeting in Rome and Canterbury, for pilgrimage and discussion on joint mission and witness.

Meeting during the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, the summit was attended by Catholic and Anglican bishop pairs, representing 27 countries from all over the world. During the summit, each pairing was commissioned by Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury, during Vespers, at the basilica of Saint Paul outside the Walls in Rome.

The summit was organised by IARCCUM, an ongoing International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. It is supported by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome and the Anglican Communion Office, Secretariat to the Anglican Communion.

Our Common Witness, Calling and Commitment covers important themes relevant to Church and world affairs. It is written not only as a summary of the bishops' commitment, but also as a united call to the wider Church. In its opening it says:

After four centuries of conflict and separation, the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion have now been on a walk towards reconciliation for almost six decades. At times, the path has been bumpy, but the Holy Spirit has been at work and our churches have persevered in a dialogue which has been extraordinarily fruitful.

We willingly proclaim that our communion in Christ is a source of joy and life. While that communion is not yet full, decades of rich theological dialogue, nourished by prayer for and with each other, have brought us to a place where the bonds which unite us are deep and profound. Yet in our churches we have barely begun to do all that is possible to do together.

It is the task and mission of the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) to build on the results of that dialogue and to bridge the gap between the elements of faith we hold in common and the tangible expression of that shared belief in our ecclesial lives.

Mindful of God's sending us forth to engage in common witness, to build relationship of friendship in Christ, to walk a synodal path together and to share wherever possible in the Church's mission, IARCCUM brings together bishops from across the world where Anglicans and Catholics live together side by side in significant number.



The statement goes on to make calls and invitations to the Church in the areas of Witness, Friendship, Mission and Synodality. It says: *'Synodality is not merely about the Church's governance; it is about putting relationships at the centre of the Church's life.'* It references the words of Pope Francis to the bishops during their commissioning at St Paul's outside the Walls in Rome: *'First our brothers and sisters, then the structures.'*

In its commitments on mission, the statement calls for working for the *'flourishing of human life in every aspect.... We cannot live in isolation from each other as churches.'* The commitment also references the challenges and hopes of *'Indigenous Peoples, descendants of enslaved persons and others that live with the legacy of colonisation and assimilation.'* Appeals are also made to be able to *'hear and heed the voices of women and of minority ethnic groups wherever they experience marginalisation or the denial of their human dignity'*.

During the Summit, bishops participating shared about the realities of the climate crisis, including Bishops Marinez Bassotto and Teodoro Mendes Tavares from Amazonia. The statement is clear in the call for *to 'care for our common home'*, echoing Pope Francis's Encyclical on the Environment (*Laudato Si'*) and the recent Lambeth Call on the Environment and Sustainable Development issued by Anglican bishops during the 2022 Lambeth Conference.

The statement also makes a promise to proclaim the 'Good News of peace to those in places scourged by ongoing wars'.

The *Growing Together* statement is an important comment from the IARCCUM bishops, not only on their sentiments during the meeting, but as an ongoing commitment to working for unity as they go home. It concludes:

As we return to our own local churches after our pilgrimage in Rome and Canterbury, we pray that our ministry alongside one another as Catholics and Anglicans will be for the world a foretaste of the reconciling of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ.

Read the full Commitment here on the IARCCUM website here: <https://iarccum.org/doc/?d=1567>

Read the full Commitment on the ACO website here: <https://bit.ly/3HIdonD>

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>