



Press Release

Anglican Centre in Rome announces new Director

The Board of Governors of the Anglican Centre in Rome has announced the appointment of a new Director. Bishop Anthony Ball take over the leadership of the Centre when Archbishop Ian Ernest steps down at the end of January 2025. There will be a transition period of a few months, as Bishop Anthony takes up his responsibilities in Rome and concludes those of his current roles.

The Anglican Centre in Rome is the permanent Anglican Communion presence in Rome. It embodies the Anglican Communion's commitment to the full visible unity of the Church, with a particular focus on building trusted relationships with the Roman Catholic Church and advancing shared ecumenical priorities.

As Director, Bishop Anthony Ball will lead the centre and be the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See, playing a key role in the interface between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.

Bishop Anthony will also play a major role as a public face of Anglican ecumenical commitment, liaising with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Unity, Faith and Order team at the Anglican Communion Office.

Bishop Anthony is currently serving at Westminster Abbey as Canon Steward and Archdeacon of Westminster and as the Bishop of the Diocese of North Africa in the Province of Alexandria, having previously been an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Egypt.

In his current role at Westminster Abbey, he has oversight of hospitality and welcome to visitors and pilgrims and responsibility for pastoral care as well as being the lead clergy person for the Abbey's inter-religious relationships. Previously, he held roles of Canon Rector, Rector of St Margaret's Church, Almoner and Sub-Dean. Before coming to the Abbey he was Rector of Worth, Pound Hill and Maidenbower in West Sussex, also holding the role of Anglican Chaplain at Worth School.

He has held several roles in the charity and education sectors, including Chair of Trustees of the Christian development charity 'Embrace the Middle East'; the Chair of Governors of Westminster City School; a Trustee of the United Westminster and Grey Coat Foundation; a Trustee of the Christian-Muslim Forum; and Co-Chair of the Council of Christians and Jews' Central London Branch. He currently Chairs the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association and serves on the UK Advisory Board of the Abraham Initiatives.

He was born and lived for many years in Southern Africa. After studying at the University of Durham, he joined the Diplomatic Service. He had overseas postings in the Middle East and Spain



during which time he was ordained as a priest. During a posting with the British Embassy in Damascus, he was the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to the Heads of the Orthodox Churches in Syria and Lebanon. From there he moved to join Archbishop Rowan Williams's staff at Lambeth Palace where he variously held responsibility for advising on Anglican Communion, Ecumenical, Inter Religious and International relations before serving as the Archbishop's Chaplain.

Speaking of the appointment, Bishop Anthony Ball said:

"It is an extraordinary privilege to be offered this opportunity to serve the Anglican Communion, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the cause of Christian unity. As a long-time supporter of the Anglican Centre in Rome I am hugely excited at the prospect of contributing to its leadership and building on the work of Archbishop Ian Ernest and his predecessors. I look forward to developing further the connections and collaboration with institutions, organisations and all those, within our Communion and beyond, committed to education, pilgrimage, encounter and deepening mutual understanding. Establishing friendships was core to the founding vision of the ACR and is as vital today as it was nearly sixty years ago - I relish the chance of sharing in this endeavour."

Announcing the appointment, Bishop Michael Burrows said,

"Bishop Anthony Ball is someone of energy, vision and rich experience whose many gifts will be a source of blessing to the ACR. Ecumenism, diplomacy, administration and liturgy are examples of areas where he is proficient. In particular he knows how to network fruitfully, to be given to hospitality and to deepen dialogue. The Governors of the ACR, rejoicing at the news of his appointment, know that he will be a worthy successor to Archbishop Ian Ernest, who over the last five years has developed the profile and agenda of the Centre, in and beyond Rome, quite immeasurably."

The Most Reverend Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury said:

"Throughout his ministry to date, Bishop Anthony Ball has served God's church in several contexts. This has imbued him with a deep commitment to the unity of the church and the value of ecumenism. I know that he will play a vital role in growing the Anglican Communion's relationship with the Holy See, as together we celebrate our warm friendship and collaboration in mission."

The Right Revd Anthony Poggo, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, is also a Governor on the Anglican Centre in Rome. Speaking of the appointment he said:

"The Anglican Centre in Rome is a unique institution in the Anglican Communion, given to embodying the spirit and commitments of ecumenism. It is hard to think of the fruitfulness of Anglican-Catholic dialogue in the last almost- 60 years without thinking of the ACR as a place of personal encounter and friendship. In April 2024, it played an important role in hosting the Anglican Primates' Meeting, which included an historic meeting with Pope Francis. I look forward to all that Bishop Anthony Ball will do as Director and share our prayers and support. We also give thanks for the service and tremendous ministry of his immediate predecessor, Archbishop Ian Ernest."

For more information

- Read about the work of the Anglican Centre in Rome [here](#)
- Read more about the Archbishop of Canterbury's ministry [here](#)
- Read about the ecumenical work of the Anglican Communion Office [here](#)



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