

Journey in hope



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Renewing relations

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Journey in hope - Introduction

The ecumenical pilgrimage is one of discoveries. Some are painful discoveries of how we are viewed by others or how we have hurt and harmed others: this requires of all of us the healing of memories. Our joyful discoveries are what we have in common and what others can offer us. The pilgrimage is not only about our ultimate goal, but also about the relationships between pilgrims on the way; it is not only about the journey's end, but how we respond to each other on the way.

Our conviction is that the movement towards the one Church of Jesus Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit. The means by which that unity is achieved, and its ultimate shape, are to be determined under God *with all humility and gentleness with patience bearing with one another in love.* (Eph. 4)

That they may be one (John 17) is the theme running through many of the texts quoted here. Descriptions of a unity that is to be include: reunion, return, reconciliation, renewal, rapprochement, relationship, reception and *koinonia* (Communion) - each reflects something of the thinking of its time.

An emerging theme is 'receptive ecumenism', learning from our partner, rather than simply asking our partner to learn from us. It is a mutual exchange of gifts. It is more about self-examination and inner conversion than convincing the other. Anglicans and Roman Catholics can help each other grow in faith, life and witness to Christ. 'Receptive ecumenism' will be the working method of the Third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission.

This spirit of generous openness and reciprocity has characterised the work of the Anglican Centre in Rome since its inception in 1966, "building friendly and informed relationships" between the Roman Catholic Church and all the Churches of the Anglican Communion. In our prayers we support the Centre and its vision.

*+ Stephen Platten, Bishop of Wakefield, England
Chairman of the Governors of the Anglican Centre in Rome*

On the road to union

King James I

I would with all my heart give my consent that the Bishop of Rome should have the first seat ... Let him in God's Name be *Primus Episcopus inter omnes Episcopos* [first bishop among all bishops], and *Princeps Episcoporum* [prince of the bishops], so it be no otherwise but as Peter was *Princeps Apostolorum* [prince of the apostles]."

Premonition to all Christian Monarchs 1616

Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham

May that Saviour who has left us, in the record of the Gospel, his own anxious prayer for the union of his disciples, promote and prosper the blessed work of Catholic Union. And for this purpose may he divest the minds of both Protestants and Catholics of all prejudice and passion and of every feeling contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.

A Charge to the Clergy 1811

Edward Bouverie Pusey

I do write in the full confidence that I express the feelings of thousands of English hearts, both here and in the United States, when I say that if not individual but accredited Roman authorities could say, "Reunion would involve you professing your faith in this, and that, but it would not involve your receiving such and such opinions or practices or devotions or matters of discipline", I believe that the middle wall of partition, which has existed so long in, as we believe, the one fold of Christendom, would be effectually shattered... Sons of the same Fathers, we must in time come to understand each other's language.

Is healthful Reunion Impossible? 1870

Catholic Emancipation (1829) and the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy (1850) show changing attitudes in England.

The Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom brought together Roman Catholics and Anglicans in the mid C19th for "united prayer that Visible Unity may be restored to Christendom".

One flock

1878 The Second Lambeth Conference

Remembering the blessing promised to united intercession, and believing that such intercession ever tends to deepen and strengthen that unity of his Church for which our Lord earnestly pleaded in his great intercessory prayer, your Committee trust that this Conference will give the weight of its recommendation to the observance, throughout the Churches of this Communion, of a season of prayer for the unity of Christendom....

As our divine Lord has so closely connected the unity of his followers with the world's belief in his own mission from the Father, it seems to us that intercessions for the enlargement of his Kingdom may well be joined with earnest prayer that all who profess faith in him may be one flock under one Shepherd.

Apostolicae Curae

On the Nullity of Anglican Orders

Pope Leo XIII 1896

Considering that this matter had been by certain persons for whatever reason recalled into discussion[‡] and that thence it might follow that a pernicious error would be fostered in the minds of many who might suppose that they possessed the Sacrament and effects of Orders, where these are nowise to be found, it seemed good to Us in the Lord to pronounce our judgment.

Wherefore, strictly adhering to the decrees of the pontiffs, our predecessors, and confirming them most fully, and renewing them by our authority, of our own initiative and certain knowledge, we pronounce and declare that ordinations carried out according to the Anglican rite have been, and are, absolutely null and utterly void.

[‡] Abbé Portal and Lord Halifax had pressed the question.
cf: *Unitatis Redintegratio*, quoted on p11.

The Reunion of Christendom

An Appeal to all Christian people from the Bishops assembled in the Lambeth Conference of 1920

We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ which is his Body.

We believe that God wills fellowship. By God's own act this fellowship was made in and through Jesus Christ, and its life is in his Spirit. We believe that it is God's purpose to manifest this fellowship ... in an outward, visible, and united society, holding one faith, having its own recognized officers, using God-given means of grace, and inspiring all its members to the world-wide service of the Kingdom of God. This is what we mean by the Catholic Church.

This united fellowship is not visible in the world today. On the one hand there are other ancient episcopal Communion in East and West, to whom ours is bound by many ties of common faith and tradition. On the other hand there are the great non-episcopal Communion, standing for rich elements of truth, liberty and life which might otherwise have been obscured or neglected. With them we are closely linked by many affinities, racial, historical and spiritual. We cherish the earnest hope that all these Communion, and our own, may be led by the Spirit into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all "who profess and call themselves Christians," within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ.

Reunion and Relationships

The Malines Conversations

Lord Halifax's Report and Reflection - 1928

Whatever the ultimate issue may be, no one who took part in, or was in any degree associated with, these Conferences, can have failed to realize how deeply they have affected the relations hitherto existing between members of the Church of England and the Holy See. Never again can representatives on either side approach the subject of Reunion in the spirit of cold and critical detachment which prevailed before the Malines Conversations took place.

If nothing else had been achieved by these Meetings and the frank discussions which marked their course throughout, this venture of faith (as I am bold to call it) would, on that account alone, have been amply justified.

But, for my own part, I have a profound conviction that these Conversations—informal and unofficial though they were—have been blessed and guided throughout by the Holy Spirit, Who has used these occasions, in ways we know not, to lead us one step nearer to the goal of Catholic Unity, which we so ardently long to reach.

As regards the need for Reunion amongst Christians it was acknowledged throughout the Conversations that the circumstances of the time revealed the necessity for its realization in the interests both of religion and morality, in a way that had perhaps never been so evident before.

It is my earnest hope and prayer that the torch which has been lit at Malines may in God's good time pass to other and more vigorous hands, in order that the sacred fire may spread far and wide, kindling in the hearts of true believers a burning zeal for the restoration of Catholic and Apostolic Unity.

Letter of Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, addressed to the Archbishop Davidson of Canterbury, October 1925

Our original intention was not to examine, within a set time, a few questions of theology, exegesis, or history, with the hope of adding a chapter of apologetics or controversies to the scientific or religious works of our predecessors. On the contrary, we met face to face like men of goodwill and sincere believers, alarmed by the confusion of opinions and the divisions of thought prevailing in modern society, and saddened by the progress of religious indifference and of the materialistic conception of life which follows it.

We had in mind the supreme wish for reunion, for unity expressed by our divine Saviour: *Ut unum sint*: Oh! If they could only be but one! We set to work without knowing either when or how this union hoped for by Christ could be realized, but convinced that it could be realized since Christ willed it, and that we had, therefore, each one of us, to bring our contribution to its realization. Reunion is not our work, and we may be unable to achieve it, but it is within our power, and consequently within our duty, to prepare it, and pave the way for it.

Cardinal Mercier

“In order to unite with one another, we must love one another; in order to love one another, we must know one another; in order to know one another, we must go and meet one another.”

The informal “Malines Conversations” between well-placed Roman Catholics and Anglicans took place between 1921 and 1926. They ended cordially but inconclusively. The Encyclical Mortalium Animos (1928) though not mentioning the conversations by name, is seen as condemning them.

On Religious Unity

Mortalium Animos

Encyclical of Pope Pius XI 1928

Here it seems opportune to expound and to refute a certain false opinion, on which...the complex movement by which non-Catholics seek to bring about the union of the Christian churches, depends. For authors who favour this view are accustomed ... to bring forward these words of Christ: "*That they all may be one.... And there shall be one fold and one shepherd,*" with this signification however: that Christ Jesus merely expressed a desire and prayer, which still lacks its fulfilment. For they are of the opinion that the unity of faith and government, which is a note of the one true Church of Christ, has hardly up to the present time existed, and does not today exist....

Controversies, they say, and longstanding differences of opinion which keep asunder ... members of the Christian family, must be entirely put aside, and from the remaining doctrines a common form of faith drawn up and proposed for belief, and in the profession of which all may not only know but feel that they are brothers. The manifold churches or communities, if united in some kind of universal federation, would then be in a position to oppose strongly and with success the progress of irreligion. ... they affirm that they would willingly treat with the Church of Rome, but on equal terms, that is as equals with an equal: but even if they could so act. ... any pact into which they might enter would not compel them to turn from those opinions which are still the reason why they err and stray from the one fold of Christ.

This being so, it is clear that the Apostolic See cannot on any terms take part in their assemblies, nor is it anyway lawful for Catholics either to support or to work for such enterprises; for if they do so they will be giving countenance to a false Christianity, quite alien to the one Church of Christ.

“Return to Rome”

The Mystical Body of Christ

Encyclical of Pope Pius XII 1943

We must earnestly desire that this united prayer may embrace in the same ardent charity both those who, not yet enlightened by the truth of the Gospel, are still outside the fold of the Church, and those who, on account of regrettable schism, are separated from Us who, though unworthy, represent the person of Jesus Christ on earth. Let us then re-echo that divine prayer of our Saviour to the heavenly Father: *"That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."*

From the very beginning of Our Pontificate, We have committed to the protection and guidance of heaven those who do not belong to the visible Body of the Catholic Church, solemnly declaring that after the example of the Good Shepherd We desire nothing more ardently than that they may have life and have it more abundantly. Imploring the prayers of the whole Church ... From a heart overflowing with love We ask each and every one of them to correspond to the interior movements of grace, and to seek to withdraw from that state in which they cannot be sure of their salvation.

For even though by an unconscious desire and longing they have a certain relationship with the Mystical Body of the Redeemer, they still remain deprived of those many heavenly gifts and helps which can only be enjoyed in the Catholic Church. Therefore may they enter into Catholic unity and, joined with Us in the one, organic Body of Jesus Christ, may they together with us run on to the one Head in the Society of glorious love. Persevering in prayer to the Spirit of love and truth, We wait for them with open and outstretched arms to come not to a stranger's house, but to their own, their father's home.

The Second Vatican Council

Lumen Gentium

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church 1964

This is the one Church of Christ which in the Creed is professed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after His Resurrection, commissioned Peter to shepherd, and him and the other apostles to extend and direct with authority, which He erected for all ages as ‘the pillar and mainstay of the truth’.

This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure. These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity.

Responses to some questions regarding certain aspects of the Doctrine of the Church

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2007

“Subsists in”

The use of this expression, which indicates the full identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church, does not change the doctrine on the Church. Rather, it comes from and brings out more clearly the fact that there are “numerous elements of sanctification and of truth” which are found outside her structure, but which “as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, impel towards Catholic Unity”.

“It follows that these separated churches and Communities, though we believe they suffer from defects, are deprived neither of significance nor importance in the mystery of salvation. In fact the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as instruments of salvation, whose value derives from that fullness of grace and of truth which has been entrusted to the Catholic Church”.

The Second Vatican Council

Unitatis Redintegratio - The Decree on Ecumenism – 1965

Men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. The differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church ... do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to full ecclesiastical communion. The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles. But even in spite of them it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's body and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church.

... Some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, and visible elements too. All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ...

Today ... under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, many efforts are being made in prayer, word and action to attain that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires. The Sacred Council exhorts all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism....

The term 'ecumenical movement' indicates the initiatives and activities planned and undertaken ... to promote Christian unity. These are: first, every effort to avoid expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult; then, 'dialogue' between competent experts from different Churches and Communities.

***Unitatis Redintegratio* cont:**

At these meetings, which are organized in a religious spirit, each explains the teaching of his Communion in greater depth and brings out clearly its distinctive features. In such dialogue, everyone gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both Communions. In addition, the way is prepared for cooperation between them in the duties for the common good of humanity which are demanded by every Christian conscience; and, wherever this is allowed, there is prayer in common. Finally, all are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the Church and accordingly to undertake with vigour the task of renewal and reform.

When such actions are undertaken prudently and patiently by the Catholic faithful, with the attentive guidance of their bishops, they promote justice and truth, concord and collaboration, as well as the spirit of brotherly love and unity. This is the way that, when the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion have been gradually overcome, all Christians will at last, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, be gathered into the one and only Church in that unity which Christ bestowed on His Church from the beginning. We believe that this unity subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time....

Divisions arose ... in the West, stemming from the events which are usually referred to as "The Reformation." As a result, many Communions, national or confessional, were separated from the Roman See. Among those in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.

It is the urgent wish of this Holy Council that the measures undertaken by the sons of the Catholic Church should develop in conjunction with those of our separated brethren so that no obstacle be put in the ways of divine Providence and no preconceived judgments impair the future inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

The Common Declaration

Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury 1966

In willing obedience to the command of Christ who bade His disciples love one another, they declare that, with His help, they wish to leave in the hands of the God of mercy all that in the past has been opposed to this precept of charity, and that they make their own the mind of the Apostle which he expressed in these words: 'Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus' (Phil 3:13-14).

They affirm their desire that all those Christians who belong to these two Communions may be animated by these same sentiments of respect, esteem and fraternal love, and in order to help these develop to the full, they intend to inaugurate between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed.

The dialogue should include not only theological matters such as Scripture, Tradition and Liturgy, but also matters of practical difficulty felt on either side. His Holiness the Pope and His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury are, indeed, aware that serious obstacles stand in the way of a restoration of complete communion of faith and sacramental life; nevertheless, they are of one mind in their determination to promote responsible contacts between their Communions in all those spheres of Church life where collaboration is likely to lead to a greater understanding and a deeper charity, and to strive in common to find solutions for all the great problems that face those who believe in Christ in the world of today.

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The Common Declaration 1966 cont:

Through such collaboration, by the Grace of God the Father and in the light of the Holy Spirit, may the prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ for unity among His disciples be brought nearer to fulfilment, and with progress towards unity may there be a strengthening of peace in the world, the peace that only He can grant who give 'the peace that passeth all understanding', together with the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that it may abide with all men for ever.



On 22nd March 1966 the Anglican Centre in Rome was dedicated by Archbishop Ramsey, who spoke of the Anglican student's debt "to writers within the Roman Catholic Church. This Centre is an attempt to repay that debt by making available the resources of Anglican learning to any who will come and enjoy them."

The following day, Pope and Archbishop prayed at St Paul's Outside-the-Walls, and made the Common Declaration. Then, in front of St Paul's, the Pope took off his episcopal ring and placed it on the finger of the Archbishop. The ring continues to be worn by the Archbishop's successors, whenever they visit Rome.

The Common Declaration paved the way for the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). A Preparatory Commission started its work in 1967; the first meeting of the new Joint Commission was at Windsor, England, in 1970.

“United but not absorbed”

Homily at the canonisation of forty English and Welsh martyrs

Pope Paul VI October 1970

May the blood of these martyrs be able to heal the great wound inflicted on God's Church by reason of the separation of the Anglican Church from the Catholic Church ... Their devotion to their country gives us the assurance that on that day, when – God willing – the unity of faith and life is restored, no offence will be inflicted on the honour and integrity of a great country such as England. There will be no seeking to lessen the legitimate prestige and usage proper to the Anglican Church when the Roman Catholic Church – this humble "servant of the servants of God" – is able to embrace firmly her ever-beloved sister in the one authentic communion of the family of Christ: a communion of origin and faith, a communion of priesthood and rule, a communion of saints in the freedom and love of the spirit of Jesus.

Christmas Greeting 1970

Archbishop Michael Ramsey to the Pope

I read with happiness the words Your Holiness spoke of warm and friendly feelings towards the Anglican Communion on the occasion of the Canonization of the Forty Martyrs. You can be sure that your warmth of feeling to us Anglicans is reciprocated ... in the hope that one day there will be between us a consummated unity which conserves all that has been true and good in our several traditions during the days of separation.

Koinonia

ARCIC I Final Report 1981

Union with God in Christ Jesus through the Spirit is the heart of Christian *koinonia*. Among the various ways in which the term *koinonia* is used in different New Testament contexts, we concentrate on that which signifies a relation between persons resulting from their participation in one and the same reality (cf. 1 John 1:3). The Son of God has taken to himself our human nature, and he has sent upon us his Spirit, who makes us so truly members of the body of Christ that we too are able to call God 'Abba, Father' (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). Moreover, sharing in the same Holy Spirit, whereby we become members of the same body of Christ and adopted children of the same Father, we are also bound to one another in a completely new relationship. *Koinonia* with one another is entailed by our *koinonia* with God in Christ. This is the mystery of the Church.

... the **eucharist** is ... the sacrament of Christ, by which he builds up and nurtures his people in the *koinonia* of his body. By the eucharist all the baptized are brought into communion with the source of *koinonia*. He is the one who destroyed the walls dividing humanity ... who died to gather into unity all the children of God his Father.

... **episcopal** exists only to serve *koinonia*. The ordained minister presiding at the eucharist is a sign of Christ gathering his people and giving them his body and blood. The Gospel he preaches is the Gospel of unity. Through the ministry of word and sacrament the Holy Spirit is given for the building up of the body of Christ. It is the responsibility of those exercising *episcopal* to enable all the people to use the gifts of the Spirit which they have received for the enrichment of the Church's common life [and] ... to keep the community under the law of Christ in mutual love and in concern for others; for the reconciled community of the Church has been given the ministry of reconciliation.

Contd.....

ARCIC I Final report contd

the Commission, discussing **primacy**, sees it as a necessary link between all those exercising *episcopate* within the *koinonia*. All ministers of the Gospel need to be in communion with one another, for the one Church is a communion of local churches. They also need to be united in the apostolic faith. Primacy, as a focus within the *koinonia*, is an assurance that what they teach and do is in accord with the faith of the apostles.

The Church as *koinonia* requires visible expression because it is intended to be the 'sacrament' of God's saving work. A sacrament is both sign and instrument. The *koinonia* is a sign that God's purpose in Christ is being realized in the world by grace. It is also an instrument for the accomplishment of this purpose, inasmuch as it proclaims the truth of the Gospel and witnesses to it by its life, thus entering more deeply into the mystery of the Kingdom. The community thus announces what it is called to become.

The *koinonia* is grounded in the word of God preached, believed and obeyed... In the New Testament it is clear that the community is established by a baptism inseparable from faith and conversion, that its mission is to proclaim the Gospel of God, and that its common life is sustained by the eucharist. This remains the pattern for the Christian Church. The Church is the community of those reconciled with God and with each other because it is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ and are justified through God's grace. It is also the reconciling community, because it has been called to bring to all mankind, through the preaching of the Gospel, God's gracious offer of redemption.

... Unity is of the essence of the Church, and since the Church is visible its unity also must be visible. Full visible communion between our two Churches cannot be achieved without mutual recognition of sacraments and ministry, together with the common acceptance of a universal primacy, at one with the episcopal college in the service of the *koinonia*.

Ut unum sint

Encyclical Letter on Commitment to Ecumenism John Paul II 1995

Prayer, the community at prayer, enables us always to discover anew the evangelical truth of the words: *'You have one Father'* (Mt. 23.9), the Father—*Abba*—invoked by Christ himself, the Only-begotten and Consubstantial Son. And again: *'You have one teacher, and you are all brethren'* (Mt 28.8). 'Ecumenical' prayer discloses this fundamental dimension of brotherhood in Christ, who died to gather together the children of God who were scattered, so that in becoming 'sons and daughters in the Son' (cf. *Eph* 1.5) we might show forth more fully both the mysterious reality of God's fatherhood and the truth about the human nature shared by each and every individual.

If prayer is the 'soul' of ecumenical renewal and of the yearning for unity, it is the basis and support for everything the Council defines as 'dialogue'. This definition is certainly not unrelated to today's personalist way of thinking. The capacity for 'dialogue' is rooted in the nature of the person and his dignity.

Dialogue is an indispensable step along the path towards human self-realization, the self-realization both of each individual and of every human community... It involves the human subject in his or her entirety; dialogue between communities involves in a particular way the subjectivity of each.

Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an 'exchange of gifts'.

The Common Declaration

**Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and Pope Benedict XVI
2006**

We celebrate the good which has come from these four decades of dialogue. We are grateful to God for the gifts of grace which have accompanied them. At the same time, our long journey together makes it necessary to acknowledge publicly the challenge represented by new developments which, besides being divisive for Anglicans, present serious obstacles to our ecumenical progress. It is a matter of urgency, therefore, that in renewing our commitment to pursue the path towards full visible communion in the truth and love of Christ, we also commit ourselves in our continuing dialogue to address the important issues involved in the emerging ecclesiological and ethical factors making that journey more difficult and arduous.

As Christian leaders facing the challenges of the new millennium, we affirm again our public commitment to the revelation of divine life uniquely set forth by God in the divinity and humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that it is through Christ and the means of salvation found in him that healing and reconciliation are offered to us and to the world.

There are many areas of witness and service in which we can stand together, and which indeed call for closer co-operation between us ...the Holy Land ... conflict ... terrorism ... respect for life ... marriage ... children ... family life ... the poor, oppressed and vulnerable ... those persecuted for their faith ... materialism ... creation ... environment ... inter-religious dialogue.

... we believe that if we can together be God's instruments in calling all Christians to a deeper obedience to our Lord, we will also draw closer to each other, finding in his will the fullness of unity and common life to which he invites us.

Growing Together in Unity and Mission

The Faith that Sets us Free

The International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission
2006

The Commission gratefully acknowledges that the faith we hold in common is given to us by God. In this statement we have attempted to harvest the fruits of forty years of dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. As we reviewed the experience of our Churches it became clear to us how increased interaction has led to greater mutual understanding, and at the same time how this greater awareness of the extent of our shared faith has set us free to witness together more effectively. We celebrate and praise God for this.

There have been failures on the way and opportunities missed. We recognise that the obstacles that prevent us from receiving together all that God offers damage the effectiveness of our mission to the world. The Commission has become more profoundly aware of how intimately connected are understanding and cooperation, faith and mission. It is our conviction that, as we grow towards full, ecclesial communion and respond afresh to the common mission entrusted to his Church by our Lord, the remaining Church-dividing issues will be resolved more effectively.

Because we hope in the bountiful grace of God, we are encouraged to persevere, and to face the difficulties of growing together. We give glory to God, “whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.” (Eph. 3).

IARCCUM grew out of a unique meeting of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops convened by Archbishop Carey and Cardinal Cassidy in Mississauga, Canada in 2000.

ARCIC II

1983 – 2005

The second phase of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission covered these topics:

Salvation and the Church 1986

The Church as Communion 1991

Life in Christ: Morals, Communion & the Church 1993

The Gift of Authority 1999

Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ 2005

ARCIC III

**Communiqué from the first meeting of the
Third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission— 2011**

ARCIC III ... will address the two principal topics (the Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching) together in a single document. It has drawn up a plan for its work that views the Church above all in the light of its rootedness in Christ through the Paschal Mystery. This focus on Jesus Christ, human and divine, gives the Commission a creative way to view the relationship between the local and universal in communion. The Commission will seek to develop a theological understanding of the human person, human society, and the new life of grace in Christ. This will provide a basis from which to explore how right ethical teaching is determined at universal and local levels. ARCIC ... will analyze some particular questions to elucidate how our two Communion approach moral decision making, and how areas of tension for Anglicans and Roman Catholics might be resolved by learning from the other.

ARCIC III does this conscious of the fact that what unites us is greater than what divides us.

Harvesting the Fruits

Cardinal Walter Kasper

It must be acknowledged that the ecumenical dialogues cannot in themselves realise the final goal and ultimate hope of the ecumenical movement; that movement is an impulse and work of the Holy Spirit. The process of ecumenical reconciliation and rapprochement is therefore primarily a spiritual process, inspired by hope that results from the belief that for God nothing is impossible.

The dialogues undertaken so far show that they can pave the way for that which is the will of the Lord and the deep longing of so many Christians: that all be one is sharing the one table of the Lord. In this way our ecumenical dialogues, enriched by what we have achieved with God's help in past decades, will embark upon a new – and hopefully equally fruitful – stage, perhaps less enthusiastic and more sober, but nonetheless full of hope and filled with the *dynamis* of the Spirit.

Harvesting the Fruits, 2009 pp 206-207

Archbishop Rowan Williams

I am asking how far continuing disunion and non-recognition are justified, theologically justified in the context of the overall ecclesial vision, when there are signs that some degree of diversity in practice need not, after all, prescribe an indefinite separation.

All I have been attempting to say here is that the ecumenical glass is genuinely half-full – and then to ask about the character of the unfinished business between us. For many of us who are not Roman Catholics, the question we want to put, in a grateful and fraternal spirit, is whether this unfinished business is as fundamentally church-dividing as our Roman Catholic friends generally assume and maintain. And if it isn't, can we all allow ourselves to be challenged to address the outstanding issues with the same methodological assumptions and the same overall spiritual and sacramental vision that has brought us thus far?

Address at the Willebrands Symposium, Rome, 2009

The Anglican Centre in Rome

The Anglican Centre in Rome develops friendly and informed relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion, through a ministry of prayer and hospitality, by offering educational opportunities, courses and a library, and encouraging and resourcing work and growth together in unity and mission.

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***We pray, Lord,
for your one holy catholic and apostolic Church,
redeemed by the blood of your Christ.
Reveal its unity,
guard its faith,
and preserve it in peace.***

A prayer regularly used at the Tuesday Eucharist
in the Chapel of the Anglican Centre in Rome

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