

THE ANGLICAN  
CENTRE IN ROME:  
AN INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF STUDY GUIDE TO  
ACCOMPANY THE DVD

*Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters.*

**1 CORINTHIAN 1:10**

*I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

**JOHN 17:20-21**

As Paul's anguished letter to the church in Corinth can testify, the challenge of church unity has bedeviled Christians since the earliest days. But when Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey visited Pope Paul VI at the Vatican in March 1966, just weeks after the close of Vatican II, Anglicans and Roman Catholics throughout the world had a glimpse of the unity for which Jesus prayed. Their meeting in the Sistine Chapel began a new era of dialogue between these two sister churches, separated by four centuries of mistrust, but united in their devotion to the gospel and to the Savior the gospel proclaims.

Now, over forty years later, one of the lasting instruments of that dialogue between these two historic churches is the Anglican Centre in Rome. The Centre not only provides a permanent Anglican diplomatic presence in Rome (its director is the Archbishop of Canterbury's permanent representative to the Holy See), but also engages in a rich ministry of education and hospitality to all who find their way to the seventh floor of the historic Palazzo Doria Pamphilj in the heart of the city.

*The Anglican Center in Rome: An Introduction* offers a first presentation of the work of the Centre. This

brief study guide, based on the themes raised by the film, attempts to provide ways for congregations and parishes in the United States to develop their own ministries of ecumenical hospitality, worship and education. Using the model of the Anglican Centre, this guide offers ideas for study and conversation that will help to examine similarities and differences in spiritual practices and teaching. It is hoped that this joint exploration will produce trust, confidence and friendship that will lead to joint worship and service.

After all, there are any number of fundamental aspects of unity that we already share which can and should be recognized and celebrated.

The suggested topics are intended to help guide both individual study and group discussion, and can be adapted to any size of gathering. The hope is that the study questions and supporting materials will be found useful by all those who seek to embrace the ecumenical ministry of reconciliation that Jesus embodied, that Paul preached, and that, in these more recent days, women and men in both communions struggle to incarnate in their own lives of faith.

## SESSION I

### *Getting acquainted with your Roman Catholic or Episcopalian neighbor*

Many people have remarked on the ministry of hospitality as one of the most important gifts of the Anglican Centre in Rome, as it models a place of mutual respect for sometimes challenging conversations among Roman Catholic and Anglican Christians. In visiting the Centre and participating in its worship, one recent visitor was reminded of the old and sometimes overlooked ecumenical saying that “what we can do together we must do together.” For Roman Catholics and Episcopalians, the list of what we can do together is long and rich: visiting each other’s churches, praying for one another in each other’s churches; joint baptismal certificates and celebrations; scripture reading and proclamation, hymn-singing and plainsong psalmody; ministries of pastoral care and social service; ministries of social justice; and the celebration of the lives of Christian saints venerated in both traditions, such as Augustine, Columba, Hilda or Theresa of Avila.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Describe the positive encounters you may have had with fellow Christians who are Roman Catholic/Episcopalian. What aspects of their spiritual life and practice resonate with your own?
2. In a parish forum, convene an informal panel with both Roman Catholic and Episcopal participants to help those attending explore the spiritual practices they hold in common. It would be good to include an equal number of men and women from both traditions on the panel. The group discussion might focus on methods of prayer, or practices of hospitality and service to others, or on ways of reading and praying with Scripture.
3. Conduct an exercise in appreciative inquiry with representatives of a neighboring Roman Catholic/Episcopal congregation. The discussion leader can start the conversation by inviting the Episcopalians present to list on a piece of newsprint what they have experienced as the most positive aspects of Roman Catholicism, and then inviting the Roman Catholics present to list what they have found positive about the Episcopal or Anglican tradition. Be

sure to ask people to be specific, and to speak from their own personal experience as much as possible. Then, in plenary discussion, using Paul's language, have people ask each other: What gifts of the Spirit do we share? What gifts seem distinctive to one group or the other? What can we learn from each other in our common journey toward Christ?

#### RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND REFLECTION

The Paulist Fathers <http://www.paulist.org/unity>

Bliss, Frederick, *Catholic and Ecumenical: History and Hope* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007)

Reath, Mary, *Rome and Canterbury: The Elusive Search for Unity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007)

The Anglican Centre in Rome <http://anglicancentre.churchinsight.com/>

The American Friends of the Anglican Centre in Rome  
[http://www.americanfriendsacr.org/American\\_Friends/Welcome.html](http://www.americanfriendsacr.org/American_Friends/Welcome.html)

The Franciscan Friars of the Atonement always have excellent material online for the January Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

## SESSION II

### *Entering the conversation*

Ever since Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey embraced one another in that historic meeting in the Sistine Chapel, conversations between Roman Catholics and Anglicans at the official level have been immensely productive, if often immensely challenging. Ecumenists have found that shared knowledge and important personal friendships have sustained the dialogue even in times of considerable disagreement on matters of church discipline and authority. As Canon Kenneth Kearon remarks in the video, the theological debates are trying to undo 400 years of separate theological development. Such work takes time. What is remarkable is how much agreement has already been reached among theologians on key doctrinal issues, including baptism, Eucharist, and the nature of ministry in the church. In the words of Benedict XVI, “we must passionately continue... through serious and rigorous dialogue to develop our shared theological, liturgical and spiritual heritage.” (January 19, 2011)

Between 1971 and 2005, ARCIC (the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission) produced



twelve major documents outlining the convergence of Anglican and Roman Catholic views (and some important differences). The ARCIC reports focused on several key aspects of our shared tradition, including teachings about the Eucharist, about authority in the church, about ministry and ordination, Christian morals, and the place of Mary in Christian life. ARCIC III began last May. This is a link to a report of their first meeting. <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2011/5/27/ACNS4874>

ARC/USA, the American version of this dialogue, concluded its 70<sup>th</sup> meeting this past August, and continues to be active in the ecumenical life of the two churches. They are currently exploring the topic *Ecclésiology and Moral Discernment: Common Ground and Divergences*.

The International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) has published *Growing Together in Unity and Mission (GTUM)*, a text that builds on 40 years of Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue. As its authors make clear, this document and others like it are not “authoritative” documents of either Communion. They are intended to be heard as a “call to action, based upon an honest appraisal of what has been achieved.”

## SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, adopted by the American House of Bishops in 1886, was an early and eloquent statement of the Anglican position on ecumenism, emphasizing the openness and humility that has long characterized Anglican attitudes toward reunion with separated churches, including the Church of Rome. The text of the Quadrilateral can be found on pages 876-877 of the Episcopal Church's *Book of Common Prayer*. A key passage in the document reads as follows:

*That in all things of human ordering or human choice, relating to modes of worship and discipline, or to traditional customs, this Church is ready in the spirit of love and humility to forego all preferences of her own.*

As you reflect on your own experience of Christian worship, what modes of worship or traditional customs might you be willing to “forego” in the quest for reunion?

2. The second half of *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* (GTUM) lists many practical ideas that Anglicans and Roman Catholics can consider doing together as they seek to carry forth their commitment to learning and mutual exchange.

Visible expressions of our shared faith

Joint study

Co-operation in ministry

Shared witness in the world

Read and study *GTUM*, and organize a series of discussions centering on these ideas, considering what kinds of practical strategies and initiatives might foster their widespread acceptance. Some of their specific proposals are the development of Anglican-Roman Catholic religious schools, joint training of lay ministers, a common baptismal certificate, and closer cooperation between Anglican and Roman Catholic religious orders. Add one or two more practical proposals of your own, based on your parish's or congregation's local experience of dialogue and collaboration.

3. Select one of the ARCIC documents released between 1971 and 2005 for intensive group or individual study. The topics of each report are as follows:  
1971 Eucharistic Doctrine (including the 1979 "Elucidation")  
1973 Ministry and Ordination (including the 1979 "Elucidation")

- 1976 Authority in the Church I (including the 1981 “Elucidation”)
- 1981 Authority in the Church II
- 1987 Salvation in the Church
- 1991 Church as Communion (The New Zealand ARC has done a study guide for this agreed document.)
- 1994 Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church
- 2005 Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ
4. Invite your diocesan ecumenical officer to visit your parish and to offer a public forum on the work of his or her office.
  5. Partner with a local Roman Catholic/Episcopal parish and invite both ecumenical officers to discuss their work.

#### RESOURCES WITH IDEAS FOR PARISHES

*Growing Together in Mission: Building on 40 Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue--An Agreed Statement of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission* (London: SPCG, 2007) <http://www.aco.org/ministry/ecumenical/dialogues/catholic/iarccum/index.cfm>

Kasper, Cardinal Walter, *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2007)

## RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND REFLECTION

ARCIC documents can found on the Anglican Communion official web site: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/ecumenical/dialogues/catholic/arcic/index.cfm>

ARC/USA documents are at:

<http://nccbuscc.org/seia/anglican.shtml>

*Benedict XVI, "Overcoming Pessimism on the Path to Full Christian Unity," sermon delivered January 25, 2011 in the Roman Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, Rome to mark the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.*

<http://pronione.wordpress.com/2011/01/25/papal-homily-at-vespers-closing-week-of-prayer>

*The Episcopal Church Office of Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Relations* [http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/110055\\_ENG\\_HTM.htm](http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/110055_ENG_HTM.htm)

*The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU)* [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_pro\\_20051996\\_chrstuni\\_pro\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_pro_20051996_chrstuni_pro_en.html)

*Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori's talk on ecumenism* [http://www.paulist.org/news/profiles/110125\\_heckerlecture\\_text.php](http://www.paulist.org/news/profiles/110125_heckerlecture_text.php)

## SESSION III

### *Meeting the challenges of dialogue*

As Mary Reath remarked in the opening moments of the video, it is important that dialogue partners avoid glossing over today's ecumenical challenges, which are considerable. A short list would include the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate in various parts of the Anglican Communion, the blessing of same-sex unions in the American and Canadian churches; the ordination of a partnered gay man to the episcopate in New Hampshire; the recent formation of a Roman Catholic Anglican-rite ordinariate outlined in the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, and the on-going questions of confidence in the integrity of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the wake of numerous episodes of sexual abuse and their possible cover-up by church authorities. Add to these several older but still difficult disagreements about contraception, abortion, papal authority and the validity of Anglican orders.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The Anglican Centre exercises a kind of convening authority that allows Anglican and Roman Catholic lay people and clergy to gather in a spirit of shared concern and mutual respect. How could your church or congregation provide a similar safe space for difficult discussion, not just between Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, but also within these two churches who themselves have sometimes widely diverging views on these divisive issues?
2. Select for intensive group or individual study one of following key documents that have widely been seen as challenges or obstacles to Roman Catholic and Anglican unity.

*Apostolicae curae (1886)—Pope Leo XIII's papal bull declaring Anglican orders "absolutely null and utterly void" <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13curae.htm>*

*Humanae vitae (1968) Pope Paul VI's encyclical letter banning artificial contraceptives <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paulo6/p6humana.htm>*

*Elucidation of "Authority in the Church" (ARCIC 1981)*

*Clarification of issues involving papal primacy <http://prounione.wordpress.com/2011/01/25/papal-homily-at-vespers-closing-week-of-prayer/>*

*Anglicanorum coetibus (2010) A new “ordinariate” established by Pope Benedict XVI intended to integrate disaffected and former Anglicans into the life of the Roman Catholic Church in such a way as “to maintain the liturgical, spiritual and pastoral traditions of the Anglican Communion within the Catholic Church, as a precious gift nourishing the faith of the members of the Ordinariate and as a treasure to be shared”*

*[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_apc\\_20091104\\_anglicanorum-coetibus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apc_20091104_anglicanorum-coetibus_en.html)*

*General Convention of the Episcopal Church:  
resolutions on same sex relationships*

*[http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts\\_resolution.pl?resolution=2003-C051](http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2003-C051)*

*[http://www.gc2009.org/ViewLegislation/view\\_leg\\_detail.aspx?id=986&type=Final](http://www.gc2009.org/ViewLegislation/view_leg_detail.aspx?id=986&type=Final)*

*[http://collegeforbishops.org/assets/1145/fall\\_2010\\_hob\\_sclm\\_consultation\\_on\\_c056\\_-\\_theological\\_and\\_liturgical\\_principles\\_-\\_english.pdf](http://collegeforbishops.org/assets/1145/fall_2010_hob_sclm_consultation_on_c056_-_theological_and_liturgical_principles_-_english.pdf)*



## A FINAL WORD

Many observers have noted an erosion of confidence in religious institutions throughout the Western world. It may well be that our continuing disunity—especially our inability or even our unwillingness to speak truthfully and with hope to one another—contributes to that erosion. One of the great gifts of the Anglican Centre in Rome is its willingness to provide a safe place for disagreements to be aired in an atmosphere of cordiality and mutual respect. The Centre sets an example for all of us as we seek to honor Jesus' mandate "that all may be one." Again, to quote Mary Reath:

*We have much to teach and much to learn from each other. Nevertheless, the point is not to lose identity or to go backwards. Rather it is to clarify who we are, be clear about it, and find new ways of going forward together.*

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