

Communiqué from the meeting of ARCIC III in St John's Convent, Toronto

18 May 2016



The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) is the official body appointed by the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion to engage in theological dialogue in order that they may come into visible unity and full ecclesial communion. It held the sixth meeting of its current phase (ARCIC III) in an atmosphere of shared prayer and friendship at the St John's Convent, Toronto, hosted by the Anglican order of the Sisters of St John the Divine, 11–19 May 2016. Members of the Commission are grateful to the Sisters of St John the Divine for their prayerful support throughout the meeting, and to the guest house team for the warm welcome extended to them.

The mandate for this third phase of ARCIC is both to promote the reception of the previous work of the Commission by presenting this as a corpus and to explore “The Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching”. As the work presenting the ARCIC II documents has now been completed and the text is awaiting publication, the Commission focused the ecclesiological part of its mandate. A full draft document was circulated to members of the Commission prior to the meeting. This had been prepared by a drafting group which had met as guests of St Albert's Dominican Priory, Oakland, California, 14–18 December 2015. Consideration of this text occupied the greater part of the Commission's discussions in Toronto, which considered the proposed text and identified areas of clarification and further reflection. The Commission also mandated two other working groups: one to work on scriptural reflections for the ecclesiology document, and the other to start to draft sections of a text on the theme of an ethical discernment based on a schema that has been developed in previous meetings.

Members of the Commission also agreed to accept a proposal which will see ARCIC change its pattern of work. The co-chairs and co-secretaries put to the Commission that from 2018 ARCIC should work in five year terms and should have shorter meetings of a week's duration. This brings ARCIC into line with other dialogue commissions sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Anglican Communion Office. The changes also reflect the concerns of younger members of the Commission who have professional and family commitments.

On Wednesday 11 May members of ARCIC attended a public event with members of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada (ARC-Canada). The evening began with an Ecumenical Prayer Service at the Cardinal Flahiff Basilian Centre Chapel. The liturgy celebrated areas of doctrinal agreement achieved in almost fifty years of dialogue. There followed a presentation at St Michael's College, the University of Toronto, during which the co-chairs of ARCIC III and Bishop Linda Nicholls and Bishop Bolen, the co-chairs of ARC-Canada, gave short addresses and answered questions. The Commission members were encouraged by the engagement and enthusiasm of those who attended the event, and are grateful to ARC-Canada and to Mr Kyle Ferguson, Advisor for Ecclesial and Interfaith Relations for the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, in particular for making all the necessary preparations.

On Thursday 12 May, the Commission met with the members of ARC-Canada again, though this time in private discussion. The Commission had shared with ARC-Canada the draft ecclesiology text to be discussed in their meeting. ARC-Canada welcomed the fresh style and approach taken by the draft document, the way in which important concerns of Church life were addressed, and expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to the process. ARC-Canada also shared their recent work and their plans for future work which includes a study text on the forthcoming publication of ARCIC II documents.

The Commission was invited to evensong at St James' Anglican Cathedral sung by the Cathedral choir on the Sunday of Pentecost, 15 May. Archbishop Colin Johnson, the Anglican Archbishop of Toronto, presided at the liturgy and Bishop John A. Boissonneau attended on behalf of Cardinal Thomas Collins, the Catholic Archbishop of Toronto. Archbishop Bernard Longley, the Catholic co-chair of ARCIC preached. The Commission was then hosted, courtesy of the two archbishops, to dinner at the Albany Club. The Commission is grateful for the gracious hospitality and generosity of the Anglican and Catholic archdioceses, and to Canon Philip Hobson, Ecumenical Officer of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, and Fr Damian MacPherson SA, Director of the Office of Ecumenical & Interfaith Affairs for the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, for taking the initiative in organising the event.

On Monday 16 May the Commission visited the Mohawk Centre in Brantford, Ontario, where they met Bishop Mark MacDonald, the first National Indigenous bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Rev Norman Casey. The Commission heard the story of the evangelisation of the Indigenous peoples, and also of the many sufferings the communities has experienced in the government instituted Residential Schools operated by Canadian churches.

The next meeting of ARCIC will take place in Erfurt, Germany, 14–20 May 2017, when the Commission will again take up a reworked draft of an ecclesiological statement comparing the instruments of communion of each tradition.

Appendix: Members of ARCIC III present at the meeting

Co-Chairs

The Most Revd Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, England

The Most Revd Sir David Moxon, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See

Roman Catholics

The Revd Robert Christian OP

St Albert Priory, Oakland, California, USA

The Revd Canon Adelbert Denaux, Professor Em.

Brugge, Belgium

Most Revd Arthur Kennedy

Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, USA

Professor Sister Teresa Okure SHCJ

Catholic Institute of West Africa, Nigeria

Professor Janet E. Smith

Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit,
Michigan, USA

The Revd Professor Vimal Tirimanna CSsR

Alphonsianum University, Rome, Italy

The Very Revd Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Ampleforth Abbey, England

Attending through video link:

Professor Paul D. Murray

Durham University, England

Anglicans

Dr Paula Gooder

The Church of England

The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Hill

The Church of England

The Rt Revd Nkosinathi Ndwandwe

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa

The Revd Canon Dr Nicholas Sagovsky

The Church of England

The Revd Canon Dr Peter Sedgwick

The Church in Wales

The Right Reverend Linda Nicholls

The Anglican Church of Canada

The Reverend Michael Poon

The Anglican Province of South East Asia

Consultant

The Revd Dr Charles Sherlock

The Anglican Church of Australia

Staff

The work of the Commission is supported by the two co-secretaries

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut

(Anglican Communion Office)

The Revd Anthony Currer

(Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)

and

The Revd Neil Vigers

(Anglican Communion Office)

The Revd Canon Jonathan Gough, minute-taker