

International Commission of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue

**October 2017 COMMUNIQUÉ**  
**Sliema, Malta**

In the name of the Triune God, and with the blessing and guidance of our Churches, the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue met in Sliema, Republic of Malta from 14 to 21 October 2017. The Commission is deeply grateful for the comprehensive and warm hospitality offered by the Anglican Communion. As always the work of the Commission was undergirded by daily prayer and worship. The Commission attended the Sunday Parish Eucharist at the Anglican Pro-Cathedral of St Paul and a celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Greek Orthodox Parish Church of St George in Valletta.

The Commission welcomed its new Orthodox Co-Chair Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium and the new representative of the Patriarchate of Antioch, as well as the new representatives of the Anglican Communion. The Commission honoured the Pauline links with Malta through visits to holy sites, such as St Paul's Grotto in Rabat, connected with the presence of the Apostle on the island following his shipwreck on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27.28).

The members of the Commission were met with kindness by their Maltese fellow Christians, according to traditional local hospitality (Acts 28.2). Wider ecumenical links were celebrated through visits to the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Paul at Mdina and Co-Cathedral of St John at Valletta. Monsignor Charles Scicluna Jude, Archbishop of Malta, generously received the Commission for dinner at his official residence for a dinner. On its last day the Commission attended a reception at the home of Marina, Lady Marks.

As agreed at its last meeting in Armagh the Commission continued to develop its work on the theological understanding of the human person, according to principles in its agreed statement *In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology* (Buffalo 2015) by focusing this year on the practical implications of the Buffalo Agreed Statement, especially in regard to the complex and pressing issues surrounding environment and ecology as well as the ending of human life.

Members of the Commission discussed four primary papers that addressed these considerations, as well as prepared written responses to those papers made by Anglican and Orthodox members. These were discussed in plenary sessions where further critical reflections ensued in a constructive manner. Two representative members of the Commission were assigned the task of collating the different points of view on the two themes arising from the presentations, responses and discussions that followed. These will be drawn together as a first draft of joint statement to be agreed in the future. The Commission concluded its work by observing that a significant level of theological convergence had been attained in its discussions.

The papers presented were:

1. Ecology: An Orthodox Approach by the Very Revd Dr Valentin Vassechko

Anglican Response : The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut

Orthodox Response : Metropolitan Seraphim of Zimbabwe

2. "And it was good": The Love of God and the Fragility of Creation by Bishop Humberto Maiztegui Gonçalves

Anglican Response : Bishop Graham Usher

Orthodox Response : Prof. Dr. Miltiadis Konstantinou

3. Anglican Approaches to Death and Dying by the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke and the Revd Canon Dr Sarah Rowland Jones

Anglican Response : The Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce

Orthodox Response : The Revd. Fr. Jonathan A. Hemmings



**Commission Members present were:**

**Representatives of the Orthodox Church**

Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium (*Co-Chairman*)

Metropolitan Serafim of Zimbabwe

Patriarchate of Alexandria

The Revd Fr Jonathan A. Hemmings

Patriarchate of Antioch

he Revd Dr George Dragas

Patriarchate of Jerusalem

The Revd Dr Valentin Vassechko

<Patriarchate of Moscow

Professor Dr Bogdan Lubardic

Patriarchate of Serbia

Metropolitan Nifon of Târgoviște

Patriarchate of Romania

Protopresbyter Giorgi Zviadadze

Patriarchate of Georgia

Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Kition

Church of Cyprus

Professor Dr Miltiadis Konstantinou

Church of Greece

Bishop Ilia of Philomelion

Church of Albania

The Revd Dr Christos B Christakis (*Co-Secretary*)

MEMBERS UNABLE TO ATTEND:

The Revd Fr Andrzej Minko

Church of Poland

**Representatives of the Anglican Communion**

Most Rev Richard Clark of Armagh (*Co-Chairman*)

The Church of Ireland

The Most Revd Philip Aspinall

The Anglican Church of Australia

The Rt Revd Humberto Gonçalves

The Episcopal Church of Brazil

The Rt Revd Graham Usher

The Church of England

The Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce

The Church of England

The Revd Canon Sarah Rowland Jones

The Church of Wales

The Revd Canon Philip Hobson OGS

The Anglican Church of Canada

The Revd Gcebile Phumzile Gina

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa

The Rt Revd Michael Lewis of Cyprus & the Gulf

The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East

The Very Revd Canon Hosam Naoum

The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East

The Revd Marc Billimoria

Church of Ceylon

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut (*Co-Secretary*)

The Revd Neil Vigers

Anglican Communion Office

MEMBERS UNABLE TO ATTEND:

The Rt Revd Dr Rowan Williams

Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury