

ARCIC

ANGLICAN - ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION (ARCIC)

COMMUNIQUÉ

Plenary Meeting in Strasbourg, 11-18 May 2024

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III) held its annual plenary meeting at the Centre Culturel Saint - Thomas in Strasbourg, France from 11 to 18 May 2024. Apart from one member, who participated remotely, all of the members of the Commission were present in Strasbourg.

The Commission continues to work on the second part of its mandate to examine how the Church local, regional and universal discerns right ethical teaching. Drafting work on the Agreed Statement for this phase of the Commission's work had continued during the period since the Commission's 2023 plenary meeting in Cyprus. Members of the drafting sub-committee had the opportunity to gather in Vienna and London between the 2023 and 2024 plenary meetings, and were able to bring an almost completed draft for consideration by the full Commission. It is hoped to complete the drafting in the coming months so that the document can be finalised by the Commission at its 2025 meeting and offered to the authorities and faithful of the two communions. When published, the Agreed Statement will complement the document published by ARCIC III in 2017, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church. Local, Regional and Universal*.

Since the beginning of this third phase of ARCIC, the Commission has consciously adopted an approach of receptive ecumenical learning, whereby each dialogue partner seeks to identify elements of church life found in the other tradition which might be gifts for the enhancement of their own traditions. A large part of the Commission's work in Strasbourg was therefore devoted to reflecting on moral discernment in our two traditions and on what they can learn from each other's practices. For the first time in its work, ARCIC III has chosen to include two case studies as part of its reflection - one where Catholics and Anglicans reached broadly the same teaching, and one where they did not. These case studies, on Enslavement and Contraception, illustrate the doctrinal and structural similarities and differences between the two communions and also serve to highlight unresolved questions. The Commission devoted much time to reflecting on what each of our traditions can learn, from both its own experiences and those of the other tradition, to inform both current and future ethical reasoning and discernment. This reflection was enriched by opportunities for shared reflection on Scripture, and by the practice of 'Conversation in the Spirit', which has been a significant dimension of the current synodal process in the Catholic Church.

On Sunday 12 May, the members of the Commission attended the Chapter Mass at Strasbourg's historical medieval Cathedral of Notre Dame. The Archpriest of the Cathedral Chapter graciously invited the Catholic Co-Chair of the Commission, Archbishop Bernard Longley, to preside at the Eucharist. Members returned to the Cathedral on Tuesday 14 May for a guided tour. The Commission was pleased to welcome local representatives of our two traditions to the Centre Culturel Saint-Thomas during the week. On Sunday 12 May, the Revd Dr Mark Barwick and the Revd John Murray from St Alban's, the Church of England chaplaincy in Strasbourg, joined the Commission for lunch and shared about the history and current life of the Anglican community in the city, as well as about the wider ecumenical life of the city. On Monday 13 May, the newly installed Archbishop of Strasbourg, the Most Revd Pascal Delannoy, joined the Commission for lunch.

On Thursday 16 May, the Commission visited the Institute for Ecumenical Research, a Lutheran-sponsored academic centre, based in Strasbourg since 1965. The former Director of the Institute, Revd Prof. Theodor Dieter, addressed the group, introducing the Institute and its programmes, and some of the ecumenical dialogues to which it has contributed, most notably, the process leading to the 1999 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church. Members of the Commission also had the opportunity to tour the European Parliament building.

This year's ARCIC meeting coincided with the period between the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost, when the liturgies of both traditions invoke the Holy Spirit in a special way. The Commission members joined this chorus of prayer in their worship together each morning and evening. In their daily Eucharistic celebrations, using Roman and Anglican rites on alternate days, members experienced the reality of their real but incomplete communion in the pain of not being able to share fully in the Eucharist together. Prompted by this pain to continue on the road to closer unity, the members of the Commission are grateful to God for their time together in Strasbourg and for the progress they were able to make towards completing the task committed to them by their respective church authorities. As they look now towards the completion of their Agreed Statement on right ethical discernment, they rely on the Holy Spirit to guide their two communions into all the truth (*cf* Jn 16:13).

PARTICIPANTS

Co-Chairs

The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier, Archbishop of Melbourne, Australia (*Anglican*)

The Most Reverend Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, England (*Catholic*)

ANGLICAN MEMBERS

Dr Moeawa Callaghan (*The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia*)

The Reverend Dr Isaías Chachine (*The Anglican Church of Southern Africa*)

The Right Reverend Garth Minott (*The Church of the Province of the West Indies*)

The Most Reverend Linda Nicholls (*Primate, The Anglican Church of Canada*)

The Reverend Dr Alexander Ross (*The Anglican Church of Australia*)

The Reverend Canon Dr Peter Sedgwick (*The Church in Wales*)

Consultants

The Reverend Dr Stewart Clem (*The Episcopal Church*)

The Right Reverend Christopher Hill (*The Church of England*)

CATHOLIC MEMBERS

The Reverend Dr Albino Barrera OP (*Providence College, Providence RI, USA*)

The Reverend Dr Paul Béré SJ (*Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome*)

Dr Kristin Colberg (*St John's University, Collegeville MN, USA*)

Professor Sigrid Müller (*University of Vienna, Austria*)

Dr Emmanuel Nathan (*Australian Catholic University*)

The Reverend Dr Vimal Tirimanna CSsR (*Accademia Alfonsiana, Rome & National Seminary, Kandy, Sri Lanka*)

Consultants

The Reverend Anthony Curren (*Darlington, England*)

Professor Paul Murray (*University of Durham, England*)

WCC Faith and Order Commission Consultant

Professor Myriam Wijlens (*University of Erfurt, Germany*)

Staff

The work of the Commission was supported by the two Co-Secretaries:

The Reverend Martin Browne OSB (*Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity*)

Dr Christopher Wells (*Anglican Communion Office*)

and

The Reverend Neil Vigers (*Anglican Communion Office*)

The Venerable Jonathan Gough (*Ripon, England*)

[<http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/comunione-anglicana/dialogo/arcic-iii/arcic-iii---communiques/2024-arcic-iii-communiqu--en-.html>]