

A - RC

THE INTERNATIONAL ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR UNITY AND MISSION January 22-29, 2024

Second IARCCUM Summit takes place in Rome and Canterbury
9 Feb 2024

The second summit meeting of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) took place in Rome and Canterbury from 22 to 29 January 2024. IARCCUM is an official commission of the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church, established to deepen the relationship between Anglicans and Catholics and promote shared mission, based on the significant degree of theological agreement that has been reached over sixty years of dialogue. The first IARCCUM summit took place in 2016. The 2024 event, with the theme *Growing Together*, gathered pairs of bishops, Catholic and Anglican, from 27 different countries around the world.

The summit began in Rome on 22 January, with introductions to the background and history of the commission and presentations by each bishop-pair on the ecclesial and ecumenical situations in their countries. On Tuesday 23 January, the Anglican office of Choral Evensong was celebrated in the Chapel of the Choir in St Peter's Basilica. Other elements of the Rome phase of the summit included a discussion on synodality in the two traditions and reflection on justice, peace and reconciliation, including testimonies about the challenging situations in their territories by the bishops from Sudan, South Sudan and the Holy Land.

Thursday 25 January, feast of the Conversion of St Paul and final day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, began with a discussion of the climate crisis, enriched by testimony from the bishop-pair from Brazil. At the Basilica of San Bartolomeo all' Isola, the 'Sanctuary of the New Martyrs', the bishops participated in an Anglican Sung Eucharist, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, His Grace Justin Welby, presiding and preaching. Later that afternoon, along with Christians from many other Christian traditions, they participated in Vespers at the Basilica of St Paul outside the Walls, presided by Pope Francis. At the end of the liturgy, the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury jointly commissioned the pairs of bishops for shared witness and mission.

On the morning of Friday 26 January, the bishops prayed in the church of San Gregorio al Celio, the church from where St Augustine was sent as a missionary to the people of England in 597. Accompanied by the Archbishop of Canterbury, they departed for England immediately after the service and that evening participated in a candle-lit pilgrimage around Canterbury Cathedral. A key element of the Canterbury phase of the summit was a panel presentation and discussion about safeguarding. Bishops heard in a series of presentations about the need for transparency and accountability and for compassionate listening to the experiences of victims/survivors of abuse by church personnel. The panel included a victim of childhood sexual abuse by a priest.

On the evening of Saturday 27 January, the bishops visited the Catholic parish church of St Thomas of Canterbury for Mass. The homily was delivered by an Anglican, Bishop Bruce Myers of Quebec. The following morning, they were in Canterbury Cathedral for Choral Eucharist. Mirroring the pattern of the evening before, the homily was delivered by a Catholic, Cardinal Stephen Chow of Hong Kong.

At the end of the summit, the bishops issued a final statement, entitled *Our Common Witness, Calling and Commitment*. [NB: French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese versions of the document will also be available soon]. In it, they affirmed: "We are sent to proclaim the joyful message of God's everlasting kingdom as pilgrim companions to one another on the missionary journey. We promise to proclaim the Good News of peace to those in places scourged by ongoing wars, and to those who live under the threat of violence; the Good News of mercy to those who live with want and with guilt; and the Good News of justice and restoration to those who are oppressed or carrying shame inflicted on them by others."

[www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/news/2024/2024-04-09-second-iarccum-summit.html]