

LLANDAFF PRESS RELEASE

The Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC-II) held its fourth plenary meeting at St. Michael's College, Llandaff from 26th August - 4th September 1986. At this meeting the Commission completed work on an agreed statement entitled Salvation and the Church. This is a statement of agreement on those issues of salvation and justification which gave rise to deep divisions between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century. The agreed statement acknowledges that the extent to which Anglicans and Roman Catholics have actually been in disagreement on this topic is itself a matter of debate. But the Commission addressed itself to this topic in response to the view that it was necessary for the two Communion to be already in agreement on this issue if it is to make further progress towards full communion of faith and sacramental life.

The document notes four areas of difficulty that surfaced at the time of the Reformation, namely the proper understanding of the faith through which we are justified; the correct understanding of the term justification together with the related concepts of righteousness and justice; the bearing of good works on salvation; and finally the role of the Church in the process of salvation.

The statement goes on to articulate a statement of faith on each of these topics which commands the assent of the members of the Commission. It is their view that this agreed statement is coherent with the official formularies to which each

Communion is committed. They also say that any outstanding differences of interpretation or ecclesiological emphasis are not such as can justify continuing separation between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

As with the Final Report of the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC-I) this statement will now be submitted to the authorities of both Churches for their consideration and evaluation.

The Llandaff meeting also had before it papers relating to its future agenda. These included a paper called Steps Towards Unity which was a study of the various steps and stages by which Anglicans and Roman Catholics might move closer together on the basis of the degree of unity that exists between them at the moment. The Commission also received and discussed a paper on renewing and restoring communion between our Churches. It became clear that the New Testament concept of koinonia or communion will become an increasingly important basis for the Commission's work.

One of the major tasks that lies before ARCIC-II is that of studying all that hinders progress towards mutual recognition of ministries between our two Churches. As is well known the ordination of women in some parts of the Anglican Communion is seen by the Catholic Church as a serious obstacle to such progress. For this reason the Commission received and discussed two papers which considered the question of how the Commission should deal with this difficult issue in the context of its work on mutual recognition of ministries.

It is clear that in the next few years the two related issues of Steps towards Unity and Reconciliation of Ministries will be central to the Commission's agenda.

The Commission received warm hospitality at St. Michael's Llandaff and completed a great deal of work. The next plenary meeting of the Commission will take place at Palazzola, near Rome from 1st - 10th September 1987.