

PRESS/MEDIA RELEASE

BISHOPS CALL FOR NEW STEPS ON THE WAY TO UNITY

Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops came away from an international meeting at Mississauga, Ontario, more resolved to do all in their power to build upon the considerable agreement in faith they already share. Those present came from 13 regions of the world and were convened by Cardinal Edward Cassidy, President of the Vatican's Council for promoting Christian Unity, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey.

After a week involving prayer together, worship, and a review of some 35 years of ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, the bishops are convinced that it is possible for Anglicans and Roman Catholics to mark a new stage in their search for unity.

While very aware of the well-known difficult problems that have to be faced before full unity is achieved, the bishops experienced and reviewed a degree of common faith during their time together, such that they believe greater cooperation and mission is possible than at present. They called for a Joint Commission to oversee the next steps and how relationships can develop further in different places.

At the top of the Commission's agenda will be the preparation of a joint affirmation of faith. This would formally express the degree of agreement that

already exists between Anglicans and Catholics. All at the Mississauga meeting believed that this extensive common faith needs to be officially acknowledged and celebrated, and that this should logically have consequences for the life of the two churches.

Because at least two bishops came from each of 13 regions around the world, the meeting had the chance to take a detailed look at the situation in a variety of places. All emphasised how greater unity would strengthen the mission of the Church of Christ. In their final hours together, each pair of bishops discussed how they could return home to foster greater cooperation and a fresh commitment to seeking unity. They will bring their ideas to their fellow bishops.

At the end of the meeting the participants will release a statement entitled *Communion in Mission*, which describes their experience together and commitment to a significant step forward.

They expressed a particular vote of thanks to the Roman Catholic and Anglican dioceses of Toronto and their bishops for all the help received in the arrangement of the meeting; and to the director and staff of the Queen of Apostles Centre for the very special welcome they had received.

Commenting on the week, the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Carey said it had been “a heartening and hopeful meeting which encourages us to press forward towards the visible unity of the Church”.

Cardinal Cassidy added: “If the experience we have had here could be more widely shared our relationship would progress more rapidly”.

One bishop commented: “We leave here with hearts filled with hope for greater unity”.

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Ends