

To My Venerable Brother
Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy
President of the Pontifical Council
for Promoting Christian Unity

I am pleased to send warm greetings through you to all taking part in the current Consultation between Anglican and Catholic Bishops being held at Mississauga near Toronto.

I greet with particular affection His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Dr George Carey, who together with you has called this special gathering. On several occasions I have had the joy of meeting His Grace, most notably when he visited Rome in 1996 and when we opened together the Holy Door of the Basilica of Saint Paul's Outside the Walls in Rome on 18 January this year. On each occasion we prayed fervently for the restoration of the full visible unity which is Christ's will for his followers.

I also greet in a special way my brother Cardinal Aloysius Ambrozic, and Anglican Bishop Terence Finlay of Ontario, who have welcomed all of you to Toronto, as well as those who have worked so hard to prepare this important meeting.

For more than thirty years the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church have been on a journey towards the restoration of unity, guided by the Holy Spirit who leads into all truth. In some places there have been very positive developments, as bonds have been strengthened through common prayer and joint action for the sake of the Gospel. In other places we are not so far along the road. Our international dialogue, ARCIC, has given real signs of hope that in the end our journey will not be in vain, even though new and serious obstacles have slowed our progress.

In our Common Declaration of December 1996, the Archbishop of Canterbury and I stated that it might "be opportune at this stage in our journey to consult together about how the relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church is to progress". I am happy to learn that your meeting in Mississauga in this Jubilee Year of the Lord's Incarnation is in response to that suggestion. I pray that it will bear lasting fruit.

I thank all those who have so generously travelled long distances and given up their time in order to take part in the Consultation. The search for unity in truth, which will enable us to preach the Gospel powerfully and without reserve, is a quest for a pearl of great price. Together with all those taking part I pray that the Lord will grant you his gifts of wisdom, patience, repentance and love, so that the spiritual bonds that have always linked Catholics and Anglicans may be strengthened and, where possible, deepened-even further.

From the Vatican, 9 May 2000