

Malines Conversations Group – Communiqué, March 25, 2013

From March 17 to 20, a group of Anglican and Catholic theologians gathered at the Monastery of Chevetogne in Belgium to initiate a new ecumenical exploration under the title ‘Malines Conversations Group’. Desiring to stand in the tradition of the Malines Conversations, which were convened by Cardinal Mercier of Mechelen (Malines) in the 1920's, the Group's first meeting included reflection on socio-cultural, liturgical and ecclesial developments from the time of the Malines Conversations to the present, and on the anthropological dimension of liturgical experience in our two communions.

During the meeting, the Conversation participants joined the monks of Chevetogne for their worship, both in the Byzantine and Latin rite traditions. They also went on pilgrimage to Mechelen and joined in prayer at the tomb of Cardinal Mercier.

Like the Malines Conversations of the 1920's, the current dialogue is informal and not officially sponsored by Anglican and Catholic Churches, though it has been organized in consultation with and has received the blessing of Church authorities. Archbishop Rowan Williams and Cardinal Godfried Danneels have agreed to serve as Patrons of the Conversations. At the recommendation of those responsible for coordinating ecumenical relations in the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, the Malines Conversations Group will remain in communication with both the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM).

Though not intentionally planned this way, the meeting was held during the same historic week as the inauguration of the Petrine Ministry of Pope Francis and the enthronement of Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, and was imbued with the hope which those events carried for the life of our two communions, and the future of our relations.

Anglican participants:

The Revd Dr. Jennifer Cooper, College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, UK
The Revd Dr James Hawkey, Westminster Abbey, London, UK
The Revd Dr Simon Jones, Chaplain of Merton College, Oxford, UK
The Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, Dean of King's College, Cambridge, UK
The Revd Dr Michael Nai-Chiu Poon, member of ARCIC III, Singapore
Canon Dr Nicholas Sagovsky, member of ARCIC III, London, UK

Catholic participants:

Bishop Donald Bolen, Catholic Co-Chair of IARCCUM, Saskatoon, Canada
Dr Joris Geldhof, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
Dr. Maryana Hnyp, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
Revd Dr Keith Pecklers, S.J., Gregorian University, Rome
Revd Dr Thomas Pott o.s.b., Monk of Chevetogne, University of Sant'Anselmo, Rome
Revd Cyrille Vael o.s.b., Monk of Chevetogne

The Malines Conversations Group members expressed their heartfelt thanks to Abbot Philippe Vanderheyden and the monks of Chevetogne for the extraordinary welcome extended to them. Their aim is to meet again next March at a location in the United Kingdom.