

PRESS RELEASE      4th September 1974

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission met from August 27th to September 5th at Centro Mariapoli near Grottaferrata to begin their discussion of the question of authority in the Church. This was the third of the three major subjects of dialogue outlined in the Malta Report, the Joint Preparatory Commission (1968), and agreed in a letter of the late Cardinal Bea to Archbishop Ramsey under the title "the nature of Authority in the Church and its concrete form in the teaching authority, Petrine primacy, etc." It had already been the subject of a paper produced at the Commission's meeting at Venice in 1970 and subsequently printed, in which some general principles were accompanied by an attempt to set side by side a Roman Catholic and an Anglican view of authority within the Church seen as community.

A large number of papers were either directly commissioned or adopted for use during the preceding year, and the Commission had reason to be grateful to the authors of those studies, which provided an exceptionally broad basis from which to begin joint reflection.

On the general nature of authority in the Church and on the purposes which it should serve, the Commission became more clearly aware of possible lines of convergence which had already been glimpsed at Venice. While historic differences about authority in the concrete persist and there was no attempt to obscure or minimise them, the meeting ended with reason to hope that we might, on the basis of the work already done and on that of some precise studies to be commissioned shortly, carry our process of convergence into this field also with the prospect of reaching agreement in faith.

The Commission was honoured and grateful to be received in audience by Pope Paul VI at Castelgandolfo and to hear from him words of hope and encouragement. We wish also to record our deep appreciation of the devoted care by which the members of the Focolare Movement made our stay at Mariapoli so agreeable. The Commission will meet to continue its work at Oxford in a year's time.