

Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission

[A photograph accompanying this article can be found at:

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/articles/37/50/acns3765.cfm>]

The Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) met from 28 January - 3 February at the Palisades Retreat Center, Seattle, under the co-chairmanship of the Most Revd Alexander J. Brunett, Archbishop of Seattle, and the Most Revd Peter Carnley, Archbishop of Perth and Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia. The Commission is extremely grateful for the generous hospitality of Archbishop Alex Brunett, who welcomed the Commission to his Archdiocese and diocesan Retreat Center. A special welcome was extended to Archbishop Peter Carnley, who had been appointed as Anglican Co-Chair following the resignation of the Most Revd Frank Griswold in November 2003.

The Commission completed work on the text of the Seattle Statement, "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ", which it is now submitting to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and to the Archbishop of Canterbury together with the Anglican Consultative Council. The Commission hopes that the sponsoring bodies will be able to move towards the publication of the document in due course.

The publication of "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ" will bring to completion the second phase of work of the Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission, which was mandated in 1982 by Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Robert Runcie. In the course of the last twenty years, the Commission has published four agreed statements - Salvation and the Church (1987), The Church as Communion (1991), Life in Christ (1994) and The Gift of Authority (1999). In 1999, the Commission began work on a consideration of the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life and doctrine of the Church.

The Church's understanding of Mary has been a subject of deep controversy between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Discussion at Seattle has placed the Roman Catholic dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Mary, and how they may relate to any future restoration of Communion, within the broader context of Scriptural and theological reflection on Mary. Following its established methodology, the Commission has sought to go behind entrenched positions, and to articulate a common approach to the subject under discussion.

The meeting concluded with an ecumenical Celebration of Vespers for the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the Presentation of Christ in the Temple) in St James' Cathedral, Seattle.

Bishop Brian Farrell and Canon Gregory Cameron, speaking on behalf of Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Canon John L Peterson, Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council, expressed heartfelt

gratitude to current and former members of the Commission for their devoted and sustained hard work over a period of twenty years on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. They also expressed the commitment of the Pontifical Council and the Anglican Communion to the ongoing theological dialogue, and looked forward to the establishment of a new Commission in the near future.

The Commission expresses its gratitude to Professor Rozanne Elder for her work over several years in the preparation of worship resources at Commission meetings. It would also like to thank not only Archbishop Alex Brunett, but also the staff of the Palisades Center and the Archdiocese of Seattle for the bountiful and generous hospitality which had been extended to it.

2 February 2004

The members of ARCIC are:

Anglicans

The Most Revd Peter Carnley (Archbishop of Perth and Primate of Australia, Co-Chair)
The Rt Revd John Baycroft
Professor Rozanne Elder
The Revd Canon Jonathan Gough
The Revd Professor Jaci Maraschin
The Revd Dr John Muddiman
The Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali
The Revd Professor Nicholas Sagovsky
The Revd Dr Charles Sherlock
The Revd Canon Gregory Cameron (Anglican Communion Office, Co-Secretary)

Roman Catholics

The Most Revd Alexander J Brunett (Archbishop of Seattle, Co-Chair)
Sister Sara Butler, MSBT
The Revd Dr Peter Cross
The Revd Dr Adelbert Denaux
The Most Revd Brian Farrell LC
The Rt Revd Malcolm McMahon OP
The Revd Professor Charles Morerod OP
The Revd Professor Liam Walsh OP
The Revd Canon Donald Bolen (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Co-Secretary)

Consultant

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