

COMMUNIQUÉ

ANGLICAN–ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

Plenary Meeting in Melbourne, 5-11 October 2025

The Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III) held its annual plenary meeting in Melbourne, Australia, from 5 to 11 October 2025. The meeting had originally been scheduled for May 2025 but was postponed following the death of Pope Francis. The meeting was hosted by the Commission's Anglican co-chairman, Archbishop Philip Freier, the recently retired Archbishop of Melbourne.



This was the final in-person plenary meeting of the Commission. The Commission has been working since 2019 on the second part of its mandate to examine how the Church local, regional and universal discerns right ethical teaching. The Commission's drafting sub-committee had held two in-person meetings in London since the 2024 plenary meeting in Strasbourg, France, and had circulated a number of drafts and solicited feedback from members during that period. During their week together, members of the Commission reflected in detail on a third draft of an Agreed Statement for this phase of the dialogue. When published, this Agreed Statement will complement the document published by ARCIC III in 2017, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church. Local, Regional and Universal*.

Since the beginning of this third phase of ARCIC, the Commission has consciously adopted an approach of receptive ecumenical learning, whereby each dialogue partner seeks to identify elements of church life found in the other tradition which might be gifts for the enhancement of its own tradition. Also in this phase, ARCIC III included two case studies as part of its work. These case studies, on Enslavement and Contraception, are intended to be a lens for moral learning from our different histories and a mirror for looking at our respective traditions' own woundedness and failures.

The Commission devoted a great deal of its time in Melbourne seeking first to engage more intentionally in receptive ecumenical reflection on what each of our traditions can learn from the other regarding ethical discernment, and secondly to reflection of the experience of the Commission itself over the past six years of shared study and discussion of moral reasoning. The Commission's work in this regard was enriched by re-engaging with the recent work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches on Churches and Moral Discernment, and the analytical tool developed in the third volume of that work. This intensive work undertaken in Melbourne led members to the view that further refinement of the draft should be carried out so as to highlight these themes more fully. Further drafting work will be carried out in the coming months, which the full Commission will review in early 2026.

The members of the Commission prayed together every morning and evening, alternating between Anglican and Roman rites. In doing so they experienced both the joy of shared prayer and the pain of eucharistic separation. The Commission is grateful to Mthr Cara Greenham Hancock and the team at St Peter's Eastern Hill for providing spaces for its meeting and for its Anglican celebrations of the Eucharist, and to Mons. Stuart Hall and the team at St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral for providing the space for its Roman Catholic celebrations. Alongside its work on the Agreed Statement, the Commission had a number of opportunities to engage with local churches in the Melbourne area. On Monday 6 October members visited the residence of the Anglican Archbishops of Melbourne for Evening Prayer and supper. The following day, they joined the Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral for Choral Evensong and were joined for supper afterwards by some students from local theological colleges. On Wednesday 8 October, following an afternoon visit to the Yarra Valley, the Commission visited the Cistercian abbey of Tarrawarra, where they joined the monastic community for Vespers, supper and Compline.

Friday 9 October, which was both the last day of the meeting and the final opportunity for the members of the Commission to meet in person, was also the 80th birthday of one of the consultants to ARCIC III, Bishop Christopher Hill. Bishop Hill has been involved in the work of ARCIC since the mid-1970s and is in the unique position of having served on its secretariat, as a member, and more recently as a consultant. Members of the Commission were delighted to be able to salute Bishop Hill on his birthday and to pay tribute to his unparalleled contribution to the work of Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue over half a century. Bishop Hill presided and preached at the Eucharist on Friday morning, and in the evening he was honoured during a festive dinner, for which several representatives of local churches joined the Commission.



A message of congratulations from the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony Poggio, was read by the Anglican co-secretary, Dr Christopher Wells, after which there were presentations to Bishop Hill and his wife Hilary.

The members of the Commission are grateful to God for their experiences in Melbourne and for the experience of working and walking together over the past six years. They look forward to presenting the fruit of that work to our churches early in 2026.

MEMBERS OF ARCIC III

Co-Chairs

The Right Reverend Dr Philip Freier, Former Archbishop of Melbourne, Australia
The Most Reverend Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, England

Anglican Members

Dr Moeawa Callaghan (The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia)
The Reverend Dr Isaías Chachine (The Anglican Church of Southern Africa) *absent for this meeting*
The Right Reverend Garth Minott (The Church of the Province of the West Indies)
The Right Reverend Linda Nicholls (The Anglican Church of Canada)
The Reverend Dr Alexander Ross (The Anglican Church of Australia)
The Reverend Canon Dr Peter Sedgwick (The Church in Wales)

Consultants

The Reverend Dr Stewart Clem (The Episcopal Church)
The Right Reverend Christopher Hill (The Church of England)

Catholic Members

The Reverend Dr Albino Barrera OP (Providence College, Providence RI, USA) *absent for this meeting*
The Reverend Dr Paul Béré SJ (Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome) *absent for this meeting*
Dr Kristin Colberg (St John's University, Collegeville MN, USA)
Professor Sigrid Müller (University of Vienna, Austria)
Dr Emmanuel Nathan (Australian Catholic University)
The Reverend Dr Vimal Tirimanna CSsR (Accademia Alfonsiana, Rome & National Seminary, Kandy, Sri Lanka)

Consultants

The Reverend Anthony Curren (Darlington, England)
Professor Paul Murray (University of Durham, England)

WCC Consultant

Professor Dr Myriam Wijlens (University of Erfurt, Germany)

Staff

The work of the Commission was supported by the two Co-Secretaries:
The Reverend Martin Browne OSB (Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity)
Canon Dr Christopher Wells (Anglican Communion Office);
and by
The Reverend Neil Vigers (Anglican Communion Office)
The Venerable Jonathan Gough