Indirizzo di saluto ai membri della Commissione internazionale anglicana-cattolica (ARCIC III)

Monastero di Bose 17-27 maggio 2011 — versione inglese

It is with profound joy and in a spirit of prayer and thanksgiving to the Lord that the Community of Bose welcomes you and accompanies you in this demanding dialogue session of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, which opens here the third phase of its deliberations, in obedience to the mandate conferred on it by pope Benedict XVI and the archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.

The themes that you will treat during these days — "The Church as local and universal communion", and, in particular, "how, in communion, the local and universal Church comes to discern the just ethical teaching" — are at the heart of the road that the Lord wills towards unity and to which are committed in various measures all the Churches today. These themes, however, also question in depth the sense of Christian presence in a humanity torn by divisions and conflicts, uncertain of its future, and often tempted to despair. It is just in the exercise of communion, that *koinonia* that was also the initial point of Anglican-Roman Catholic deliberations in their first phase, that Christians are called today to narrate among men the face of God revealed in Jesus Christ, to seek a language and behavior comprehensible to those who have not yet come to the Christian faith, to witness to the Christian difference that stimulates the various cultures and raises a prophetic voice against every threat to the liberty and to the dignity of the human person, to exercise a spiritual operation of discernment according to the exhortation of St Paul: "Examine everything and keep what is good" (1Th 5,21).

Only in the assiduous seeking of that communion that has faithfulness to God's will as the source of inspiration of every church decision is it possible to discern together "the just ethical teaching" even where various pastoral demands sometimes lead to choices that apparently are irreconcilable among them and to a more difficult recognition of the existing communion.

It is for us a motive for joy to welcome this session of dialogue, on account of the acquaintance and affection that bind us to the Churches in England, in particular on account of the fraternal ties with numerous monastic communities that belong both to the Catholic Church and to the Anglican Communion, which feel keenly the Lord's appeal to unity between our Churches and for this engage their prayer, their work, their life.

Friendship with the present archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has allowed us to know closely the profound desire of unity that animates the Churches of the Anglican Communion, perhaps called upon to a dialogue with both shores of Western Christianity today more than ever and, at the same time, to cast a privileged bridge towards Orthodoxy. I think that the theme itself of this new phase of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, the Church as communion on the local and on the universal level and its relation to ethical problems, has a particular importance for other theological dialogues, such as that between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches.

Our community has always followed with prayer and incessant invocation of unity the work of the first and second phases of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. It is now happy to be able to show concretely its support of your work.

The concluding words of the second phase of deliberations of ARCIC on *The gift of authority* have been for us a sign of hope on the road to unity: "Anglicans are open to and desire a recovery and re-reception under certain clear conditions of the exercise of universal primacy by the Bishop of Rome; Roman Catholics are open to and desire a re-reception of the exercise of primacy by the Bishop of Rome and the offering of such a ministry to the whole Church of God" (*The Gift of Authority*, 62).

We pledge our prayer that this desire of conversion of one's own heart towards others, this "Amen" said together by Anglicans and Catholics to the only Lord, may dilate and thus may widen and strengthen the web of unity which is woven from communion with God and reconciliation with each other" (*The Gift of Authority*, 63). This is also our hope.

We are grateful to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians and to the Department of Unity, Faith and Order of the Anglican Communion for having wanted to choose our Monastery as a propitious place for their fraternal dialogue. From our part we assure them already of our prayers and our engagement so that the meeting of the Commission may be held in the best possible way and bring fruits according to the Lord's will.