



*A Letter to the Clergy and Faithful of
the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina
& the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle*



Dear friends in Christ,

Following on the recent celebrations of the centennial of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina and the 125th anniversary of the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle, we are pleased to announce that our two faith communities are entering into a covenantal relationship. The covenant will be signed by us, Archbishop of Regina and Bishop of Qu'Appelle, in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, on Sunday, January 23, 2011, at 3 p.m. at a joint service in St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Regina. All the faithful are welcome to attend this service.

This covenant represents a significant stage in the evolving relationship between our two Churches. For over forty years, the Roman Catholic Church and the world-wide Anglican Communion have engaged in serious theological dialogue, resulting in agreed statements on key issues such as the Eucharist, authority in the Church, ministry and ordination, and the place of Mary in the life and doctrine of the Church. Dialogue continues on matters which still separate us. In Canada, the two Churches enjoy substantial areas of practical cooperation. Here in Saskatchewan, friendship and understanding have steadily grown between our two dioceses over the past four decades. We believe it is now time to develop and expand this positive relationship.

To this end, the solemn covenant we shall sign commits the two dioceses to specific initiatives. It also encourages our parishes, clergy and lay people to undertake joint activities in worship, mission, education and social justice. It is our hope that, in praying and working together, our two faith communities will deepen their understanding and practice of Christ's commission to proclaim the Gospel to the world.

We ask you to read and study the text of the covenant, which is available from both of our diocesan offices. We cordially invite you to attend the service on January 23 at which we shall sign the covenant.

In the Epiphany season, we reflect on the manifestation of Christ to the world. It is an appropriate time for us, as Roman Catholics and Anglicans, to publicly proclaim our fundamental baptismal unity in the Lord.

Yours in Christ,

✠ Daniel Bohan
Archbishop of Regina

✠ Gregory Kerr-Wilson
Bishop of Qu'Appelle

Epiphany 2011

A Covenant between the Archdiocese of Regina and the Diocese of Qu'Appelle

On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle and the 100th anniversary of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina, we, the bishops of these dioceses, together with our people and responding to the call of the Holy Spirit, wish to enter into a covenantal relationship. In doing so, we are building on more than 40 years of actively seeking reconciliation between our two Communion on an international level, and also on the guidance and leadership of our local churches in fostering those relations, beginning with conversations and friendship between Archbishop Frederic Jackson and Archbishop Michael Cornelius O'Neill. This has continued on through successive bishops and faith communities to our own day.

Honouring the teaching and prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ that all may be one (John 17:11, 21), we give thanks to the Father and rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit working within us which can do infinitely more than we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). In the name of our churches, we solemnly enter into this covenant.

I. The faith we share

Already in 1977, Archbishop of Canterbury Donald Coggan and Pope Paul VI signed a Common Declaration, in which they affirmed the following about our churches:

“[we] have come to recognize, to value and to give thanks for a common faith in God our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit; our common baptism into Christ; our sharing of the Holy Scriptures, of the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, the Chalcedonian definition [on Christ’s full humanity and full divinity], and the teaching of the Fathers; our common Christian inheritance for many centuries with its living traditions of liturgy, theology, spirituality and mission” (§2).

Through our international dialogue, we have reached significant agreement on the nature of the eucharist and ministry. We have also reached convergence on authority in the Church, the nature and mission of the Church, salvation and justification, discipleship and morals, and more recently, the place of Mary, Mother of Jesus, in the life and doctrine of the Church.¹ In Canada, we rejoice in our use of a common lectionary, in our joint participation in theological and pastoral formation in some places, in our national theological dialogue and in the meetings of our bishops on regional and national levels.

¹. The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), in its first phase of dialogue (1970-1981), produced *The Final Report* (London: CTS/SPCK, 1982), which included the statements *Eucharistic Doctrine* (1971); *Ministry and Ordination* (1973); *Authority in the Church I* (1976); an Elucidation of each of these three texts (*Eucharist and Ministry Elucidations* dated 1979, *Authority in the Church I Elucidation* dated 1981; and *Authority in the Church II* (1981). The second phase of dialogue produced agreed statements entitled *Salvation and the Church* (1986), *Church as Communion* (1990), *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church* (1993), *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III* (1998), and *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (2005).

Today, we no longer feel ourselves as strangers in each other's houses of worship. Despite remaining obstacles which we continue to address in dialogue, we have come a long way, making considerable progress in our relations.

And yet, as the recent international document *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* stated, "we have only just begun to give tangible expression to the incontrovertible elements of shared faith" (§7). In that document, we express our conviction that "it is the time to bridge the gap between the elements of faith we hold in common and the tangible expression of that shared belief in our ecclesial lives" (§10). "Even in a time of uncertainty, the mission given us by Christ obliges and compels us to seek to engage more deeply and widely in a partnership in mission, coupled with common witness and joint prayer" (§7).

II. Moving Forward in Mission

Here in Saskatchewan, Anglicans and Roman Catholics have enjoyed the regular meetings of our bishops since the 1970s; meetings were expanded to include Lutheran and Ukrainian Catholic bishops in the 1990s. In 1999, the Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches joined with the Franciscan community in setting up an ecumenical board to give direction to St. Michael's Retreat House in Lumsden. This is a sign and indication of what is possible when we give tangible expression to the faith we share.

The Spirit now calls our Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches to a new stage in jointly building up the body of Christ in our dioceses.

To that end, our relationship now moves us to **commit our two dioceses to the following:**

1. Hold a prayer service each year, ideally during the Easter season, alternating between the two cathedrals, with our bishops present. This would take the form of an annual service of reconciliation, with participants (planning, officiants, servers, lectors, choir, etc) from both churches.
2. Commit ourselves to regularly remembering the other church and its leaders, and our relations, in our intercessions at each Sunday eucharist.
3. Join together on a justice-related initiative locally and/or sponsor a justice-related project where our churches are working together in the developing world.
4. Hold joint meetings with First Nations elders in order to promote reconciliation and healing.
5. Commit ourselves to maintaining communication between us when any new development in one of our churches has implications or challenges for the other.

We also encourage the following at the diocesan level and in communities where there are both Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes. Whenever possible, other Christian churches and their ministers would fully share in these proposed activities and initiatives:

1. Joint activities in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity;
2. Common services in Advent and Lent;
3. Joint witness in the name of Christ to people in particular spiritual need, including those who have lapsed from regular attendance at worship;
4. Parish welcome and support for inter-church couples and families;
5. Bishops acting together when feasible: for example, issuing joint statements on current public pastoral concerns;
6. Clergy acting together when feasible: for example, holding occasional study days; arranging a joint component in our parish programs for baptism preparation;
7. Youth leadership: possibility of a joint youth group forming or occasional jointly-organized events with our youth;
8. Occasional workshops on aspects of the liturgy which would allow us to learn liturgical best practices from each other (e.g. welcoming/greeting, music, lectors, servers, those preparing intercessory prayers);
9. Meetings of those with parallel ministries: pastors; deacons; lay leadership/lay ministry; musicians; healing ministry; bereavement; church wardens/vestries/parish councils;
10. Exploration of common texts – for example, study of Scripture, study of our joint A-RC statements, e.g. *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*;
11. Social occasions following joint liturgical events, to offer opportunities for fellowship;
12. Fostering friendly relations and regular communication between neighbouring Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes and their clergy; they are encouraged to enter into parish covenants and hold annual events together;
13. Justice issues - speaking out together on areas of common concern where we can act together: prison ministry; relations with First Nations communities; healing ministry, chaplaincies, nursing homes;
14. Preparation for mission: coming together to identify a specific concern in the community and provide gracious outreach, then joining together to bring relief and Christ's healing.

III: Carrying the Covenant Forward

Bilateral relations between churches are always at the service of a broader vision of the unity of all Christ's disciples. Therefore it is our hope that this covenant could be the base of an ever-widening covenantal relationship among Christian communities.

We specifically extend an invitation to the Saskatchewan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, and the other Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses in Saskatchewan to consider entering into a renewed version of this covenant.

Furthermore, we hold many common elements of faith with other Christian churches in this province, most fundamentally: a Trinitarian faith into which we are baptized and which we profess in the Apostles' Creed; a common recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour to whom we commit ourselves in discipleship; common sources of authority in the Old and New Testaments and in the witness of the early Church which shape our mission; and a common hope and prayer grounded in God's presence and action in the world and the promise of God's Kingdom. We would therefore invite other Christian churches into a conversation about the prospect of entering into a broader multilateral covenantal relationship.

Conclusion

We give our thanks to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the gifts we have received and which we have come to recognize in each other, for the joy we have come to know in our life in Jesus Christ, and for the renewed and life-giving relationship which has come to us from the Holy Spirit. To God be the glory, in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:21).