**GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY SYMPOSIUM**

**5th September 2016**

I am delighted to be part of the sequence of gatherings that has been organised by the Anglican Centre here in Rome today and tomorrow.  The timing of these gatherings results from the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Centre itself and we should see this in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and as an acknowledgement of a significant ecumenical part of its legacy.

The Anglican Centre, along with the role of its Director as the Archbishop of Canterbury's personal representative to the Holy See, can very properly be thought of as one of the ecumenical fruits of the Council - among the fruits, to use Cardinal Kasper's phrase, that we have been encouraged and increasingly equipped to harvest in recent years.  But we also need to recall that the Second Vatican Council made it possible for other Churches and ecclesial communities to develop ecclesial relationships with the Catholic Church for the first time on the basis of a new theological and magisterial understanding of their own ecclesial identity.

For relationships to develop and thrive at the ecclesial level they have to be accompanied by an ecumenism of the heart.  Personal contacts between theologians, Religious and Church leaders were and still are needed for our ecclesial communion to deepen - and no personal contacts have been as important to the progress of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations as the friendship that has grown between successive Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury.

But relations between Archbishops of Canterbury and Popes while always personal can never be wholly private (and the same is true for Anglican and Catholic bishops and others in positions of Church leadership).  Their actions in relation to one another, no less than their joint statements or dialogues, are always invested with a communal and ecclesial character.

That is why gestures of friendship while often spontaneous have also on occasion been carefully considered in order to determine how they might be read and interpreted.  Sometimes such gestures, while personal and expressive of the friendship that lies at their core, also carry theological significance. They have the capacity to carry recognition of theological realities that written formularies have yet to express adequately or to speak of at all. But to be authentic they must flow from theological convictions that are rooted within the traditions from which the they have emerged.

What do I mean by such theologically significant gestures of friendship? I would like to offer three examples - in the hope that we may witness further examples in the years ahead.  One of the earliest and most striking in its impact was the gift of an episcopal ring to Archbishop Michael Ramsey by Blessed Pope Paul VI during the visit that was to prove such an encouragement to the Anglican-Roman Catholic international dialogue still in its infancy. In a custom that highlights the ecclesial significance of this gift this ring has been passed from Archbishop to Archbishop and it seems very fitting that Archbishop Justin has worn it on this current visit.

The giving of that ring carries with it the Second Vatican Council's recognition of the continuity of episcopal ministry within the Anglican Communion together with a profound respect and gratitude for the fruitfulness of that ministry during the last five centuries. It reflects the ecclesial kinship that we are beginning to re-discover thanks to the work of IARCCUM and which has manifested itself through the increasing number of joint meetings that enable us to share our episcopal insights and to offer one another frame fraternal support.

Of a different order but no less arresting in its impact was the invitation of Pope St John Paul II to Archbishop George Carey and the Ecumenical Patriarch to assist him in opening the Holy Door at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls at the beginning of the Great Jubilee Year in 2000. This was personal invitation to participate in an ecclesial event - a characteristically Catholic expression of the theology of redemption, with its unblocking and opening of jubilee doors for pilgrims to pass through.

Can we also detect a recognition that, while the Catholic Church is universal in its scope and embrace, there is nevertheless a missing element - not only an eschatological incompleteness but a sense that all those in Communion with Rome also need the Churches of East and West in order to be fully faithful to the gift and mark of Catholicity? The presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Canterbury - as brother bishops with worldwide responsibilities - pointed towards that fullness of communion for which we continue to work and pray.

The third theologically and ecclesially significant gesture of friendship was similar but perhaps more expected, more familiar to us. I was present, during the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelisation, at the Mass celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Opening of the Second Vatican Council. It was no less significant that Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Rowan Williams were at the side of Pope Francis to celebrate the Council whose legacy had ensured the place and presence of our ecumenical partners within e life of the Catholic Church.

So, the series of events organised today and tomorrow here in Rome will serve to highlight the unfolding and developing patterns that characterise the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion worldwide.  Alongside the Golden Jubilee of the Anglican Centre, the most encouraging of these events will be the joint witness of Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin and the commissioning of nineteen pairs of Anglican and Catholic bishops from across the world.

Despite the fresh challenges that have emerged within more recent years the commitment of our two Communions to pray and work for the unity that our Lord wills for us is greater than ever.  The obstacles to unity that we have encountered have made us more aware that the road ahead is a long one, much longer than those who initiated our dialogue nearly fifty years ago might have expected.  But those fresh challenges have also brought a sharper focus to our dialogue and a determination to find ever more creative ways of witnessing to what we hold in common and of shaping the life of our two communions towards the unchanging goal of full, visible unity.

One of those creative ways of witnessing is the commissioning of pairs of bishops from nineteen different parts of the world where Anglican-Catholic co-operation is already well established or where it can be developed and strengthened.  The mandate that they will receive from Pope Francis and Archbishop Welby will authorise and equip them to promote a wider range of opportunities for parishes and dioceses, pastors, Religious and Church leaders to work and witness together locally and nationally.

Among the bishops from England to be commissioned are the Anglican Bishop of Truro, Bishop Tim Thornton and the Catholic Bishop of Plymouth, Bishop Mark O’Toole.  Apart from encouraging our on-going national dialogue (the English Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue known as English ARC) they will be keen to foster some practical forms of co-operation among our bishops, especially following the national meeting of Anglican and Catholic bishops which is due to take place in Birmingham next January.

When Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin meet this week they will encourage and give fresh energy to the work of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) and The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) as the two complementary bodies that seek to carry forward our joint commitment to work and witness together in mission and service (IARCCUM) and the theological dialogue that seeks agreement about our ecclesial identity and mission (ARCIC).

ARCIC is now in the third phase of its work, responding to the new mandate we received in 2010 – a mandate that falls into three parts.  With my Co-Chairman, Archbishop David ARCIC was asked first to gather together the five agreed statements of our predecessors in ARCIC II with a narrative that describes their genesis and purpose as well as their reception to date within both Communions.  Then, drawing on the existing corpus of all the agreed statements, ARCIC was mandated to study the nature and mission of the Church as communion, local and universal.  Finally, we have been asked to consider how as local and universal communion the Church comes to discern right ethical teaching.

ARCIC has now completed the first of these tasks.  We shall present to the Archbishop and the Holy Father the single volume of the Agreed Statements of ARCIC II, under the title *Looking to a Church Fully Reconciled*, so that the formal process of reception by the Anglican Provinces and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church can begin.  We have to be realistic about the challenges this may pose.  It cannot be taken for granted that the pattern of response within our two Communions to the Agreed Statements of ARCIC twenty or thirty years ago will still reflect the status of their reception today.  It is possible that some of the authoritative bodies and representatives responsible for receiving ARCIC's work today will not share the understanding and judgment of their predecessors.

The story of the last fifty years of ecumenical dialogue, joint work and witness echoes the pattern of many friendships.  As a friendship develops and deepens it often leads beyond the discoveries about each other towards unexpected discoveries about ourselves.  The better we come to know our friends and are known by them the more clearly we see the truth about who we are, reflected back through our encounters with one another.

By the very fact of their meeting Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin will give fresh energy and a renewed sense of hope to the work of ARCIC and IARCCUM in sustaining the face-to-face character of dialogue, together with the side-by-side ecumenism of joint social outreach, mission and witness.  As the Anglican Centre in Rome celebrates its Golden Jubilee, may our ever-growing friendship in Christ enable us to respond with renewed commitment to the prayer of our Lord *that they may all be one.*

+Bernard Longley

5th October 2016