

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MALINES CONVERSATIONS GROUP

Communiqué, 4 April 2014

An international group of eight Anglican and eight Catholic theologians representing nine countries and four Anglican provinces, met from March 30 to April 3 in Canterbury. Called “The Malines Conversations Group,” participants continued their deliberations on various aspects of Anglican-Catholic liturgical and sacramental theology which they had begun last year at the Benedictine Monastery of Chevetogne in Belgium. Like the original Malines Conversations of the 1920s hosted by the then Archbishop of Malines-Bruxelles Cardinal Mercier, this is an informal dialogue and not officially sponsored by the Anglican and Catholic Churches, though it has been organized in consultation with and has received the blessing of both the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and Lambeth Palace.

This year, the group was joined by its co-patrons, retired Archbishop of Malines-Bruxelles Cardinal Godfried Danneels, and former Archbishop of Canterbury The Rt Revd and Rt Hon The Lord Williams of Oystermouth, each of whom made presentations. Participants were received at Lambeth Palace by Archbishop Justin Welby together with the Archbishop of Westminster Cardinal Vincent Nichols. In their joint presentation, the two Archbishops stressed the importance of this theological dialogue, working in collaboration with ARCIC III (the Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission) and IARCCUM (the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission). Indeed, Cardinal Nichols and Archbishop Welby spoke of the ways in which this group can serve as a theological resource – a “laboratory” -- both for the work of ARCIC and IARCCUM. The Malines Conversations Group includes five members of ARCIC including one of its co-chairs, and two members of the IARCCUM coordinating committee including one of its co-chairs.

This year’s conversations explored contemporary Anglican-Roman Catholic relations notably through the lens of “Memory, Identity, and Difference,” beginning with a consideration of the theme of the original Malines Conversations, “United, not Absorbed.” Other topics included liturgy as dangerous memory; the ethics of liturgy; the spiritual renewal of our Churches; the changing face of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism; memory, tradition, and the Church’s future.” At the House of Lords, participants were received by a Roman Catholic peer, Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield, who addressed the group on the subject of faith and culture in Great Britain.

At Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop of Canterbury stressed the importance of pilgrimage in our ecumenical relations – a poignant concept as members chose this year’s venue precisely to make an ecumenical pilgrimage to Canterbury to visit the tomb of St. Thomas a Becket, and to Westminster Abbey to reverence the tomb of St. Edward the

Confessor. At both Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, the Malines Conversations Group joined those communities for Evensong. The group was also hosted at dinner in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey by its Dean, The Very Reverend John Hall, and then on the following evening in Canterbury at the Deanery, hosted by the Dean, The Very Reverend Robert Willis.

The Group's Steering Committee is chaired by The Revd. Dr. Thomas Pott, O.S.B. of the Monastery of Chevetogne, along with The Revd. Dr. James Hawkey of Westminster Abbey, and the Revd. Dr. Keith Pecklers, S.J. of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. A third meeting is scheduled for March, 2015.

Anglican Participants:

The Revd. Dr. Jennifer Cooper, College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, UK
Bishop Jonathan Goodall, Ebbsfleet, UK
The Revd. Dr. James Hawkey, Westminster Abbey, London, UK
The Revd. Dr. Simon Jones, Chaplain of Merton College, Oxford, UK
The Revd. Dr. Jeremy Morris, Dean of King's College, Cambridge, UK
Archbishop David Moxon, co-Chair of ARCIC III, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre, Rome, Italy
The Revd. Dr. Michael Nai-Chiu Poon, member of ARCIC III, Singapore
Canon David Richardson, Melbourne, Australia
Canon Dr. Nicholas Sagovsky, member of ARCIC III, London, UK

Catholic Participants:

Bishop Donald Bolen, Co-Chair of IARCCUM, Saskatoon, Canada
The Revd. Anthony Currer, Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, Vatican City
Dr. Joris Geldhof, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
Dr. Maryana Hnyp, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
Dr. Paul Murray, Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University, Durham, UK
The Revd. Dr. Keith Pecklers, S.J., Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, Italy
The Revd. Dr. Thomas Pott, O.S.B., Monastery of Chevetogne; Ateneo Sant'Anselmo, Rome, Italy
The Revd. Cyrille Vael, O.S.B., Monastery of Chevetogne.

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