

COMMUNIQUÉ – THE MALINES CONVERSATIONS GROUP

The Malines Conversation Group held its Sixth Meeting at the San Alfonso Retreat House, Long Branch New Jersey on 8th-12th April 2018.

This is an international group of Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians committed to dialogue and unity. The group takes its name and inspiration from the original Malines Conversations of the 1920s. These early informal conversations, held between a small group of British Anglicans and European Roman Catholics, were made possible because of the bonds of friendship between the members of the group. The current Malines Conversation Group is under the patronage of Cardinal Godfried Danneels (Archbishop Emeritus of Malines-Brussels) and The Right Reverend and Right Honourable The Lord Williams of Oystermouth (former Archbishop of Canterbury), and meets with the blessing and support of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and Lambeth Palace. Like its predecessor, it is an informal group while at the same time it keeps in close contact with the official mandated ecumenical bodies in both communions; it includes members of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM). Last year's meeting at Clare College, Cambridge, UK, continued work of previous meetings on questions of sacramentality and ordination, with particular focus on liturgical theology, canon law, and the relation between theological anthropology and ordination in both communions.

This sixth meeting developed each of these areas in greater depth as resources for ecumenical theology, continuing to sharpen the focus on the question of 'order'. A number of distinguished theologians presented papers to further these discussions. The Revd Prof Gordon Lathrop (Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia) offered two papers, on the 'Ecclesial Grammar of Scripture' and on the 'Reality of Life at the Root of the Reality of Holy Order'. The Revd Prof Sarah Coakley (Cambridge University) and Prof Dr Antoine Courbain (Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth) offered an interdisciplinary session on 'Perspectives on Gender and the Human Person'. The Revd Prof Paul McPartlan (Catholic University of America) presented a close reading of ecclesial texts, asking the question: 'Can it be said that the church of Christ *subsistit in* the Anglican Communion?' The Revd Prof Alexander Rentel (Saint Vladimir's Theological Seminary) offered a paper on 'The Concept of *Oikonomia* from an Orthodox Perspective'. Archbishop Donald Bolen and Cardinal Joseph Tobin offered their reflections on the current ecumenical context; the overarching theme of this shared conversation was one of hope.

A number of themes recurred throughout the sessions, most notably the recognition that liturgical language, rich in symbol, sign, word and gesture, offers rich possibilities for expressing the reality of unity and communion we share already. And it gives rise to possible methodologies for developing new layers of unity as we continue to explore the reception of orders and fuller communion together.

The Group benefited from the beautiful and peaceful setting of San Alfonso Retreat House, and from the generous hospitality received from General Theological Seminary in New York, the Jesuits at St Peter's Villa, Sea Bright, NJ, and from Cardinal Joseph Tobin, Archbishop of Newark, who hosted a closing Eucharist in his Cathedral followed by a festive lunch in his

Residence. The communities of Saint Luke in the Fields and St Thomas', New York provided a warm welcome on the first Sunday of the meeting.

The Group is grateful to all its supporters and sponsors. A seventh meeting is planned for next Spring, in York, UK.

Anglican members:

The Most Revd Bernard Ntahoturi, Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See and the director of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

The Right Revd David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop of the Church of England Diocese in Europe; Co-chairman of IARCCUM

The Most Revd David Moxon, Co-Chairman of ARCIC III and former representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See and director of the Anglican Centre in Rome

The Revd Dr Jennifer Cooper, Lecturer in Theology, College of the Resurrection, Mirfield; Research Fellow, Campion Hall, Oxford

The Revd Dr James Hawkey, Dean of Clare College, Cambridge; member of the International Anglican-Reformed Dialogue; member of the CofE-URC Dialogue

The Revd Dr Simon Jones, Chaplain and Fellow of Merton College, Oxford; Honorary Canon of Christ Church, Oxford and Chichester Cathedral; Member of the Church of England Liturgical Commission

The Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge; Senior Associate of the Cambridge Theological Federation, Affiliated Lecturer at the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society

The Revd Dr Michael Nai-Chiu Poon, Canon theologian of St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore, and ministerial formation director and sub-warden of St Peter's Hall, The Diocese of Singapore

The Very Revd Canon David Richardson, Former representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See and director of the Anglican Centre in Rome

The Revd Canon Professor Nicholas Sagovsky, Former Canon Theologian at Westminster Abbey; member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)

Catholic members:

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Tobin, C.Ss.R, Archbishop of Newark

The Revd Canon Anthony Curren, Secretary to the Anglican and Methodist dialogues at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Rome

The Revd Professor Marc R. Francis, President of The Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois

Professor Joris Geldhof, Professor of liturgical studies and sacramental theology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium; Chair of the Liturgical Institute Leuven; Editor-in-chief of the bilingual journal Questions Liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy; President of Societas Liturgica

Dr Maryana Hnyp, Coordinator of Inter-Religious Affairs, KU Leuven; Institutional Development Officer, Caritas Europa

The Revd Professor Keith Pecklers, SJ, Professor of Liturgy at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome), Professor of Liturgical History at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of Sant'Anselmo (Rome); Founding president of the International Jungmann Society

The Revd Professor Thomas Pott OSB, Monastery of Chevetogne (Belgium); Professor of Oriental Liturgy and Sacramentology at the Pontifical Atheneum Sant'Anselmo and at the Pontifical Oriental Institute (Rome); Consultor of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches and of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

The Revd Cyrille Vael OSB, Monastery of Chevetogne (Belgium); Advisor of NNE (New Narrative for Europe) of the Department for Promotion and Protection of the Regional Cultural Heritage of Europe (European Commission).

Dr. Clare Watkins, Lecturer of Ministerial Theology, Department of Humanities, University of Roehampton, London, UK