

PRESS RELEASE (DRAFT)

A truly encouraging start was made at the first meeting of the new Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC-II) at Venice, August 30 to September 6, 1983. The Commission, whose membership is more wide-ranging than that of its predecessor, includes representatives from five continents and twelve nationalities. This made possible an important exchange of information on the actual state of Anglican/Roman Catholic pastoral relations in many parts of the world. Although there are places where a competitive spirit still prevails, in the majority of cases regular co-operation is now taken for granted.

It was against this background that the Commission turned to its theological task of examining the outstanding doctrinal differences between the two Communion. Two papers from Australia set out the related problems of justification by faith and the theology of the Church. Discussion of these issues led the Commission to make "The Church and Salvation" its immediate priority.

Preparatory papers from England on the subject of the reconciliation of Churches and the recognition of ministries prompted the Commission to a wider discussion of how Anglicans and Roman Catholics can grow towards full communion. Essential to this process will be the response of both Churches to the Final Report of ARCIC-I which will show the extent of our agreement in faith. In the meantime the Commission plans to involve national Anglican/Roman Catholic commissions in a number of countries in the discussion of the theological implications of full communion and of the way towards it.

For its next meeting in twelve months' time ARCIC-II has commissioned further studies on the Church and salvation. A small group will work on this before the full Commission meets.

An important part of the Commission's life was its corporate prayer. On its first day the Commission was led in recollection by the two Co-Chairmen, Bishop Mark Santer of Kensington, England (Anglican), and Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Arundel and Brighton, England (Roman Catholic). On alternate days Roman Catholic and Anglican Eucharists were celebrated; at these the Commission was at one in prayer while respecting the sacramental discipline of each Church.

Cardinal Marco C , Patriarch of Venice, visited with the Commission to express the warm welcome of the Church of Venice and to give an assurance of its prayers for the Commission and its work. This was reflected in the warm hospitality of the Sisters at the Casa Cardinal Piazza.

During the Commission's meeting, Pope John Paul II urged those present at his General Audience on August 31st, to earnest prayer at the beginning of this new stage in the dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.