

Anglicans, Roman Catholics Meet in Toronto

November 3-5, 2005

The regular meeting of the Anglican Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada took place November 3-5, 2005 at the new Anglican Convent of the Sisters of St. John the Divine in Toronto.

The dialogue is made up of 6 people from each church, plus staff. Members include theologians, both pastors and lay people.

On the first evening the dialogue hosted a Forum at Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, on the new agreed statement of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ". Bishop John Baycroft, retired Anglican bishop of Ottawa, and a member of ARCIC, presented the document, and Professors Margaret O'Gara (St. Michael's College) and Alan Hayes (Wycliffe College) critiqued it from their perspectives.

At the meeting of the Dialogue itself, members discussed the 'Mary' document and agreed to do more work in connection with it. The Dialogue will gather questions for a study process from a pilot project being initiated among military chaplains; explore in more depth the questions it raises about grace, salvation and discipleship, recalling the work of *Salvation and the Church*; and discuss practical implications, practices and ecclesiological implications if both Communion were to accept the findings of the report. The Dialogue heard an update from Bishop Baycroft about the work of the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) that meets later in November in Rome.

The Dialogue also welcomed Anglicans who had attended the June, 2005 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, hearing from Ms. Suzanne Lawson and Rev'd Dr. Stephen Andrews about the current issues and dynamics in the Anglican Communion. Roman Catholic members reflected on the issues and dynamics in their own Communion in the light of the election of Pope Benedict XVI, and the Dialogue discussed highlights from the recent Synod on the Eucharist.

Assisted by Canon Linda Nicholls, the Dialogue revisited the ARCIC statement on morals, *Life in Christ* (1994), which articulated a moral vision shared by our two communions. The Dialogue considered whether the present differences relating to homosexuality and the blessing of same sex unions derive from different applications of shared common moral principles rather than representing a change in those principles. Members agreed that more work needs to be done by the Dialogue to understand how our churches do our moral theology, in particular with respect to same sex marriage, homosexuality, and the changing role of marriage in society.

As is the custom, members of the Dialogue prayed the offices together and participated in the Convent eucharist, as much as the practices of our two churches allow, with Archbishop Bruce Stavert (Anglican) presiding and Dr. Catherine Clifford (Roman Catholic) preaching.

The next meeting will take place in Ottawa March 2-4, 2006.