

Anglican Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada
Highlights
September 16-18, 2007

Canadian Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians and pastors and lay people met for their semi-annual dialogue in Mississauga, Ontario for 3 days in September. They welcomed a new Anglican co-chair, Bishop Anthony Burton of Saskatchewan.

The group reflected on several recent events in the lives of their churches:

- Dr. Susan Brown reported on her experience as an ecumenical partner to the Anglican General Synod held in Winnipeg in June. She reflected on this expression of synodality as an ‘ecclesial laboratory’ from which her church can learn, but suggested that Anglicans might search more deeply for consensus on difficult issues. Following intense debate and close votes, General Synod asked the Anglican Primate’s Theological Commission to consider, during the next three years, the question of whether and how the blessing of faithful, committed same-sex unions is a faithful development of Christian doctrine. Roman Catholic members expressed interest in contributing to the work of the Anglican Primate’s Theological Commission on the development of doctrine.
- Bishop Lapierre, who had spent several years in ministry in Guatemala, reported on the meeting of the Bishops of Latin America (CELAM) held in May; the dialogue reflected on the appeal of Pentecostal and charismatic churches and their significance for the ecumenical movement
- two documents were issued by the Holy See in July – a ‘moto proprio’ permitting broader use of the 1962 Latin rite for the eucharist, and a clarification of certain questions of ecclesiology by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. While acknowledging that these documents appear to address threats to unity and/or orthodoxy within the Roman Catholic communion, the dialogue noted that they risk being misinterpreted, especially by others. This is particularly true of the CDF document which could have acknowledged more explicitly the richness of ecclesial elements which 40 years of dialogue have brought to light even though all are still not in full communion. The dialogue recalled that it had responded with concern and criticism to a similar declaration from 2000, *Dominus Iesus*, which it said was ‘a source of pain and confusion for ecumenical partners. It undermines the mutual trust that we have worked hard to establish, impedes progress in mutual understanding, and damages ecumenical relationships.’ The group reminds both Catholics and Anglicans that we have been enriched by our 40 years of thoughtful, prayerful engagement, and that we still have many gifts to share with one another.

To this end, the dialogue discussed ways of improving communication between and within the churches. It is considering using internet resources through which Canadian Anglicans and Roman Catholics can contribute positively to the relationship. Dialogue statements and papers could be made more readily available.

On Monday evening the dialogue was delighted to welcome the Most Rev’d John Boissoneau, Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto and Chair of the Ecumenism Commission of

the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. They discussed ways of improving communication between the dialogue and the bishops and giving more profile to ecumenism.

The dialogue is preparing a response to the agreed statement of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ". The response will invite readers to consider the dynamic history of Marian devotion in both churches and in changing historical settings, including Canadian ones. It will illustrate the careful way in which Roman Catholic authorities are re-shaping, in language more vividly recalling the biblical sources, their strong tradition of praying with Mary and the saints. The resource will function as an invitation to Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes to study the agreed statement together. The dialogue plans to finalize this response at its next meeting in Montreal, January 31-February 2 2008.

Present at this meeting of the Dialogue:

For the Anglican Church of Canada: Rt. Rev. Anthony Burton, Bishop of Saskatchewan (co-chair); Ms. Ann Cruickshank, Montreal; Rev. Dr. Kevin Flynn, University of St. Paul, Ottawa; Dr. Joseph Mangina, Wycliffe College, Toronto; Rev. Dr. David Neelands, Trinity College, Toronto. As secretary on behalf of the ACC: Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, Director, Department of Faith, Worship and Ministry of General Synod.

For the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: Most Rev. François Lapierre, Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe (co-chair); Dr. Susan Brown, King's University College at the University of Western Ontario; Dr. Catherine Clifford, St. Paul University, Ottawa; Rev. Jacques Faucher, Director of Ecumenism, Archdiocese of Ottawa; Rev. Luis Melo, S.M., St. Paul College, University of Manitoba; Rev. Dr. Gilles Routhier, Faculté de Théologie, Université Laval, Québec. As secretary on behalf of the CCCB: Ms. Janet Somerville, Toronto.