



Pope Paul VI (right) presents his episcopal ring to Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey when the two met in 1966 in what was the first public meeting between a Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury since the Reformation.

NEWS FOCUS - Canterbury and Rome celebrate 50th anniversary with closer links in mission

The Archbishop of Canterbury spent two days in Rome this week, accompanied by 17 leaders from other Anglican Provinces worldwide, as well as pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops who discussed ways of forging closer partnerships in mission.

At an audience in the Vatican on Thursday, Pope Francis said that it was “a beautiful sign of fraternity” to see the Primate of so many Anglican Provinces celebrating the fruits of the first meeting 50 years ago between his predecessor Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey.

“Let us never grow tired of asking the Lord together and insistently for the gift of unity,” the Pope said. All church leaders were being challenged to go out and bring God’s “merciful love to a world thirsting for peace”.

Archbishop Welby thanked the Pope for his leadership, and for the important effect that this has had on the Anglican Communion. He said: “You have recalled us afresh to the needs of ministering with the poor. You have set a Christ-like example by your travel to places of suffering and difficulty. You have stood alongside migrant



Symbolic: Pope Francis puts on a pectoral cross of silver nails, a gift from Archbishop Welby during vespers at San Gregorio in Rome on Wednesday evening

peoples. You have initiated work on modern slavery and human trafficking, and much more.

“You gave essential force to the meeting of nations in Paris on climate change. Your letters and encyclicals have spoken far beyond Rome and her Church, in a manner which is universal.”

The two leaders also spent close to an hour in private conversation, sharing jokes and

discussing everything from prayer to peacemaking, from sexual ethics to the personal revelations that Welby made earlier this year regarding his own father's identity.

It was a relaxed and friendly encounter between two leaders who clearly share many spiritual and practical objectives. On Wednesday evening, they presided at a celebration of Vespers sung by the Sistine Chapel choir alongside Canterbury Cathedral choir in the ancient Rome church of San Gregorio on the Caelian Hill.

On the spot where Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine out on mission to evangelise the English at the end of the sixth century, Francis and Welby "sent out" on mission together the pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops, before signing a common declaration recommitting their Churches to take the gospel "to the ends of the earth", and, in particular, "to those on the margins and the peripheries of our societies".

Significantly, the declaration does not sidestep the "serious obstacles" that continue to divide Anglicans and Roman Catholics (and cause tensions within both Churches), most notably the



Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops process into Canterbury Cathedral for Evensong on Saturday as part of their larccum meeting.

disagreements over women's ordination and same-sex relationships.

But these differences, it says, must not hold us back from "recognising one another as brothers and sisters in Christ", and "rejoicing in the deep Christian faith and holiness we find within each other's traditions".

Fifty years ago, Pope Paul VI recognized Michael Ramsey as “a brother in Christ” by placing on the Anglican leader’s finger his own episcopal ring, a gesture which witnesses said moved the elderly Archbishop to tears.

In a reciprocal gesture on Wednesday, Archbishop Welby gave Pope Francis a silver Cross of Nails, based on the Coventry symbol of reconciliation, as a sign of their renewed partnership in the urgent work of reconciliation today. The Pope put it around his neck before the two leaders gave a joint blessing, a gesture that would have been unthinkable half a century ago.

It was a similarly moving moment for all the congregation, in particular for Archbishop Welby, who summed up the two-day visit by affirming that Anglicans and Catholics “have found renewed impetus and momentum” in how they “work and walk together”.

Archbishop and Pope sign Common Declaration

[Common Declaration of His Holiness Pope Francis and His Grace Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury](#)

Fifty years ago our predecessors, Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey met in this city hallowed by the ministry and blood of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Subsequently, Pope John Paul II with Archbishop Robert Runcie, and later with Archbishop George Carey, and Pope Benedict XVI with Archbishop Rowan Williams, prayed together here in this Church of Saint Gregory on the Caelian Hill from where Pope Gregory sent Augustine to evangelise the Anglo-Saxon people. On pilgrimage to the tombs of these apostles and holy forebears, Catholics and Anglicans recognize that we are heirs of the treasure of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the call to share that treasure with the whole world. We have received the Good News of Jesus Christ through the holy lives of men and women who preached the Gospel in word and deed and we have been commissioned, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to be Christ's witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). We are united in the conviction that "the ends of the earth" today, is not only a geographical term, but a summons to take the saving message of the Gospel particularly to those on the margins and the peripheries of our societies.

In their historic meeting in 1966, Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey established the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission to pursue a serious theological dialogue which, “founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed”. Fifty years later we give thanks for the achievements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, which has examined historically divisive doctrines from a fresh perspective of mutual respect and charity. Today we give thanks in particular for the documents of ARCIC II which will be appraised by us, and we await the findings of ARCIC III as it navigates new contexts and new challenges to our unity.

Fifty years ago our predecessors recognized the “serious obstacles” that stood in the way of a restoration of complete faith and sacramental life between us. Nevertheless, they set out undeterred, not knowing what steps could be taken along the way, but in fidelity to the Lord’s prayer that his disciples be one. Much progress has been made concerning many areas that have kept us apart. Yet new circumstances have presented new disagreements among us, particularly regarding the ordination of women

and more recent questions regarding human sexuality. Behind these differences lies a perennial question about how authority is exercised in the Christian community. These are today some of the concerns that constitute serious obstacles to our full unity. While, like our predecessors, we ourselves do not yet see solutions to the obstacles before us, we are undeterred. In our trust and joy in the Holy Spirit we are confident that dialogue and engagement with one another will deepen our understanding and help us to discern the mind of Christ for his Church. We trust in God's grace and providence, knowing that the Holy Spirit will open new doors and lead us into all truth (cf. John 16: 13).

These differences we have named cannot prevent us from recognizing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ by reason of our common baptism. Nor should they ever hold us back from discovering and rejoicing in the deep Christian faith and holiness we find within each other's traditions. These differences must not lead to a lessening of our ecumenical endeavours. Christ's prayer at the Last Supper that all might be one (cf. John 17: 20-23) is as imperative for his disciples today as it was at that moment of his impending passion, death and

resurrection, and consequent birth of his Church. Nor should our differences come in the way of our common prayer: not only can we pray together, we must pray together, giving voice to our shared faith and joy in the Gospel of Christ, the ancient Creeds, and the power of God's love, made present in the Holy Spirit, to overcome all sin and division. And so, with our predecessors, we urge our clergy and faithful not to neglect or undervalue that certain yet imperfect communion that we already share.

Wider and deeper than our differences are the faith that we share and our common joy in the Gospel. Christ prayed that his disciples may all be one, "so that the world might believe" (John 17: 21). The longing for unity that we express in this Common Declaration is closely tied to the desire we share that men and women come to believe that God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world to save the world from the evil that oppresses and diminishes the entire creation. Jesus gave his life in love, and rising from the dead overcame even death itself. Christians who have come to this faith, have encountered Jesus and the victory of his love in their own lives, and are impelled to share the joy of this Good News with others. Our ability to come together in praise

and prayer to God and witness to the world rests on the confidence that we share a common faith and a substantial measure of agreement in faith.

The world must see us witnessing to this common faith in Jesus by acting together. We can, and must, work together to protect and preserve our common home: living, teaching and acting in ways that favour a speedy end to the environmental destruction that offends the Creator and degrades his creatures, and building individual and collective patterns of behaviour that foster a sustainable and integral development for the good of all. We can, and must, be united in a common cause to uphold and defend the dignity of all people. The human person is demeaned by personal and societal sin. In a culture of indifference, walls of estrangement isolate us from others, their struggles and their suffering, which also many of our brothers and sisters in Christ today endure. In a culture of waste, the lives of the most vulnerable in society are often marginalised and discarded. In a culture of hate we see unspeakable acts of violence, often justified by a distorted understanding of religious belief. Our Christian faith leads us to recognise the inestimable worth of every human life, and to

honour it in acts of mercy by bringing education, healthcare, food, clean water and shelter and always seeking to resolve conflict and build peace. As disciples of Christ we hold human persons to be sacred, and as apostles of Christ we must be their advocates.

Fifty years ago Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey took as their inspiration the words of the apostle: “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3: 13-14). Today, “those things which are behind” – the painful centuries of separation –have been partially healed by fifty years of friendship. We give thanks for the fifty years of the Anglican Centre in Rome dedicated to being a place of encounter and friendship. We have become partners and companions on our pilgrim journey, facing the same difficulties, and strengthening each other by learning to value the gifts which God has given to the other, and to receive them as our own in humility and gratitude.

We are impatient for progress that we might be fully united in proclaiming, in word and deed, the saving and healing gospel of Christ to all people.

For this reason we take great encouragement from the meeting during these days of so many Catholic and Anglican bishops of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) who, on the basis of all that they have in common, which generations of ARCIC scholars have painstakingly unveiled, are eager to go forward in collaborative mission and witness to the “ends of the earth”. Today we rejoice to commission them and send them forth in pairs as the Lord sent out the seventy-two disciples. Let their ecumenical mission to those on the margins of society be a witness to all of us, and let the message go out from this holy place, as the Good News was sent out so many centuries ago, that Catholics and Anglicans will work together to give voice to our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring relief to the suffering, to bring peace where there is conflict, to bring dignity where it is denied and trampled upon.

In this Church of Saint Gregory the Great, we earnestly invoke the blessings of the Most Holy Trinity on the continuing work of ARCIC and IARCCUM, and on all those who pray for and contribute to the restoration of unity between us.
Rome, 5 October 2016

His Grace Justin Welby

His Holiness Francis

News reports from Rome

Pope Francis and Archbishop Welby “undeterred” by “serious obstacles” to unity

The ordination of women and “more recent questions regarding human sexuality” are serious obstacles in the path to unity between Anglicans and Roman Catholics; but they “cannot prevent us from recognising one another as brothers and sisters in Christ”, Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said in a Common Declaration.

Speaking of the meeting between Pope Paul VI and Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey in 1966 – the first such public meeting of a Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury since the Reformation – and [their Common Declaration](#), Pope Francis and Archbishop Welby said that their predecessors had “recognised the ‘serious obstacles’ that stood in the way of a restoration of complete faith and sacramental life between us. Nevertheless, they set out undeterred, not knowing what steps could be taken along the

way, but in fidelity to the Lord's prayer that his disciples be one..."

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/10/pope-francis-and-archbishop-welby-undeterred-by-serious-obstacles-to-unity.aspx>

Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops "sent out" for united mission

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Pope Francis have commissioned 19 pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from across the world to take part in united mission in their local areas. The bishops, selected by the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (Iarccum) were "sent out" for mission together by the Pope and Archbishop from the same church were Pope Gregory sent Saint Augustine to evangelise the English in the sixth Century.

"Fourteen centuries ago Pope Gregory sent the servant of God, Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, and his companions, from this holy place, to preach the joyful message of the Word of God," Pope Francis told the bishops. "Today we send you, dear brothers, servants of God,

with this same joyful message of his everlasting kingdom.”

Archbishop Justin Welby told them: “Our Saviour commissioned his disciples saying, ‘Peace be with you’. We too, send you out with his peace, a peace only he can give.

“May his peace bring freedom to those who are captive and oppressed, and may his peace bind into greater unity the people he has chosen as his own.”

The commissioning and sending out came in the setting of a Vespers service, led jointly by Pope Francis and Archbishop Welby, at the Church of Saint Gregory on the Caelian Hill in Rome...

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/10/anglican-and-roman-catholic-bishops-sent-out-for-united-mission.aspx>

[Anglican-Roman Catholic unity takes shape in Canterbury and Rome](#)

Pulpit swaps, shared retreats, joint action on social issues and regular meetings between clergy are just some of the ideas for local expressions of unity between Anglicans and Roman Catholics taking shape during an ecumenical summit in Canterbury and Rome.

This afternoon, during a service in the monastery church of San Gregorio al Cielo, Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby will commission 19 pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops to implement local expressions of unity in their dioceses around the world...

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/10/anglican-roman-catholic-unity-takes-shape-in-canterbury-and-rome.aspx>

President of the British Methodist Conference visits Rome

The Revd Dr Roger Walton, President of the Methodist Conference, was in Italy's capital this week to celebrate 50 years of the [Anglican Centre in Rome](#).

As well as meeting with other Church leaders and celebrating the 50th anniversary, Roger and his wife, Marion, took part in a number of activities including visiting sites of special religious significance.

Speaking about the celebrations, the director of the Anglican Centre, Archbishop David Moxon, said: "The Anglican Centre has worked for fifty

years to help Roman Catholics and Anglicans work together, pray together, study and talk together.

"The journey we are on demands the laying-down of old fears and misconceptions of each other, and the building up of a shared story together. These celebrations mark the writing of a new chapter in the history of the Christian Church."

In April of this year, the Methodist Church officially opened its own centre in Rome, the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome.

The [opening ceremony](#) saw Methodist representatives from across the world, including the Secretary of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gareth J Powell, [meet and address the Pope](#).

Since 1955, a British Methodist Minister has been stationed at the Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist, Rome, to act informally as a link with the ecumenical work of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, a body of the Catholic Church. Since 2014, a more formal arrangement has been put in place.

The President's visit culminated in an ecumenical evening prayer service and Gala dinner with Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Videos : US Presiding Bishop speaks from Rome



Presiding Bishop Michael Curry speaks from Rome during a week when Anglicans and Roman Catholics are participating in a series of events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the historic meeting in 1966 between Pope Paul VI and Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsay. Click here -

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2016/10/05/video-presiding-bishop-speaks-from-rome/>

Video: Pope Francis preaches at ecumenical vespers in Rome

Pope Francis preaches in Italian during vespers at San Gregorio al Celio in Rome as part of the celebrations to mark 50 years of closer and deeper relationships between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2016/10/06/video-pope-francis-preaches-at-ecumenical-vespers-in-rome/>

Video: Archbishop of Canterbury preaches at Roman vespers

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby preaches during vespers at San Gregorio al Celio in Rome as part of the celebrations to mark 50 years of closer and deeper relationships between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2016/10/06/video-archbishop-of-canterbury-preaches-at-roman-vespers/>

Video: Archbishop, Pope exchange gifts as a symbol of partnership

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Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby presented Pope Francis with a silver Cross of Nails Oct. 5 as a symbol of their partnership in the work of reconciliation. Welby took the pectoral cross from round his neck and presented it to Pope Francis during vespers at San Gregorio al Celio in Rome, which [...]

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2016/10/06/video-archbishop-pope-exchange-gifts-as-a-symbol-of-partnership/>

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