

International Commission of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue

**Armagh, Northern Ireland, 23-29 September 2016 COMMUNIQUÉ**

In the name of the Triune God, and with the blessing and guidance of our Churches, the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue met in Armagh, Northern Ireland from 23-29 September 2016. The Commission is deeply grateful for the generous and warm hospitality offered by the Diocese of Armagh through the Primate of All Ireland, the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, his clergy and people. Warm greetings were also extended by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd Eamon Martin, and by other Christian leaders.

The meeting began with the celebration of the Divine Orthodox Liturgy in the Cathedral of St Patrick, Armagh. The Commission was invited to join with local Anglicans in both parish and cathedral worship, including a memorable morning in the parish of St Mark, Ballymore, and a rich experience of Evensong in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh. On the final day, the festival of St Michael and All Angels was celebrated, with prayers for the guidance of the angels in the continuing work.

The Commission expressed its thanks to Archbishop Roger Herft for his notable contribution as Co-Chairman of the Commission since 2009; and remembered in prayer HE Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, the Orthodox Co-Chairman, who was unfortunately unable to attend. New members were welcomed to the Commission, working with its new Anglican Co-Chairman, Archbishop Richard Clarke and Acting Orthodox Co-Chairman HE Metropolitan Seraphim of Zimbabwe, appointed by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Members of the Commission were deeply conscious of the blessing and illuminating presence of St Patrick, the apostle to the Irish, both during the time of their work and as they travelled to sites connected to the blessed saint, including Downpatrick and Saul. The Commission continued in the spirit of St Patrick, venerated in both the eastern and western churches, as it sought the deeper unity of Christians in witness to the Gospel of Christ in the world.

The Commission developed its work on the theological understanding of the human person, according to principles in its agreed statement *In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology* (Buffalo 2015). In this phase the Commission has begun to examine the practical consequences that follow from these theological principles, looking at the complex ethical concerns in various areas of human life.

Members of the Commission discussed four papers which addressed bioethical considerations. These included aspects of contraception, abortion, reproductive technology, stem cell research, organ transplants, artificial life support, assisted dying and euthanasia. Prepared responses to the four papers were made by Anglican and Orthodox theologians and fruitfully discussed in plenary sessions.

The papers were:

*Christian Ethics and the Beginning and End of Life: Themes in Anglican Reflection*

(The Rt Revd Rowan Williams)

Responses by the Revd Canon Dr Sarah Rowland Jones and Protopresbyter George Dragas

*Bioethical Themes: Transplants and Euthanasia*

(HE Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Kition)

Responses by the Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut and HE Metropolitan Seraphim of Zimbabwe

*Survey of Anglican Church Documents on Beginning and End of Life Issues*

(The Revd Canon Philip Hobson OGS)

Responses by Fr Alexander Haig and the Revd Marc Billimoria

*Medical Bioethics: An Orthodox Christian Perspective for Orthodox Christians*

(Protodeacon Basil Andruchow)

Responses by the Rt Revd Michael Lewis and Fr Valentin Vassechko



Anglican Communion Office

MEMBERS UNABLE TO ATTEND:

The Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce  
The Church of England

The Very Revd Hosam Naoum  
The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East

The Rt Revd Dr Rowan Williams  
Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury