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Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission

October 24-29, 2016 Antelias, Lebanon

AOOIC Communiqué

The Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission held its fifth meeting from the 24th to 29th October 2016 at the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, Antelias, Lebanon.

The Commission greatly appreciated the welcome to the Armenian Catholicosate by His Holiness Aram I of the Holy See of Cilicia, and was grateful for the kindness and hospitality offered by the Catholicosate brotherhood members and staff.

At the opening session, the Commission was welcomed by His Holiness the Catholicos, who addressed its members, and encouraged the continuation of its work towards full visible unity in the face of existing and ongoing differences and disagreements. Having completed its work on the Procession of the Holy Spirit at its 2015 meeting, the Commission continued its reflection on the second part of its Agreed Statement on pneumatology, 'The Sending of the Holy Spirit in Time (Economia).'

This second part considers the action of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the Church making it one, holy, catholic and apostolic. The Co-Chairs signed the second part of Agreed Statement that will be sent to our churches for reflection and comment, after which the Commission will produce the full statement, 'The Nature and Work of the Holy Spirit,' in its final form.

The Commission discussed the present situation of Christians in the Middle East and heard reports on the difficulties facing churches, particularly in Syria and Iraq, and the situation of refugees in Lebanon. There was a consideration of the most practical ways in which the Anglican Communion in its various countries could respond effectively to the challenges facing Christians in the Middle East.

Members of the Commission continue to pray for the Middle East, for the victims of war, for refugees, and for all hostages. We also continue to pray for our fellow Christians, and especially the two bishops of Aleppo abducted in April 2013: Metropolitan Mor Gregorios Youhanna Ibrahim of the Syriac Orthodox Church, and Metropolitan Boulos Yazigi of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch.

The Commission visited a number of religious sites reflecting some of the spiritual diversity of Lebanon, including the Armenian Genocide Orphans' 'Aram Bezikian' Museum. The Commission also recognised that the International Day for Religious Freedom was marked during its meeting, and so prayed for all, Christians and others alike, deprived of the right to hold and practice their faith openly.

Mindful of the global context of migrants and refugees, particularly in the local context of Lebanon, where a third of the population are refugees from Palestine, Syria and Iraq, and the dismantling of the migrant community at Calais during this week, the present Agreed Statement finished with the following words:

'In a world of enforced displacement and fearful arrival; in a world of accelerated movement; in a world of war-torn fragmentation and courageous martyrdom; the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, transcends time and space and yet inhabits both. The same Spirit is sent to commission and empower the weak to be strong, the humble to be courageous and the poor to be comforted and blessed in a fallen world that is upheld by the providence and grace of God the Trinity who makes all things new in faith and hope and love.'

The sixth meeting of the Commission will take place, God willing, in Dublin, Republic of Ireland, from the 23rd to 28th October 2017, hosted by the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin, a member of the Commission.

At the conclusion of its meeting, the Commission thanked the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the mutual understanding, joy, and friendship that was experienced and shared, and looks forward to continuing its work.

Present at the meeting in Antelias 2016

ANGLICANS

The Rt Revd Gregory K Cameron	The Church in Wales (Co-Chair)
The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut	Anglican Communion Office (Co-Secretary)
The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson	The Church of Ireland
The Rt Revd Dr Geoffrey Rowell	The Church of England (Consultant)
The Very Revd Dr Samy Shehata	The Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
The Ven Dr Edward Simonton OGS	The Anglican Church of Canada
The Revd Stephen Stavrou	The Church of England
The Revd Canon Dr William Taylor	The Church of England
The Revd Neil Vigers	Anglican Communion Office

Not able to be present

The Revd Christopher Edgar	The Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
The Revd Dr Patrick Thomas	The Church in Wales

ORIENTAL ORTHODOX

Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria

His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy	Egypt (Co-Chair)
His Grace Bishop Angaelos	England

Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch

His Eminence Polycarpus Augin Aydin	The Netherlands
The Very Revd Fr Roger Akhrass	Syria

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church - Holy See of Cilicia, Antelias - Lebanon

The Very Revd Fr Housig Mardirossian	Lebanon (Co-Secretary)
The Revd Fr Boghos Tinkdjian	Lebanon

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

The Revd Fr Dr KM George	India
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Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

The Revd Fr Kaletsadike M. Argaw	Ethiopia
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Not able to be present

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church - Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin - Armenia

His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian	USA
The Very Revd Archimandrite Shahe Ananyan	Armenia

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church - Holy See of Cilicia, Antelias - Lebanon

His Eminence Archbishop Nareg Alemezian	Lebanon
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Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

Metropolitan Geevarghese Mor Coorilos	India
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