

# **COVENANT BETWEEN THE ANGLICAN CENTRE ROME AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ORATORY OF SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER “DEL CARAVITA,” ROME**

## **Introduction**

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2013, the Third Sunday of Easter, the Anglican Centre Rome and the Oratory of Saint Francis Xavier “del Caravita” will formally sign a covenant, committing those two institutions to enter into a closer relationship.

The pastoral and theological rationale derives from the real but incomplete communion which exists between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion. This communion is grounded in a recognition of Anglicans and Catholics, deepened through five decades of dialogue, of the many constituent elements of the Church each tradition contains.

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 1966, Archbishop Michael Ramsey, the 100<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, visited Rome at the invitation of Pope Paul VI. The two signed a Common Declaration committing their respective churches to work towards unity. At the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls of Rome, the Pope and the Archbishop jointly blessed the congregation. As they parted, the Pope gave Archbishop Ramsey his own Episcopal ring, placing it on his finger. It was during that visit that the Archbishop dedicated the Anglican Centre in Rome.

On 29<sup>th</sup> May 1982, Blessed Pope John Paul II became the first pontiff to travel to Canterbury Cathedral, where he met with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, and where they prayed together and jointly blessed the congregation at the conclusion of that ecumenical liturgy. In the following quarter of a century, relationships and indeed, bonds of affection have grown significantly, and ecumenical cooperation has been welcomed by both communities.

At a meeting in Mississauga, Canada, in May, 2000, which brought together Anglican Primates and the Presidents of Catholic Episcopal Conferences from thirteen countries where Anglicans and Roman Catholics live side by side in significant numbers, the bishops concluded that “our communion together is no longer to be viewed in minimal terms. We have been able to discern that it is not just formally established by our common baptism into Christ, but is even now a rich and life-giving, multifaceted communion.” (*Communion in Mission*, §5).

Those assigned to draft the covenant<sup>1</sup> were mindful of close relations which had grown between the Anglican Centre and Caravita over the years. But they were also motivated by the 2007 statement of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, which drew attention to “the gap between the elements of faith we hold in common and the tangible expression of that shared faith in our ecclesial lives” (§10). After attempting to harvest the constructive results achieved through dialogue in nine areas (Trinitarian and Christological foundations; the Church; the Word of God; Baptism; Eucharist;

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<sup>1</sup> The Covenant was drafted by The Very Reverend Canon David Richardson, Archbishop of Canterbury’s Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre Rome, and The Reverend Prof. Keith F. Pecklers, S.J., Founder and Director of the Caravita Community at the Oratory of Saint Francis Xavier, “del Caravita,” drawing heavily upon the work of The Most Reverend Donald Bolen, Bishop of Saskatoon, in his work on crafting the Covenant between the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina and the Anglican Diocese of Qu’Appelle in Canada.

Ministry; authority in the Church; morals and discipleship; and Mary), *Growing Together* gives a variety of suggestions for closer cooperation in the areas of worship and prayer; common study; cooperation in ministry; and shared witness.

The drafters of the Anglican Centre-Caravita Covenant made a careful study of other Anglican-Roman Catholic covenantal relationships, notably diocesan covenants in Papua New Guinea; Brisbane, Australia; and Regina, Canada. In many respects, this Covenant seeks to affirm and articulate what, in fact, has already been happening over the years in the growing relationship between the Anglican Centre and Caravita. Indeed, there is a natural affinity between the two institutions: neither is a parish; both serve as centres of ongoing lay formation with an ecumenical mission whose heart is the weekly celebration of the Eucharist.

Building upon the first section of the covenant, which offers a very brief articulation of the faith we share, the drafters set out to ask what we can do together based on these elements of common faith. A series of commitments are at the heart of the covenant, wherein the two institutions commit themselves to common prayer and study, joint mission and witness, in the context of ongoing friendship as we seek to be faithful to the Gospel. These commitments are not an exhaustive list of what Anglicans and Roman Catholics can do together, but are a practical set of proposals appropriate for this time and place, drawing from *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, and from our lived experience as unique institutions in the City of Rome. We have come a long distance in our relationship but are not yet able to take ultimate steps toward full visible unity. Thus, as a way of living in this interim period, this Covenant is a way of receiving and embodying the convergence and consensus achieved by dialogue in the everyday practice of our ecclesial lives.

For almost fifty years, Christian churches the world over have been engaged in constructive dialogue, which has given rise to a library full of statements which, with increasing clarity, have identified that which we hold in common. While acknowledging differences which continue to be addressed through ongoing dialogue, these statements have generally produced surprising and immensely encouraging results. Ecumenical dialogue has brought our churches many gifts.<sup>2</sup> One of the great ecumenical challenges of the day is for our churches, faithful to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to find ways to give expression to the degree of shared faith which has been articulated in these dialogue statements, so that their transformative potential can be unleashed in order to deepen and enrich our ecclesial lives and strengthen our witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our profound hope that by God's grace, this covenant will play a role in building up relations locally, but also will serve as a stimulus for further reflection and action more broadly.

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### **A Covenant Between the Anglican Centre and Caravita**

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, and in particular, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of the Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium* (4<sup>th</sup> December 1963), we, the directors of these two institutions, together with our members and responding to the call of the Holy Spirit, wish to enter into a covenantal relationship. In doing so, we are building on more than fifty years of actively seeking reconciliation between our two Communion on an international level, and also on the guidance and

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<sup>2</sup> See Keith F. Pecklers, S.J., "What Roman Catholics Have to Learn from Anglicans" in Paul D. Murray, ed., *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 107-121.

leadership of our local churches in the fostering of relations, beginning in 1992 with conversations and friendship between the then Director of the Anglican Centre Father Douglas Brown, S.S.M., and Father Keith Pecklers, S.J.

This friendship has continued on through successive directors of the Anglican Centre and the Caravita Community to our own day. On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2002 on the occasion of the first International Meeting on Jesuits and Liturgy, Father Pecklers presented Bishop Richard Garrard, then Director of the Anglican Centre, with one of the Slabbinck chasubles that had been given to each Jesuit priest participating in the meeting. That chasuble continues to be worn in the Anglican Centre Chapel to this day. In February, 2008, the Caravita Community presented the departing Anglican Centre Director Bishop John Flack with the gift of an episcopal ring in the style of those given to Bishops at the Second Vatican Council. And in November, 2009, on the occasion of the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams' preaching at Caravita, a bishop's mitre purchased for the occasion to be worn by the Archbishop, was later presented to the Anglican Centre as a remembrance of that historic occasion presided over by the President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, Cardinal Walter Kasper.

Honouring the teaching and prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ that all may be one (John 17:11, 21), we give thanks to the Father and rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit working within us which can do infinitely more than we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). In the name of our respective institutions, we solemnly enter this covenant.

## **I. The Faith We Share**

Already in 1977, Archbishop of Canterbury Donald Coggan and Pope Paul VI signed a Common Declaration, in which they affirmed the following about our churches:

“(we) have come to recognize, to value and to give thanks for a common faith in God our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit; our common baptism into Christ, our sharing of the Holy Scriptures; of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds; the Chalcedonian definition (on Christ's full humanity and full divinity); and the teaching of the Fathers; our common Christian inheritance for many centuries with its living traditions of liturgy, theology, spirituality and mission” (§2).

Through our international dialogue, we have reached significant agreement on the nature of the Eucharist and ministry. We have also reached convergence on authority in the Church, the nature and mission of the Church, salvation and justification, discipleship and morals, and more recently, the place of Mary, Mother of Jesus, in the life and doctrine of the Church.<sup>3</sup> Today, we no longer feel ourselves as strangers in each other's houses of worship. Despite remaining obstacles which we continue to address in dialogue, we have come a long way, making considerable progress in our relations.

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<sup>3</sup> The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), in its first phase of dialogue (1970-1981), produced *The Final Report* (London: CTS/SPCK, 1982), which included the statements *Eucharistic Doctrine* (1971); *Ministry and Ordination* (1973); *Authority in the Church I* (1976); an Elucidation of each of these three texts (*Eucharist and Ministry Elucidations* dated 1979, *Authority in the Church I Elucidation* dated 1981); and *Authority in the Church II* (1981). The second phase of dialogue produced agreed statements entitled *Salvation and the Church* (1986), *Church as Communion* (1990), *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church* (1993), *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III U* (1998), and *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (2005).

And yet, as *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* has stated, “we have only just begun to give tangible expression to the incontrovertible elements of shared faith” (§7). In that document, the conviction is expressed that “it is time to bridge the gap between the elements of faith we hold in common and the tangible expression of that shared belief in our ecclesial lives” (§10). “Even in a time of uncertainty, the mission given us by Christ obliges and compels us to seek to engage more deeply and widely in a partnership in mission, coupled with common witness and joint prayer” (§7).

## II. Moving Forward in Mission

Here in Rome, Anglicans and Roman Catholics have enjoyed a long-standing friendship for many years, already begun in the Malines Conversations of the 1920s<sup>4</sup>, but especially helped by that extraordinary visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI in March, 1966. The generosity of the Doria Pamphilj Family has also played a significant role, not only in the establishment of the Anglican Centre but in the furthering of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the City of Rome in general.<sup>5</sup> All this has led to a regular and quite natural contact and exchange between Anglican and English-speaking Roman Catholics resident in Rome – an exchange greatly facilitated by joint membership in the monthly meetings of the Ecumenical Clergy Fraternal and that of “Churches Together in Rome.” It is also significant that for some years now, the Church of England Parish in Rome, All Saints, has been twinned with its Roman Catholic counterpart -- the Parish of Ognisanti on the Via Appia Nuova. This twinning has led to an ongoing pulpit exchange between the Chaplain of All Saints and the Pastor of Ognisanti, and to a growing friendship between parishioners of both churches. There also exists a twinning between the Anglican Church of St. Pancras in London, and the Church of San Pancrazio in Rome. Thus, our desire to enter into this covenant relationship should be seen in the wider context of the already established Anglican-Roman Catholic relationship present here in Rome.

The Spirit now calls us as Anglicans and Roman Catholics to a new stage in jointly giving ourselves over to the upbuilding of the Body of Christ in our respective institutions.<sup>6</sup>

To that end, our relationship now moves us to **commit our two institutions to the following:**

- Promote and publicize the programmes, events, and worship of the other institution, both verbally at the weekly Eucharist, but also on our respective websites.
- List a link to the other institution’s website on our respective websites.
- Provide a link to the Covenant statement on our respective websites.
- While remaining faithful to the liturgical discipline of both Churches, encourage members to attend the worship of the other institution especially during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

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<sup>4</sup> See John A. Dick, *The Malines Conversations Revisited* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989) on the Rome visits of Abbé Portal and Lord Halifax to promote the Malines Conversations.

<sup>5</sup> See Frederick Bliss, S.M., *Anglicans in Rome: A History* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> See “Visible Expressions of our Shared Faith” in *Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on 40 Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue* (An Agreed Statement of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (London: SPCK, 2007), 51-58.

- Commit ourselves to regularly remembering the other church and its leaders, and our relations, in our intercessions at the weekly Eucharist.
- Commit ourselves to mention the name of the patron saint of the other institution during the Eucharistic Prayer, thus, recalling Francis Xavier at each Anglican Centre Eucharist, and recalling Augustine of Canterbury at each Caravita Eucharist.
- Commit ourselves to a shared use of space when necessary and appropriate: For example, welcoming the Anglican Centre to utilize the Oratory of Caravita for its weekly Eucharist on Tuesdays, when its limits of space are unable to accommodate a larger group in its Chapel of Augustine of Canterbury. Similarly, the Anglican Centre has welcomed the Caravita Community in hosting a farewell lunch in honour of one of its priests.
- Begin Lent together each year ecumenically at Caravita, with a joint Liturgy of the Word and imposition of ashes.
- Hold ecumenical liturgies several times each year (e.g. Evensong) especially during the Easter Season, with the involvement of clergy from both institutions.
- That Caravita will host the official Liturgy of Installation for an incoming Director of the Anglican Centre in 2013.
- That Caravita will host the official Liturgy of Farewell for a departing Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Director of the Anglican Centre.
- That Caravita will host liturgies (e.g. Evensong) as requested, on the occasion of a visit of the Anglican Centre Board of Governors; of the annual meeting of the Anglican-Roman Catholic “Informal Talks,” or on the visits of other distinguished Anglican or ecumenical groups.
- That the Director of the Anglican Centre will regularly be included in fraternal moments shared by the Caravita clergy, for example, times of prayer, retreat, and ongoing formation, as well as times of informal social exchange and relaxation.
- That our clergy will act together when feasible: for example holding occasional study days; arranging a joint component in our various programmes or jointly hosting a retreat day in Advent or Lent.
- Commit ourselves to maintaining communication between us when any new development in one of our churches has implications or challenges for the other.
- Host common social occasions following joint liturgical events, to offer opportunities for fellowship.
- When specific concerns or needs in either community are identified, Caravita and the Anglican Centre will join together to find a way forward in providing relief and assistance.
- Express a willingness to collaborate and strategize together on joint projects with the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity; the *Centro Pro Unione*; Lambeth Palace; and the Anglican Consultative Council.

- Conduct a review and celebrate a re-affirmation of the Covenant every three years.

### III. Carrying the Covenant Forward

Bilateral relations between churches are always at the service of a broader vision of the unity of all Christ's disciples. Therefore it is our hope that this covenant would be the base of an ever-widening covenantal relationship among Christian communities in Rome and beyond.

Indeed, we hold many common elements of faith with other Christian churches and institutions in this city, most fundamentally, a Trinitarian faith into which we are baptized and which we profess in the Apostles' Creed; a common recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour to whom we commit ourselves in discipleship; common sources of authority in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and in the witness of the early Church which shape our mission; and a common hope and prayer grounded in God's presence and action in the world and the promise of God's Kingdom. We would therefore invite other Christian institutions in Rome into a conversation about the prospect of entering into a broader multilateral covenantal relationship.

### Conclusion

We give thanks to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the gifts we have received and which we have come to recognize in each other; for the joy we have come to know in our life in Jesus Christ; and for the renewed and life-giving relationship which has come to us from the Holy Spirit. To God be the glory, in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:21).

David Buchanan, Archbishop of Canterbury's  
Rep. to the Holy See, Director of the Anglican Centre

Keith F. Phillips, Sr. Director,  
The CARAVITA Community

Rome, 14th April 2013