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Charity No 1053899
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Archbishop Justin Welby and Pope Francis set sights on reunification – but no way around differences over female clergy and sexuality yet



Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby arrive for vespers in Rome - CREDIT: GREGORIO

Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury have publicly pledged to press on towards the full reunification of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches - while admitting they “do not yet see” a solution to differences over the female clergy and sexuality.

They insisted they were “undeterred” in their desire to heal the split between the two churches which emerged amid the convulsions of the Reformation, which began 500 years ago next year.

In a joint declaration in Rome, where they led prayers together, they spoke of decades of progress on reaching common ground on the major areas of disagreement but acknowledged there were still “serious obstacles” to full communion.



Pope Francis wears a Coventry Cross of Nails gift from Justin Welby
CREDIT: ANDREAS SOLARO/AFP

These, they acknowledged, include the ordination of female clergy in the Church of England and other Anglican provinces, a move viewed by Roman Catholics as a fundamental breach with its teaching that bishops follow in an unbroken line of male succession from the original apostles.

“While we ourselves do not yet see solutions to the obstacles before us, we are undeterred

They also singled out “more recent questions regarding human sexuality” – a deliberately vague reference to the controversies especially within the Church of England over the possibility of effectively blessing same-sex marriages and gay bishops. Crucially, however, they signalled that they would seek new ways around their theological differences, saying they believed God would “open new doors”.

They also urged their respective clergy to join forces on the ground, making the most of the “certain yet imperfect communion” the two churches already share.

And, strikingly, the Archbishop, the Most Rev Justin Welby jointly led the service with a female priest, his interim chaplain the Rev Julia Pickles, by his side.

The renewed commitment came in a service rich in symbolism in the church of San Gregorio Magno al Celio, a monastery seen by some as the spiritual home of the English church. The site’s links to Britain date back to the Sixth Century when it was the home of St Gregory the Great who as Pope dispatched St Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, on a mission to help reconvert the Anglo-Saxons.

In a vivid symbol of reconciliation, Archbishop Welby gave the Pope his own Coventry Cross of Nails – the symbol of international peace-making ministry which grew out of the destruction of Coventry Cathedral in the Second World War. Pope Francis wore it around his neck and in turn presented Archbishop Welby with a replica of the staff of Pope St Gregory.

The leaders of the two churches, which for centuries viewed each other as heretical, repeatedly spoke of their “common faith” and “common baptism” and described members of the both denominations as “brothers and sisters”.

The service marked the 50th anniversary of closer ties between the two churches in the wake of the historic visit by Archbishop Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI, which led to the establishment of an Anglican Centre in Rome.

They spoke of a desire to put “painful centuries of separation” behind them. Referring to the efforts of the last 50 years, they added: “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.”

“These,” they said “essentially amounted to differences over organisation - or “how authority is exercised in the Christian community” but nevertheless “constitute serious obstacles to our full unity”.

“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”.

They pledged to work together on issues such as the environment, fighting poverty and extremism. In a short homily Archbishop Welby also pointed to shared concerns on issues such as abortion and euthanasia, speaking of a world where “the weak, the unborn, the trafficked, the dying, those with disabilities are treated not as humans but as inconveniences”.

John Bingham, religious affairs editor – The Telegraph

CANON THEOLOGIAN



The Bishop of Truro and the Dean of Truro are pleased to announce the appointment of The Revd Professor Mark David Chapman, MA, Doctor of Philosophy, Prof of the History of Modern Theology,

Vice-Principal of Ripon College, Cuddesdon as Canon Theologian.

He was welcomed and installed at Solemn Evensong in Truro Cathedral on October 2nd.

Churches Together Culdrose



We welcome the new changes within the chaplaincy of Culdrose -

Rev'd Janice Honey-Morgan,
CSFC* Chaplain – Team Leader – Navy Cu-Chap
CSFC@mod.uk – 01326 552145

Rev'd Andrew Corness, CofE Chaplain – Navy Cu-Chap
CE@mod.uk – 01326 552226

Annette Brightman – Office Manager – Navy Cu-Chap
Office Manager@mod.uk – 01326 552388

* CSFC = Church of Scotland Free Church
The duty mobile is 07771522063

The Breakfast Church which, at the moment, we hold on the first Sunday in the month at 09:30 is proving to be very popular. We don't hold it on the base but in Culdrose Community Centre on the 'Patch' in the heart of the area where naval families are based in Helston.

A number of children attend which gives us an opportunity to have a sort of Sunday School. We are considering holding a second Breakfast Church each month, but this will depend on the thoughts of the new Team Leader, Janice, who will be settling in at the end of this week.

Walk of Witness in Solidarity with Refugees.



Forced out by war, poverty or persecution, millions of people live uncertain lives as migrants and refugees. But each of us, moved by faith, can act in welcome, respect and love.

So far this year hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced and are making perilous journeys in search of shelter. UNHCR says over 3,000 people have drowned in the Mediterranean trying to get to safety in Europe in the first 6 months of 2016. That is 1,000 MORE than in the same months of 2015.

That is why CAFOD, the Catholic Diocese of Plymouth, Anglican Diocese of Exeter and others are organising a walk of witness in solidarity with people who have been forced to become refugees because of war, climate change, exploitation and persecution.

Pope Francis calls us to "see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved".

The walk of witness will be led by the Southwest's own 'Lampedusa Cross', which is made from salvaged pieces of boats wrecked off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa, where many refugees have drowned making their way to Europe.

The walk will be a memorial for those who had perished and an act of solidarity with those who are searching for a new life of safety.

Where: Plymouth City Centre Piazza, main rally then a walk of witness to Plymouth RC Cathedral ending with a short service to conclude.

When: Saturday morning 19th November 2016 - 10am -12noon.

Organisers invite all other interested agencies and partner to join us in preparing this event contact

mary.conway@procdtr.org.uk,
martyn@exeter.anglican.org or
plymouth@cafod.org.uk

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017

Crossing Barriers is the theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017 - traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January, the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The main resources 2017 are now available as [downloads](#) from the CTBI website.

Editable versions of the materials in Word and PowerPoint are available through the CTE website.

The materials, [Crossing Barriers](#), were prepared for worldwide use by the churches in Germany based around the verses 2 Corinthians 5:14-20.



Churches Together Conference

26 November 2016 in Camborne

Address: Elim Church Camborne, Kerrier Way, Camborne,
Cornwall TR14 8FH **Telephone:** 01209 714 781

Our Aim:

to gather as Churches Together in Cornwall to pray, worship, celebrate, and learn about the work of God in our county and beyond with a focus toward leadership development.

Focus for 2017 going forward includes:

providing pastoral care for our congregations & the local community, engaging with a broader group of churches across Cornwall & planning for "Thy Kingdom Come"

programme

10am - Morning Celebration with worship offered by hosts

Greeting from Bishop Tim and leaders. *Mission project updates.*

11am - Leadership Session: Waiting on God the Holy Spirit

Led by: Bishop Tim Thornton in the Chair,
Rev. Steve Wild, Chairman of Cornwall Methodist District
Pastor Richard Curnow, Wadebridge Christian Centre
Rev Matt Noble, Truro Baptist Church

12 Noon - Being Christians Together – Faith stories in a secular society – led by Sarah Yardley

12:30pm - Lunch Break (free pasty lunch included)

1:15pm - Afternoon Praise: God's Care For Us

1:45pm - Breakout Sessions

Dementia Awareness within our churches : Led by the CTC Dementia Action Project Group

Youth Ministry: Reaching our Children and Teens led by Ray and Becky Thomas (SWYM)

Sharing the Faith: Led by Worship Director David Brittain of Camborne Elim Church

3pm — Group feedback

3:15pm — Closing Worship

3:30pm — Finish

To book your place and order your free pasty,
Please copy and paste this link

<https://bookwhen.com/transformationcornwall/e/ev-s8ck-20161126100000>

STOP PRESS



Churches across England and around the Anglican Communion are uniting around the second year of Thy Kingdom Come, the call by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York for Christians to pray in the run-up to Pentecost for more people to know Jesus Christ.

25th May to 4th June 2017

The Presidents of Churches Together in England (CTE) have announced that they have taken up the invitation for churches to pray intensively and intentionally for evangelism in the 10 days before Pentecost 2017.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said:

"It was profoundly moving to see over a hundred thousand people around England and beyond praying together during Thy Kingdom Come in the 10 days before Pentecost of 2016. As we look ahead to 2017 there is growing desire, as beautiful as it is remarkable, among people of so many denominations and nations to pray together for more people to know Jesus Christ.

"I pray that Christians everywhere say yes to this movement of the Spirit, and come together as one in prayer. This is about asking God to fill us with fresh joy and confidence to be the witnesses to Jesus Christ that we are called to be – as individuals and as churches – so that we may share His life-transforming love with those around us."

In a statement today the CTE Presidents said: "We want to encourage our brothers and sisters in churches of all traditions to partner in praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' in the days leading up to Pentecost 2017. There is no prescription about how we should pray; we hope each church will participate in a way that is authentic to them and where possible to engage in this with their partner churches in their area."

The CTE Presidents will be writing to their churches and congregations to encourage them to share this aim and to take part in this movement.

"We pray to the Father that his family, called to be one in Jesus Christ, may see the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to transform many lives and communities in our land," they said.

Churches Together in England is represented by Presidents from the major traditions of **member churches**. The current presidents are:

Archbishop Justin Welby - The Archbishop of Canterbury

Cardinal Vincent Nichols - The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

The Revd Dr Hugh Osgood - The Free Churches Moderator

The Revd Canon Billy Kennedy - The President nominated by the New Churches, the Religious Society of Friends (i.e. the Quakers) and the Lutheran and German-speaking Churches

HE Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain - The President for the Orthodox Churches

Bishop Dr Eric Brown - The Pentecostal President

Early ecumenical commitment to take part in Thy Kingdom Come 2017 includes:

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has committed to playing a full part.

The Free Churches Group is actively encouraging all its member churches to get involved.

Many of the **Pentecostal churches and new churches** will be participating, and several of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches in the UK have signalled their support.

Provinces across the Anglican Communion have been invited to join the wave of prayer, and the World Methodist Council is encouraging **all Methodists** to warmly receive and actively participate in it.

The hope is to see 'beacon' worship events in many capital cities in Europe. To view Video click below

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9oT69xnvp0>

Welby & Francis: Is it time to drop the dream of uniting the two churches?



As the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Francis push to see their two churches formally reunited, Ian Paul takes a fresh look at relations between Catholics and Anglicans.

Today the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, meets Pope Francis in Rome, their third meeting since taking office. There was a time when such meeting at all, let alone with this frequency, would have been considered unthinkable, and this meeting will celebrate the first meeting of an Archbishop of Canterbury with the Pope since the Reformation—that of Michael Ramsey and Paul VI in 1966.

The thawing of relations between Rome and Canterbury was of historic significance, and led to the founding of the Anglican College in Rome, as a permanent Anglican presence in proximity to the Vatican, as well as the series of meetings known as the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), now in its third phase. Some of the early statements signalled important clarifications of shared understanding of salvation and the church, the meaning of Holy Communion, and the nature of ordained ministry. But there was always some ambiguity about the extent to which both parties involved really represented the positions of their respected churches, and several clarifications were issued following a number of reports.

Fundamental differences

Despite the thawing of relations, and the considerable energy invested in these talks over the years, significant differences remain - which some would call 'fundamental'. The root of these is the Catholic conviction that the teaching position of the Church has equal authority with the teaching of the canonical Scriptures, something which the historic position of the Church of England (expressed in the XXXIX Articles) vociferously rejects.

Differences in ministry centre around the meaning of Holy Communion, which in the Catholic liturgy is clearly referred to as a 'sacrifice' ("May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for our sake and the sake of all the Church"), language that, even with some ambiguity around the edges, the Church of England carefully avoids. And this implies significant differences in understandings of ministry, both in terms of its purpose and focus and who is eligible to be ordained. One of the arguments in the Church of England in relation to the ordination of women was that it would put us further away from the possibility of unity with Rome.

One of the curious dynamics here is that, while Rome refuses formally to recognise the ministry of the Church of England, the same is not true in reverse. I was brought up Roman Catholic (by my Irish mother) and so was baptised, received First Holy Communion and was confirmed all within the Catholic church. Since the Church of England recognises Catholic ministry, when I came to be ordained in the Church of England, I simply need to be 'welcomed' by my vicar; my baptism and confirmation were accepted - indeed, some Anglo-Catholics seemed rather jealous of the 'true' rites that had been administered to me! In 1896, the papal bull *Apostolicae Curae* stated forcefully why Anglican orders of ministry (and so their sacraments) are null and void. At its anniversary, in 1996, many hoped that Pope Benedict would repeal this - but in fact he reiterated it as formal teaching of the Catholic Church. Strictly speaking, Pope Francis is today just meeting some chap called Justin.

Unity at any cost?

If relationships are so cordial, while being formally rather cool, it is worth asking whether institutional unity is actually that important? This is not just a question for churches; it also applies to political parties and other institutions. Political historian Dr Robert Crowcroft of Edinburgh University comments in relation to divisions within the Labour party: "unity" is not a good in itself, and to call for it is little more than tribalism of the most unthinking sort. Patriots should not 'unite' with people who back Britain's enemies abroad and who pursue a style of politics at home that is little more than malice in the guise of virtue."

Crowcroft believes that, if there are irreconcilable differences, then the honest thing to do is to split, rather than imposing unity and being caught up in a "pathological, increasingly pathetic, fixation with 'betrayal'". Adrian Hilton carries this proposal over into the question of relations between Canterbury and Rome:

"Is spiritual division necessarily wrong when it concerns what might be termed the 'betrayal' of eternal salvation? If one Christian preaches the sufficiency of Christ crucified once and for all, while another preaches Christ and him crucified over and over again, is such a dispute over the manner and meaning of that salvation a question of 'malice in the guise of virtue'? Is it a dispute worth having? Is it a schism worth sustaining? Perhaps, more importantly, does the lack of visible unity mean that 'our worship is diminished and our capacity to grow close together with God is reduced'?"

"Far from being diminished, surely our worship is enlarged and amplified by the conscience-affirming voice of Jesus which speaks of love with truth, and of truth with mercy? Love and mercy may ignite candles of peace, but what manner of peace is it without a thirst for truth?"

The church is not a political party, and so the argument does not carry over perfectly. But a recent paper from the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) makes some observations about disagreement which are pertinent. It quotes from a World Council of Churches report that articulates different forms that 'unity' can take, and these include: "communion in the fullness of apostolic faith; in sacramental life; in a truly one and mutually recognized ministry; in structures of conciliar relations and decision-making; and in common witness and service in the world."

Commenting on unity *within* the Church of England, FAOC notes: "The sequence should not be read hierarchically, as if composed in descending order of significance. Witness and service in a particular *place* in the world has shaped and indeed defined the Church of England and the way that it has lived communion in Christ. The strength of commitment here has been another crucial factor alongside common forms of worship in forming the distinctive manner in which the Church of England has held diversity in unity and pluriformity in unanimity."

Honest differences

But the same applies to relations with other denominations. It is perfectly possible for Anglicans and Roman Catholics (along with Christians from other denominations) to express "common witness and service in the world" without any formal agreements - and many would argue that this is the most important form of Christian unity, and contributes much more than decades of debate about doctrinal difference in the form of ARCIC.

And perhaps, as Hilton comments, it is rather important to be honest about our differences rather than try and cover them over. The constant refrain is a text that Hilton, too, cites, from John 17.21: "...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." But this is only the second half of Jesus' prayer, and his central request to his Father comes in verse 17: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." In the long term, complete unity will only come by means of agreement on the truth. But in the meantime, good relations and shared actions testify to the truth of God's grace more than any form of institutional unification.

My hope is that the meeting of the two leaders will encourage this kind of mutual respect and shared action by local churches and Christians of each denomination around the country - which will make it a worthwhile meeting.

Revd Dr Ian Paul is a member of the Archbishops' Council, and blogs at psephizo.com