

## **Anglicans and Catholics finding one voice 'to express our faith in our contemporary culture'**

A communiqué from the May 2013 meeting  
of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada

Inspired by the apostle Peter's exhortation to offer "an account of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15), members of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada (ARC Canada) are working on a project aimed at giving such an account with one voice.

Using as their starting point some of the fundamental questions that continue to be asked by people inside and outside the church, members of ARC Canada are composing short, accessible pieces of writing that offer responses rooted in the common Christian tradition shared by Catholics and Anglicans.

Among the questions being addressed by the Common Witness Project are: Why believe? Why is the world the way it is? What is my mission in life? Are science and faith compatible? What good is the church? Is suffering good for anything? Will it be okay?

"For over 40 years Anglicans and Roman Catholics have been engaged in dialogue, both at the national and international levels, mapping out the extent to which we share common elements of faith, and trying to make progress on communion-dividing points of doctrine and church practice," said Bishop Don Bolen, the Roman Catholic bishop of Saskatoon and ARC Canada co-chair.

"The Common Witness Project builds on that work by addressing the challenge both our churches face in seeking a language with which to express our faith in our contemporary culture, addressing perennial human questions in the way they are being asked today. The project has been a gift for all of us working on it, and we look forward to finalizing it within the next year," Bishop Bolen said.

The Common Witness Project emerged out of a desire expressed by the Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops' Dialogue of Canada for the two churches to speak together in the increasingly secularized context in which Canadian Anglicans and Catholics find themselves.

In doing so, ARC Canada co-chair Bishop Linda Nicholls said Anglicans and Catholics are reminded of the high level of agreement they share on matters of faith.

"It can be easy for us to focus on what divides us," said Bishop Nicholls, who is bishop of the Trent-Durham area of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. "The Common Witness Project is our opportunity to focus on the shared core of our faith and our witness to it in the face of the questions of daily life. Our own discussions of the questions have been rich and delightful and we hope that same richness will be shared by those who will receive the project in the future."

The exact shape the Common Witness Project will finally take is still under discussion, but the intent is that it will become a teaching resource for both churches as they seek to proclaim the Christian faith to a new generation.

The Common Witness Project was the focus of ARC Canada's work during its meeting in Montreal May 16-18. The members of the dialogue express their gratitude to Bishop Barry Clarke and the Anglican Diocese of Montreal for their hospitality in

hosting the gathering, which as usual included common prayer, shared meals, and social time.

ARC Canada will next meet in December in Niagara Falls. Part of that gathering will include a day-long joint meeting with the Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops' Dialogue of Canada, an annual pattern of meeting that began in 2011, and out of which the Common Witness Project emerged.

The Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada was established in 1971 and has been meeting continually ever since. Its current members are:

**Anglican**

The Rt. Rev. Linda Nicholls (co-chair)

The Rev. Dr. Eileen Conway

The Rev. Prof. Kevin Flynn

Dr. Joseph Mangina

The Rev. Dr. David Neelands

The Ven. Bruce Myers (co-secretary)

**Roman Catholic**

The Most Rev. Don Bolen (co-chair)

Dr. Catherine Clifford

Mr. Julien Hammond

The Rev. Dr. Raymond Lafontaine

The Rev. Alexander Laschuk

Dr. Carolyn Chau (co-secretary)