

Ad Clerum:

Re: The College of Bishops' Meeting in Portsmouth

From: +Peter, +Craig, +Carl

16 October 2007

Dear Brethren,

Since your bishops came back from the College of Bishops' meeting in Portsmouth many of you have been anxious for information on what happened, especially about the progress of our approach to the Holy See. We can tell you that after the meeting of the College, the Primate, Bishop Mercer and Bishop Wilkinson flew on to Rome on the 8th of October to deliver a letter to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the 9th.

Remember the background: this is part of a long process. After about 450 years of attempts of varying seriousness, Anglicans and Roman Catholics really began talking to one another after the joint decision by Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey, expressed in a Common Declaration during their meeting in Rome in March 1966--41 years ago. Within a year the Commission they established had produced a report that proclaimed "penitence for the past, thankfulness for the graces of the present, urgency and resolve for a future in which **our common aim would be the restoration of full organic unity.**"

In April 1977 Archbishop Ramsey's successor in the See of Canterbury, Donald Coggan, and Pope Paul VI, made a further Common Declaration declaring their desire for "**the restoration of complete communion in faith and sacramental life.**"

In the same year, The Affirmation of St Louis, so deeply embedded in our ACCC Constitution and the Concordat, also declared "**our intention to seek and achieve full sacramental communion and visible unity with other Christians who 'worship the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity,'** and who hold the Catholic and Apostolic Faith in accordance with the foregoing principles." This should not be news to anyone in the ACCC!

Now we can add that a statement authorized by the Primate, Archbishop Hepworth, has been released.

The College of Bishops of the Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC) met in Plenary Session in Portsmouth England in the first week of October 2007.

*The Bishops and Vicars-General unanimously agreed on the text of a Letter to the See of Rome **seeking full, corporate, and sacramental union**. The Letter was signed solemnly by all the College and entrusted to the Primate and two Bishops chosen by the College to be presented to the Holy See.*

The Letter was cordially received at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The Primate and College of the TAC have agreed that no member of the College will give interviews until the Holy See has considered the Letter and responded.

As you can imagine, this is only the beginning of a process that will take some time, perhaps many years, to come to fruition. There will be further discussions between the COB and the Holy See with respect to the nature and details of what constitutes "full, corporate, and sacramental union" between the TAC and the See of Rome. For now we continue our prayers and our efforts to fulfil the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that there be one Flock and one Shepherd.