



DICASTERIUM
AD CHRISTIANORUM UNITATEM FOVENDAM

E Civitate Vaticana, die

6 December 2023

PROT. N. 1249
/2023/a

Reverend Father Thomas Pott OSB
Chairman, Malines Conversations Group
Rue Rivelaïne 42/7
B-1428 Lillois
Belgium

Dear Father Thomas Pott,

Exactly 102 years to the day from the beginning of the first Malines Conversations, I am very pleased to send this greeting to you, your co-editors, and all the members of the contemporary Malines Conversations Group, as you gather at Westminster Abbey in London, for the launch of the volume, *Malines: Continuing the Conversations*. To the greeting, I add my congratulations, as you mark ten years since the foundation of the group.

Several decades before the Second Vatican Council called on Catholic theologians to engage in ecumenical dialogue ‘with love for the truth, with charity, and with humility’ [*Unitatis Redintegratio*, #11], the Malines Conversations brought together theologians from the Church of England and the Catholic Church for precisely this purpose. Happily, more official rapprochement between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion soon developed, culminating in the memorable meeting between Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey in Rome in 1966.

At that time, the Pope and the Archbishop signed a Joint Declaration in which they announced their intention ‘to inaugurate between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth for which Christ prayed’ [*Joint Declaration 1966*, #5]. We can give thanks for the serious dialogue undertaken since then by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), and for the practical efforts to receive the fruits of that dialogue promoted by the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM).



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The journey towards full unity between Anglicans and Roman Catholics is neither short nor easy. The Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Francis acknowledged this frankly in their Joint Declaration in 2016: ‘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. Behind these differences lies a perennial question about how authority is exercised in the Christian community. These are today some of the concerns that constitute serious obstacles to our full unity. While, like our predecessors, we ourselves do not yet see solutions to the obstacles before us, we are undeterred. 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’ [*Joint Declaration 2016, #3*].

The quest to overcome those things that divide us must continue and this Dicastery is grateful to all who devote their intellectual and spiritual gifts to the task. As the Malines Conversations Group marks ten years of meetings, distinct from the officially mandated commissions, but complementing them, my prayer is that all efforts, both institutional and informal, in pursuit of greater unity between Anglicans and Roman Catholics will indeed help us to discern the mind of Christ for his Church.

May the Holy Spirit guide us into all truth! [*cf John 16:13*].

In Christ,

Kurt Cardinal Koch
Prefect