

Reflections • Tuesday 28 May 2019 • By Archbishop Phillip Aspinall

Celebrating the Anglican-Roman Catholic Covenant

On the Seventh Sunday of Easter (2 June) the Gospel reading is from St John, Chapter 17, in which Jesus prays to the Father that those who believe in him:

“may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

Christian unity is deeply rooted in the gospel and integrally related to God’s mission in the world: “so that the world may know that you have sent me.”

Wednesday 29 May sees a special service in St John’s Cathedral to celebrate and reaffirm the signing of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Covenant, which is now in its tenth year.

The Covenant was signed on 29 May 2009 at St Stephen’s Cathedral by myself (on behalf of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane), Archbishop John Bathersby (Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane) and Bishop Bill Morris (Catholic Diocese Toowoomba). It is a strong sign of the friendship that has long existed between the two communities and encourages continued cooperation and dialogue.

The agreement reflects the warm relationships that have existed between all three Dioceses over many years. On 29 May 1984, a Common Declaration was signed by Archbishops John Grindrod and Francis Rush in St John’s Cathedral. This event also marked the second anniversary of the meeting between His Holiness Pope Saint John Paul II, the first pontiff to visit Canterbury Cathedral, and Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie.

The Covenant commits our respective Dioceses to:

encourage our local communities to pray for one another;

celebrate an annual Ecumenical Service of Reconciliation;

convene an annual gathering of the respective Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops to include a time of shared prayer/reflection, the discussion of issues of mutual interest and concern, and the sharing of a meal together;

invite Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops to preach in each other’s Cathedrals/churches on appropriate ecumenical occasions;

promote an annual Joint Clergy Day for the clergy of the three Dioceses to reflect on the pastoral, social or theological issues which we face together;

convene a yearly meeting of the Ecumenical Commissions and Bishops of the three Dioceses;

explore possibilities for cooperative use of church plant and resources;

explore possibilities for co-operation in theological education, priestly formation and lay education and training (including the sharing of visiting speakers and guests), both between ourselves and our other ecumenical partners;

explore possibilities for co-operation in the development and presentation of church music, art, drama and appropriate public lectures and events;

acknowledging the agreement which already exists between the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba regarding pastoral care in rural communities, continue to explore the possibilities of cooperative ministry whilst respecting the limitations imposed by our different disciplines in relation to sacramental administration; and

conduct a review and celebrate a re-affirmation of the Covenant each five years.

Over these past ten years our respective Dioceses have observed the Covenant’s terms faithfully. It has been reviewed and updated several times.

A new initiative will be to include in Pray Daily local Roman Catholic parishes and communities along with our own. This will strengthen our commitment to pray for each other.

The deepening of our spiritual ties together enhances our ability to proclaim the Gospel to a sceptical world, and to bring us closer together as members of Christ's body, the Church.

Please pray for God's blessing on those who gather together to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Covenant.

The Collect for the Seventh Sunday of Easter picks up the hopes expressed in the Gospel reading:

Almighty God,
whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples
that they might be one, as you and he are one:
grant that your Church,
being bound together in love and obedience to you,
may be united in one body by the one Spirit,
that the world may believe in him whom you have sent,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall
Archbishop of Brisbane

Sunday Devotions • Monday 3 June 2019 • By Dr Stephen Harrison

Sunday Devotion: 9 June 2019, Pentecost

Main readings: [Acts 2.1-21](#) or [Genesis 11.1-9](#); [Psalm 104.26-36](#); [Romans 8.14-17](#) or [Acts 2.1-21](#); [John 14.8-17 \(25-27\)](#)

Supplementary readings: 'Song of God's Children' (*APBA* p.394), [John 14.22-31](#), [Numbers 11.24-30](#), [Romans 8.18-27](#)

"All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'" (Acts 2.12)

A university student was seen with a large 'K' printed on his T-shirt. When someone asked him what the 'K' stood for, he said, "Confused." "But," the questioner replied, "you don't spell 'confused' with a 'K'." The student answered, "You don't know how confused I am."

Witnesses to the effect of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost were amazed and perplexed. Something astounding was happening, but what did it all mean? Some were quick to draw conclusions, speculating that they were all drunk. It is at this point that Peter steps in to cast some light.

As we live our life infused with the Holy Spirit, no doubt we might cause some confusion. Lesslie Newbigen, the great 20th century missiologist and theologian said: "We must live in the kingdom of God in such a way that it provokes questions for which the Gospel is the answer. This is a great challenge for Christians today: what about our life might mark us out as more than just 'nice people'. And in the words of the hymn 'should our life attract or scare?'"

Whatever we do it is likely some will be confused, while others will be cynically dismissive. The important thing is that as the Holy Spirit shapes our lives and actions in astounding ways, we might also have words that clarify the guiding presence of God in us.