



The Archbishop of Canterbury will meet the Pope in Rome next week as part a week-long summit in Canterbury and Rome to mark 50 years of closer and deeper relationships between the Anglican Communion and Roman Catholic Church. During the week, bishops from both Churches will look ahead to opportunities for greater unity.

The meeting will be Archbishop Justin and Pope Francis' third formal meeting since they were installed within a week of each other in 2013.

The highlight of the visit will be a service at the church of San Gregorio al Cielo jointly led by Archbishop Justin Welby and Pope Francis. The Sistine Chapel Choir will be joined by the choir of Canterbury Cathedral. This service, at 6pm on October 5, will also see the commissioning of 19 pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from around the world to work together in joint mission. The bishops have been chosen by IARCCUM – the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission.

The monastery church of San Gregorio is uniquely suited to such an occasion. The prior of the monastery was St Augustine, sent by the Pope in 597 to evangelise England. More recently, San Gregorio sent its ancient relic, the head of the crozier of St Gregory the Great, to Canterbury for the Primates' Gathering and Meeting in January 2016. It was a symbol of prayer and support for the Archbishop and the Anglican Communion.

Archbishop Justin Welby will be joined in Rome by the Community of St Anselm, the monastic-inspired community for young Christians from across the world and different denominations, which he founded at Lambeth Palace in 2015. The community will be on retreat in Rome and will participate in and contribute to shared acts of prayer and worship during the celebrations.

Prior of the Community of St Anselm, the Revd Anders Litzell, said: "We count it a blessing and a sign to be traveling to Rome to participate in – and celebrate – the work of unity and sisterhood between our churches, which the Spirit has been bringing to increasing fruition over many years. As a Community, we are committed to praying for, and embodying, unity in the Holy Spirit and in the bond of peace across the Body of Christ. We hope that this milestone event shall be a sign that brings us all to join our prayers with that of Christ, that we all shall be one."

The summit will mark the 50th anniversary of the Anglican Centre in Rome. There will be a dinner hosted by Archbishop Welby to celebrate its work. The Centre opened in 1966 with the aim of promoting Christian unity in a divided world. The Centre was established as a result of the historic meeting in Rome of Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Pope Paul VI during which the Pope presented the Archbishop with his papal ring. As a mark of their deep friendship and respect, Archbishop Welby will wear the ring when he visits Rome next month. The Archbishop will also have a private meeting with the Pope.

The Director of the Anglican centre, Archbishop David Moxon, said: "The Anglican Centre has worked for fifty years to help Roman Catholics and Anglicans work together, pray together, study and talk together. The journey we are on demands the laying-down of old fears and

misconceptions of each other, and the building up of a shared story together. These celebrations mark the writing of a new chapter in the history of the Christian Church.”

The week will also include the formal presentation of a book marking the 20 years of work on reconciling the two churches by the second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II). The Commission met between 1983 and 2005. The document ‘*Looking Towards a Church Fully Reconciled*’ has been produced following a mandate from Pope Benedict and Archbishop Rowan Williams in 2009. It will be presented to the Pope and the Archbishop.

The 19 pairs of IARCUUM bishops are taking part in a summit which begins in Canterbury on Friday September 30 and ends in Rome on Friday 7 October.

The Anglican co-chair of IARCCUM, Bishop David Hamid, stressed the enormous importance of the week.

“It is an immensely significant occasion” said Bishop Hamid. “There has been such an extraordinary progress towards reconciliation between the two communions in these past fifty years that it is easy to forget just how far we have journeyed together as sisters and brothers in Christ. The common faith we have discovered through our years of dialogue now compels us to act together, sharing in Christ's mission in the world”.

Other scheduled events include:

- All bishops taking part in Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral (3.15pm, 1 October )
- A Catholic Vigil mass in Canterbury Cathedral (5.30pm, 1 October )
- A Symposium at the Pontifical Gregorian University on current relations between the two Churches and where issues remain unresolved, including a series of presentations by theologians and writers: Paula Gooder, Nick Sagovsky, Paul Murray and Anna Rowlands (9.00am-1.00pm 5 October )

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