

Internationale Altkatholische Bischofskonferenz der Utrechter Union  
International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Union of Utrecht  
Präsident: Der Erzbischof von Utrecht  
President: The Archbishop of Utrecht

**Communiqué from the meeting of the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference (IBC) in Doorn/NL from 19th to 24th June 2005**

The Old Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Union of Utrecht met from 19th to 24th June in Doorn/NL for their annual meeting. Both the Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Union of Utrecht, Bishop Jonathan Gledhill, the Bishop of Lichfield, and the Representative of ECUSA to the Union of Utrecht, Bishop Mike Klusmeyer of West Virginia (USA) were welcomed as guests. They represent the Anglican Communion as permanent observers to the IBC.

Amongst other issues, the bishops dealt with the ecumenical dialogues and contacts to other Churches. The report from the International Roman Catholic -Old Catholic Dialogue Commission was well-received. A joint paper on the primacy of the Pope is expected in the course of next year.

The Orthodox - Old Catholic Commission is also working effectively. An initial meeting clarified the topics to be addressed. These will cover above all contacts to other Churches and the consequences which arise from the ordination of women in Old Catholic Churches. The next meeting is scheduled for the autumn of this year.

An initial conversation has taken place with the Church of Sweden by way of preparation for the possibility of a dialogue. The Church of Sweden represents a strong Catholic theology and is linked to other Churches which are in communion with the Union of Utrecht. The conversations, covering a variety of topics, have shown that such a dialogue between the two Churches would be worthwhile. An official commission is to be set up to this end.

The mandate of the Anglican - Old Catholic International Co-ordinating' Council has been extended for a further five years. It is to encourage and support the growth of communion and co-operation between both church families. At first it will principally address questions of ecclesiology. A new group of Old Catholic members have been nominated for the next stage of the Commission's work.

As ever more requests from so-called 'Old Catholic' groupings in the USA are being received, the IBC commissioned a comprehensive report on such groups. The report, which was received at the meeting, raised further questions as to the size and nature of these groups, which will require further investigation. Dr. Tom Ferguson of the Episcopal Church has been of enormous help in this respect.

The IBC also dealt with the parish in Toronto, which has separated itself from the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC). The parish has been visited by Mr. B. Maan, on behalf of the Union of Utrecht, who presented a comprehensive report on his fact-finding mission. The situation is very unpleasant as the parish and individual parishioners are again and again being legally pursued by the PNCC. It was decided that the parish would be recognised as an Old Catholic parish of the Union of Utrecht. A bishop of the IBC will be nominated as the responsible Delegate but a

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local bishop of the Episcopal Church in Canada would be asked to perform episcopal duties. Certainly the IBC will not be assuming any financial or legal responsibilities for the parish. This position was already communicated to the parish last year and was re-confirmed this year on the basis of the report.

A study day was dedicated to the theme of the ecumenical role of the Old Catholic Churches. It was decided to produce a document detailing the ecclesiological vision and the strategies needed to fulfil this vision and its goals with a view to developing the Old Catholic position further within the ecumenical movement. This would serve the purpose of enabling the Churches of the Union of Utrecht to fulfil the (ecumenical) role to which they feel called. To this end the document will also contain concrete short and medium term goals. The document can be expected next year.

The bishops also addressed the topic of marriage. The report which they had commissioned on the subject gave rise to the wish for a more in-depth discussion on the matter. Therefore it was decided to take the topic as the key theme for the study day at next year's meeting.

The next meeting will take place in Switzerland. The dates have yet to be finalised.

Amersfoort und Bern, 28th June 2005

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Bishops' Conference