



A Common Declaration

In this Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist, we, Archbishops John Grindrod and Francis Rush, leaders of the Anglican and Roman Catholic communities of Brisbane, have come together to give thanks to God for the progress that has been made in the work of reconciliation between our two communions. In the presence of the leaders of other Christian Churches we have listened to the Word of God, we have begged His forgiveness, and we have celebrated our unity in Christ who is the true vine and the light who enlightens the whole world.

On this night, we are conscious of the historic meeting two years ago of Pope John Paul and Archbishop Runcie in the Cathedral Church of Christ at Canterbury. Once again we hear their challenge:

"We call on the bishops, clergy and faithful people of both our communions in every country, diocese and parish in which our faithful live side by side. We urge them all to pray for this work and to adopt every possible means of furthering it through their collaboration in deepening their allegiance to Christ and in witnessing to him before the world. Only by such collaboration and prayer can the memory of past enmities be healed and our historical antagonisms overcome."

It is with gratitude to God that we celebrate our rich heritage as Australians. It is a heritage which has been blessed with a marked degree of religious tolerance and a diversity of cultural traditions. While recognising our failure to live out these ideas, we acknowledge the many contributions to the cause of unity of those who have gone before us. It is their struggle and their commitment which have made this day possible.

We commend the members of both our communions who have engaged so whole-heartedly and enthusiastically in the recent ARCIC study programme. We salute the courage, the honesty and the fraternal charity which they have brought to those moments of sharing and listening as they discussed together those matters so precious to their respective traditions.

Heartened by their response and encouraged by the faithfulness of their efforts, we commit ourselves to work together towards fulfilling that dream of unity, when we all will be one. With deep respect for each other's tradition and integrity, we look forward to the time when we can greet each other fully as sister churches under the one headship of Christ.

Our aim is not limited to the union of our two communions alone, to the exclusion of other Christians, but rather extends to the fulfilment of God's will for all his people. Every moment we listen to each other with charity and respect, every step that brings us closer together, is a moment and a step which draws us closer to all our Christian brothers and sisters. We therefore welcome the presence tonight of so many fellow Christians whose churches and communities join with us in prayer and work for the unity of all. We rejoice in the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches which led to the publication of the Lima document on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" and we promise to do all in our power to make it a focus of joint reflection between all Christians in the near future.

This holy season reminds us of the presence of the Risen Lord in our midst. As we prepare to celebrate the great festivals of Ascension and Pentecost, we pray that we may always be aware that we are drawn together under the one Lordship of Christ. He is the Lord who sends us his Spirit. He is the Lord who breaks down the barriers of race and language and religious intolerance. He is the Lord who calls us to be one. Confident in the power of that crucified and risen Lord, we commit ourselves anew to the task of promoting unity with unshakeable faith, renewed hope and ever-increasing love.

+ John Grindrod.

+ Francis Rush.

The Most Rev. John Grindrod, K.B.E.
ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

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