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## **ANGLICAN-CATHOLIC COMMISSION ENTERS NEW PHASE**

### **Follows Pope's Meeting With Archbishop of Canterbury**

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 30, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The third phase of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission will begin with the new year.

The decision to move into this new phase in 2010 follows the Nov. 21 meeting between Benedict XVI and the Anglican archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, a Vatican communiqué reported Saturday.

During that meeting, the religious leaders "reaffirmed their desire to strengthen ecumenical relations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics."

On Nov. 23, there was a meeting of the committee responsible for preparing the third phase of this commission.

The communiqué explained that "this third phase will deal with fundamental questions regarding the Church as Communion Local and Universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church comes to discern right ethical teaching."

It reported that in the coming months members will be nominated to the commission and a date for its first meeting will be announced.

#### Dialogue

The two ecclesial structures through which the theological dialogue between Catholics and Anglicans is carried forward are the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, which met for its first phase in 1970, and the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, which first met in 2001.

The former concentrates on topics that spark theological controversies between Catholics and Anglicans. The latter reinforces these goals, while identifying methods of expressing in concrete deeds the spiritual communion attained.

The first working phase of the international commission (1970-1981) was sealed with declarations on the Eucharist and ministry, and by statements on authority in the Church.

The second phase, which began in 1983, produced a historic declaration titled "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ" (2005).

That document was the fruit of six years of work by 18 Catholic and Anglican theologians. It includes statements on salvation and justification, on the nature of the Church and further studies on the authority of the Church.

Over the past 20 years, the commission has published four joint declarations: "Salvation and the Church" (1987), "Church as Communion" (1991), "Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church" (1994) and "The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church" (1999).

These texts are not statements officially authorized by the Catholic Church or the Anglican Communion, but they are studied and valued by both.