

# ACU academic appointed to the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission

AUSTRALIAN Catholic University's (ACU) Dr Emmanuel Nathan has been formally appointed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC).

The ARCIC was established in 1967 by Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey with the intention to make ecumenical progress between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. The sponsors are the Anglican Consultative Council and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (formerly the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity).

Archbishop of Birmingham, England, the Most Reverend Bernard Longley is the present Catholic co-chair of the Commission and the Right Reverend Philip Freier, Primate of Australia, is the Anglican co-chair.

The highly prestigious appointment reflects the strong credentials of Dr Nathan, a senior lecturer at ACU in biblical studies and the comparative study of sacred texts in the Abrahamic traditions.

"I am deeply humbled by the invitation and am looking forward to being of service to this commission in its great work to build bridges of understanding and dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion," Dr Nathan said.

"More broadly, I hope this can serve to highlight the many religious dialogues taking place in the world today that are aimed at building greater understanding and coexistence between communities."

ARCIC is currently in its third phase and on the basis of the 2008 Common Declaration of Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams has been mandated to study, "the Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching."

The Commission has recently published an agreed statement, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be Church-Local, Regional, Universal*, which was completed in 2017. This document provides the ecclesiological background for the next phase of the Commission which is to study "how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching."

In light of the significance of ARCIC in promoting Christian unity and dialogue, Dr Nathan is pleased to be joining other ACU colleagues within the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy who are also recipients of Vatican appointments.

"I think especially to colleagues such as Msgr Professor Denis Edwards, Reverend Associate Professor Orm Rush, Dr David Kirchhoffer, Dr Gemma Cruz and Dr Edmund Chia," Dr Nathan said.

"I think too of colleagues already involved in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue such as Reverend Dr Michael Trainor (Jewish-Catholic relations), Associate Professor Stephen Downs and Dr Josephine Laffin (Catholic-Lutheran dialogue)."

As Australia's pre-eminent Catholic University, the appointment of Dr Nathan reflects ACU's international reputation for excellence in theology, divinity and religious studies, which is currently ranked at 53 in the world (QS World University Rankings by Subject).

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