



England and Wales have met for prayer, reflection and conversation

Bishops from the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales have taken part in shared worship, prayer, conversation and a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Julian in a two-day meeting in Norwich.

More than 40 bishops gathered for the joint meeting hosted at the Roman Catholic and Anglican Cathedrals in the city.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Cardinal Nichols and the Archbishops of Birmingham, Liverpool and Southwark were among those attending.

The gathering began with prayers in the Catholic Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich, led by the Archbishop of Birmingham, before a pilgrimage to the St Julian Shrine in Norwich.

Father Richard Stanton, Priest Director of the Shrine and Parish Priest of St John the Baptist Timberhill, in Norwich, told the bishops that 4,000 pilgrims visit every year from across the world.

He spoke of the ‘daily prayerful witness’ in the church through morning and evening prayer and celebration of the Eucharist. He added that ‘quiet multitudes’ come to the church every day to pray and seek God in stillness and silence.

He said: “Many times I think the most important thing I do is to open the doors and allow people to come in.”

The bishops took part in a walk from the Shrine to the Anglican Cathedral.

They also attended Morning Prayer, Choral Evensong (pictured, above, photo credit Bill Smith) and a service of the Eucharist, presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the city's Anglican Cathedral.

Discussions included the Synodal journey in the Catholic church, the Coronation, and a session on St John Henry Newman with Revd Professor Roderick Strange, Rector, Mater Ecclesiae, St Mary's University London.

The Bishop of Norwich, who hosted the meeting, said: “It has been wonderful to pray and be on pilgrimage with so many of the Roman Catholic bishops with whom we have great bonds of affection and friendship.

“Through praying together, learning and reflection, my hope is that the Holy Spirit will inspire us and guide us to greater unity.

“Norwich has a long tradition of hospitality and it was very moving for us to visit the shrine of St Julian, a place that receives thousands of Christian pilgrims every year from across the world.

“As Pope Francis has said, Mother Julian speaks to us from across the centuries and is increasingly being acknowledged and celebrated for her significance in the Christian tradition”.

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The joint meetings have been held around every two years since 2006. The venues hosting the meetings have been Birmingham, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London and Norwich.

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