



*The Anglican Parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields,
Toronto / Used with permission*

CHAPTER V

Neighbours in faith: Welcoming the stranger

For this story we turn to the Rev. Canon Philip Hobson, OGS, Rector of the Anglican parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Diocese of Toronto:

~~~~~

*Our fellowship began some years ago when Mary Jo Leddy, a committed Roman Catholic and founder of Romero House, a home for refugees in Toronto, gave St. Martin-in-the-Fields Anglican parish a call looking for space for their community meal at Christmas. We were glad to offer our Parish Hall and since that date every Christmas Day Romero House has held its Peace Dinner at St. Martin's. Out of this connection a strong bond and relationship has*

*developed between the parish and Romero House. All of the homes that house the residents of Romero House are located within the geographical boundaries of St. Martin's parish quite close to the church and so as neighbours in the faith this relationship seems a very natural one.*

*Over the years the links between our two communities have grown. Since our patron saint, St. Martin, is noted for dividing his officer's cloak in two to clothe a beggar one cold night, we began the practice of collecting winter coats for the Romero House clothing bank. We have also made regular annual financial donations to Romero House and have been glad to help with special needs (e.g. backpacks for the refugee children going to school) at various times. Several parishioners have become involved as volunteers at Romero House, others have served on the Board and assisted in the leadership of the Romero House community. Beginning two years ago, St. Martin's Parish Hall has also become the site for Romero House's annual Howcroft Lecture in January which involves noted speakers and draws a very large crowd.*

*Some years ago, the parish borrowed from Romero House a large stand-alone cut out of the Holy Family on their flight into Egypt. We placed it in the church for some weeks as a reminder to us that Christ and his family were themselves refugees, and that Christ calls us to reach out to assist the refugees and exiles of our world. Out of this heightened awareness has come the parish's own refugee ministry. In recent years we have been involved either on our own or in cooperation with other local parishes in three different refugee sponsorships. The ongoing fellowship between Romero House and St. Martin's has been a wonderful partnership in the faith. I know that this partnership has been instrumental in helping us at*

*St. Martin's to grow in our Christian faith and to put that faith into action in very concrete ways.*

---



*Romero House pilgrims to Rome for the Canonization of St. Oscar Romero / Used with permission*

The first agreed statement of ARCIC II, *Salvation and the Church* (SC), was published in January 1987. Although the topic of justification had not been of major significance in the English Reformation, the Anglican Consultative Council asked ARCIC II to address it because of the widespread view that the continental Reformers' teaching on justification is an element in the faith which is still to be jointly confessed today. With the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ) by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation in 1999, *Salvation and the Church* has now been recognized by the Consultative Council as an affirmation of the Anglican Communion's alignment with the JDDJ's

basic consensus in the doctrine of justification. Earlier concerns about differing understandings of the role of good works in salvation have been resolved or held in reconciled diversity. The above story illustrates how, for both Anglicans and Roman Catholics, Christian faith is lived in action not only in the life of the individual but also in the corporate life of the Church.

In the words of *Salvation and the Church*, “The human response to God’s initiative is itself a gift of grace, and is at the same time, a truly human, personal response. It is through grace that God’s new creation is realized. Salvation is the gift of grace; it is by faith that it is appropriated” (SC, 9). Further, “Faith, therefore, not only includes an assent to the Gospel but also involves commitment of our will to God in repentance and obedience to his call; otherwise faith is dead (Jas. 2:17). Living faith is inseparable from love, issues in good works, and grows deeper in a life of holiness” (SC,10). In the Preface to *Life in Christ*, the dialogue’s two co-chairs state: “As Christians we seek a common life not for our own sakes only but for the glory of God and the good of humankind.” The text goes on to affirm that the new life in Christ “has been entrusted to the Church for the good of the world” (LC, 9). This life is for everyone and embraces everyone. In seeking the common good, therefore, the Church listens and speaks, not only to the faithful, but also to women and men of good will everywhere” (LC, 9). With reference to the portrayal of communion among the disciples in Acts, the dialogue report claims: “This striking example of community care and concern has, down the ages, prompted a critique of every form of society based on the unbridled pursuit of wealth and power. It has challenged Christians to use their gifts and resources to equip God’s people for the work of service

(cf. Eph. 4.12)” (LC, 21). We see this lived out in the close partnership between St. Martin’s and Romero House and their work with refugees.



*Fr. Philip Hobson, OGS / Used with permission*

*Father Hobson calls the relationship which has developed between Romero House and St. Martin’s a “partnership in faith”? How does this differ from other supportive relationships which might have developed?*

*Have you had a similar experience of living faith expressed in action? What did you learn from this experience?*

*How can these kinds of faith partnerships be encouraged locally?*