

THE EUCHARIST

A FURTHER STATEMENT BY THE A.R.C.I.C.
SUBCOMMISSION ON THE EUCHARIST, BASED
ON THE VENICE DRAFT DOCUMENT

1. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ God reconciled men to Himself, and, in Him, offers unity to all mankind. Our relationship with one another as children of God is inaugurated by baptism into Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and is expressed and deepened through the Eucharist.
2. (7) In the course of the Church's history several traditions have developed in expressing Christian understanding of the Eucharist: for example, various names have become customary as descriptions of the Eucharist: Lord's Supper, Liturgy, Holy Mysteries, Synaxis, Mass, Holy Communion. Some of these have acquired emotive content after divisions have arisen, and have been taken as slogans. Perhaps the Eucharist has become the most universally acceptable term. Underneath the use of differing terms lie the real problems of belief and practice. (*)

Insert Venice II, 2, 3 & 4.

I THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

3. (5) ~~2-6~~ We agree that when His people gather for the Eucharist to commemorate His saving acts for our redemption, Christ ^{sacramentally} makes effective among us the eternal benefits of his victory on the cross and elicits and renews our response of faith, thanksgiving and self-surrender. By Christ's activity through the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist the life of the Church is built up, its fellowship strengthened and its mission furthered. In the Eucharist the Church becomes most intensely itself. The identity of the Church as the Body of Christ is both expressed and effectively proclaimed by its being gathered around, and partaking of, His Body and Blood. In the whole action of the Eucharist, and in and by His ^{Sacramental} presence given through bread and wine, the Crucified and Risen Lord, according to His promise, offers Himself to His people.

4(6) In the Eucharist we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Receiving a foretaste of the kingdom to come, we are spurred on to hasten its present realisation on earth. We look back with thanksgiving to what Christ has done for us: we greet his presence among us, we look forward to his final appearing in the fulness of his kingdom when "The Son also himself (shall) be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). By partaking of the one loaf and gathering around the same table in this communal meal at the invitation of the same Lord, we are one in commitment not only to Christ and to one another, but also to the mission of the Church in the world.

insert as footnote Venice 8^a (Christ - Passover)

(*) In this redaction we have deliberately left aside those aspects of Eucharistic doctrine that have not been historically a source of conflict.

II. THE EUCHARIST AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

54 (8) As for the relation which exists between the Eucharist and the unique sacrifice of Christ, we all accept Christ's death and resurrection as having taken place once and for all in history. Christ's death on the Cross, the culmination of his whole life of obedience, was the one, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Any attempt to express a nexus between the sacrifice of Christ and the Eucharist must not obscure this fundamental fact of Christian faith. Yet we believe that "The Lord's Supper, a gift of God to His Church, ... is a means whereby the sacrifice of the Cross, which we proclaim, is operative within the Church" ~~(cf. The Bristol Document accepted at Uppsala, 1968).~~ A recourse to the notion of memorial, as understood in the Passover celebration at the time of Christ (i.e. the making effective in the present of an event in the past) opens the way to a fresh understanding of this relationship. For the Eucharistic memorial is not only a calling to mind of what is past, or of its significance, it is the Church's effective proclamation of God's mighty acts. Christ instituted the Eucharist as the memorial (anamnesis) of the whole of God's reconciling action in him, and by this communion with Christ the Church participates in that reality (cf. op.cit.)

*add par.
from Lutheranism
sic*

Add: We affirm & accept the Lutheran RC statement: "The members -
has given us" (Vol. 189-90)

III. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

6 B. (10) This communion with Christ presupposes his true presence, in a mysterious fashion, effectively signified by the bread which is his body and by the wine which is his blood, that are given for the spiritual nourishment of his people. It is a dynamic presence, finding its fulfilment in the unity of Christ with the Church, which is his body. By the term 'dynamic', it should be noted, there is no intention of restricting the presence of Christ to his power alone. The intention is to affirm that, through the Eucharistic action, completed by communion, the bread and wine are no longer food and drink for the natural life, but the Body and Blood of Christ, given to believers for life everlasting. To achieve this something must happen to the elements.

7 As an explanation of this, the word 'transubstantiation' is used in Roman Catholic tradition to indicate not an external change of the elements, but a change in their inner reality. The use of this term to express this mysterious change effected by the power of the Holy Spirit does not necessitate the acceptance of any particular philosophical interpretation.

8 Some Anglicans would accept this kind of definition with these safeguards, which go a long way towards meeting the objections to transubstantiation raised in Article 28. But others would prefer to refrain from a precise definition of the moment at which the sign becomes truly efficacious and of the manner in which this occurs. They would emphasise that the whole movement of the Eucharist culminates in the believing reception of the elements, a spiritual feeding upon the Body and Blood of Christ.

9 We have reached a greater measure of agreement in our understanding of the nature of the Eucharist, but it is apparent, from the preceding section, that there remains a serious point of non-agreement, which requires further examination. This divergence is high-lighted by the Catholic belief that the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ necessarily implies the permanence of His presence in the elements.

10 We submit to the Commission the question whether we have attained a sufficient measure of agreement for the subject of the Eucharist no longer to constitute an obstacle to reunion.

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