

SUB-COMMISSION A

1. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. By His life, death, and resurrection, ^{He has won redemption for} mankind ~~has been redeemed~~. Through His Spirit in the Church the ascended Christ continues to draw men into union with God and with one another. He makes himself present in word and sacrament to [the faith of] his people, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, objects, actions, experiences become the means by which Christ meets and saves us. As children of God, our relationship with Him and with one another is inaugurated by baptism into Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and is expressed and deepened through the Eucharist.

2. 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.

I THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

^{It makes effective the benefits}
3. When His people gather for the Eucharist to commemorate His saving acts for our redemption, Christ 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. Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist builds up the life of the Church, strengthens its fellowship and furthers its mission. 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 presence given through the sacramental elements, the Crucified and Risen Lord, according to His promise, offers Himself to His people.
^{He offers himself}

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"

4. In the Eucharist we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Receiving a foretaste of the kingdom to come, 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 gathering around the same table in this communal meal at the invitation of the same Lord and partaking of the one loaf we are united and strengthened in commitment not only to Christ and to one another, but also to the mission of the Church in the world.

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II THE EUCHARIST AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

5. Christ's death and resurrection took place one 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. There can therefore be no repetition of or addition to what was there accomplished once for all by Christ. 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.

Christ and the early Church, in expressing the meaning of His death and resurrection, found the language of sacrifice indispensable. For the Hebrew, sacrifice was a traditional means of communication with God. This involved a wide range of expression, for example, the Passover, which was essentially a communal feast, the Day of Atonement, which was essentially expiatory; the Covenant, which was essentially the establishing of communion between God and man. 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 the relationship between the sacrifice of Christ and the Eucharist. 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.

In Roman Catholic belief the Mass is a memorial (before God and man) of the one sacrifice of Christ, a participation in the merits and grace of that one sacrifice and therefore also an offering of ourselves and a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. At the same time it is the supreme moment of Christian intercession and is therefore an offering for the living and the dead. Anglicans have commonly seemed to Roman Catholics to be altogether too reticent on the theme of offering in the Eucharist. However, all the themes mentioned above find some place in Anglican liturgy and devotion, and it is sufficient to recall the words used in 1897 by the English Archbishops in their Answer to Pope Leo XIII:-

"We make provision with the greatest reverence for the consecration of the holy Eucharist and commit it only to properly ordained Priests and to no other ministers of the Church. Further, we truly teach the doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice and do not believe it to be a 'nude commemoration of the sacrifice of the Cross' an opinion which seems to be attributed to us by the quotation made from the Council (sc. Trent). But we think it sufficient in the Liturgy which we use in celebrating the holy Eucharist - while lifting up our hearts to the Lord, and when now consecrating the gifts already offered that they may become to us the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, - to signify the sacrifice which is offered at that point of the service in such terms as these. We continue a perpetual memory of the precious death of Christ, who is our Advocate with the Father and the propitiation for our sins according to his precept until His coming again. For first we offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; then next we plead and represent before the Father the sacrifice of the cross, and by it we confidently entreat remission of sins and all other benefits of the Lord's passion for all the whole Church; and lastly we offer the sacrifice of ourselves to the Creator of all things which we have already signified by the oblations of His creatures. This whole action in which the people has necessarily to take part with the Priest, we are accustomed to call the Eucharistic sacrifice."

The words employed in the Roman Catholic tradition and liturgy, which speak of our offering the Sacrifice of Christ to the Father, appear to some Anglicans to deny the fact of the once-for-all nature of the Cross. But it is implicit in this language of 'offering' that we can offer nothing to God except through the sacrifice of Christ.*

* Possibly our mutual misunderstandings spring from emphasis on different facets of the atonement, a subject which the New Testament expresses in a variety of ways. In one, the stress is laid upon the self-offering and obedience of Christ in his humanity, which helps to explain the Roman Catholic emphasis. The other approach emphasizes the unique action of God for man's justification through the death of the Cross, which explains the concern of some Anglicans over Roman Catholic usage. However, both these approaches can be found in each of our two communions.

III THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

6. This communion with Christ presupposes his true presence, approached by faith and not by sense, and 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 the bread and wine, through the Eucharistic action, completed by communion, are no longer common food and drink, but the Body and Blood of Christ, given to believers for life everlasting.

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 the mystery of this change effected by the power of the Holy Spirit does not necessitate the acceptance of any particular philosophical interpretation. 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).

8. With the Anglican tradition there are those who are unwilling to speak of the signs as truly efficacious until reception occurs. Many others, and this they share with Roman Catholics and the Orthodox Churches, believe that after the consecration, in accordance with the faith and intention of the Church, Christ is truly and sacramentally present.

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8. Within the Anglican tradition there are those who, on the ground (shared by both Anglicans and Roman Catholics) that the whole purpose of the Eucharist finds its culmination in communion, speak of the signs as truly efficacious but not in divorce from reception in communion. By this it is not meant that the faith of the individual is the creator of the presence. Many other Anglicans, and this they share with Roman Catholics and Orthodox, believe that, in accordance with the faith and intention of the Church, Christ is already truly and sacramentally present and is then given to the faithful in communion.

9. Omit.

10. We have reached a great measure of agreement on doctrinal issues, but realise that these are not the only matters to be taken into account.