



UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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NEWS

NATIONAL CATHOLIC OFFICE FOR INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BISHOPS' COMMITTEE RESPONDS TO EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE STATEMENT

WASHINGTON--The U.S. Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (BCEIA) has issued a statement of response to the "Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine" adopted late last year by an international Anglican and Roman Catholic commission.

The BCEIA said it was happy to observe that serious dialogue on the Eucharist, as recommended by the Second Vatican Council's Decree On Ecumenism, "has been so successfully employed at the highest level by representatives of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Communion. And, above all, that this dialogue has issued in the 'Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine.'"

The BCEIA expressed hope that differences dividing Anglicans and Roman Catholics on the subject of the Eucharist can be resolved on the principles of the Agreed Statement.

Last December 31, an international Anglican-Catholic commission established by Pope Paul VI and Anglican Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury released a statement of "substantial agree-

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ment on the doctrine of the Eucharist." The international commission had adopted the statement at a meeting at Windsor, England, on September 7, 1971.

The Vatican press office noted at the time that the "substantial agreement" is strictly a "study document." It said the agreement "was not yet complete and that there are still essential points to be clarified."

In the United States, meanwhile, the U.S. Anglican-Roman Catholic consultation known as ARC, which consists of representatives officially appointed by authorities of the two churches in this country, issued a statement saying that:

"While at this stage it [the Windsor statement] has only the authority of the distinguished bishops and theologians who signed it, the statement will serve as an effective instrument for clarifying the degree of convergence to which the Holy Spirit has already led us and for understanding the terminology and emphasis which have grown up in our separate traditions on such subjects as Eucharistic sacrifice and Christ's Eucharistic presence."

In its statement, the BCEIA said it had accepted ARC's comments with gratitude, and especially the reservations of some members of that group on the matter of Presence and Sacrifice as regards the doctrine of the Eucharist.

It also took note of separate commentaries on the Windsor statement that have been made by Bishop Alan C. Clark, who is Roman Catholic Chairman of the international Anglican-Catholic commission; Rev. Herbert J. Ryan, S.J., of Woodstock College,

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a member of ARC; Dr. Julian Charley, an Anglican theologian; the Theological Commission of the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops; and the Roman Catholic National Theology Commission of England.

The BCEIA statement commended the international Anglican-Catholic commission for "bypassing polemics of the 16th and subsequent centuries" and for adopting more contemporary--and more ancient and traditional--expressions of Eucharistic doctrine found in Pope Pius XII's encyclicals "Mystici Corporis" and "Mediator Dei," the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Priestly Life and Ministry, and the antiphon "O Sacrum Convivium," a celebrated summary of Catholic Eucharistic doctrine.

"We express the Christian hope that on the principles of the agreed statement, whatever differences appear to divide the Anglican and Roman Catholic Communions on this subject of the Eucharist can be solved," the BCEIA said.

The members of the BCEIA are Bishop Charles H. Helmsing of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., chairman; Bishop William W. Baum of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Mo.; Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan of Worcester; Bishop Joseph Green of Reno, Nevada; Bishop Mark J. Hurley of Santa Rosa, Calif.; Bishop Francis J. Mugavero of Brooklyn; and Auxiliary Bishop T. Austin Murphy of Baltimore.

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