

AGREEMENT ON THE EUCHARIST

The Windsor Statement
of the Anglican/Roman Catholic
International Commission,
December 31st, 1971.

With an Introduction and Commentary
by
the Right Rev. ALAN C. CLARK, D.D.

Bishop of Elmham and Auxiliary in Northampton,
Roman Catholic Co-Chairman of the International Commission,
Chairman of the National Ecumenical Commission
of England and Wales.

Roman Catholic Ecumenical Commission
44, Grays Inn Road,
London, W.C.1.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction to the Statement.
2. The Text of the Windsor Statement.
3. Theological Commentary.
4. Appendix.
5. Statement of the Roman Catholic National Theology Commission.

The Statement on the Eucharist Copyright the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission.

The Introduction, Commentary and Appendix Copyright Alan C. Clark 1972.

NOTE: The Statement is published as a separate booklet by the S.P.C.K. London @ 10p net.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgment is gratefully given to Dr. Julian Charley for his kind permission to use his Historical Introduction extensively in the writing of my own introduction to the Statement. Reference is to: **The Anglican-Roman Catholic Agreement on the Eucharist**, Grove Booklet, Bramcote, Notts.; December, 1971. Also to Fr. Herbert Ryan, S.J., and to the Editors of **Worship** to quote from his article on the same subject in **WORSHIP**, Vol. 46, No. 1, p.8. Finally, my thanks to all for the reactions, official and unofficial, which have enabled me to have an accurate idea concerning the impact of the Statement.

"Obviously this Statement does not constitute agreement between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. Agreement has been reached, for the moment, at the level of the International Commission. The text is being published, so that further study and discussion may be carried out by theologians. The Commission will examine the suggestions and criticisms, take them into consideration if necessary, for the improvement of the text. All this will then constitute the basis on which authorities in both Churches can assess opinions expressed on the area of agreement."⁽¹⁾

(1) Cardinal Jan Willebrands: Address on "Church Unity" on the Vatican Radio, during the Week of Prayer, January 1972.

1. INTRODUCTION

From the mixed reception which the **Agreed Statement** has received at home and abroad, it is clear that the nature, the consequences, and the authority of the document issued at the close of the Third Meeting of the International Commission (A.R.C.I.C.) at Windsor on September 7th, 1971, and published on December 31st, are not immediately evident. This is due to the fact that it is a part, however significant, of a wider doctrinal enquiry still in progress between the two Churches. It was never intended to be a final statement of belief, but rather a report of an agreement on what constitutes the central mystery of the Eucharist.

Though this Statement must rightly be judged on its merits, it has become increasingly apparent that it requires a commentary. The following pages are an attempt to provide this, and fall into two parts. The first part describes the background to the Statement, while the second, which follows the text itself, is in the nature of an explanation. For it I must accept personal responsibility, in the hope, nevertheless, that it will be a guide to the general reader. No doubt it will be superseded by others. My hope is that it will help people to understand this particular moment in our search for unity.

The Background

Ecumenism has become a dimension of the Church's mission. The Second Vatican Council opened an entirely new era. The Decree on Ecumenism, while deploring "a false conciliatory approach," advocated dialogue with other Christians.

"The meaning and order in which Catholic belief is expressed, should in no way become an obstacle to dialogue with our brethren." (para. 11).

The Decree also spoke of "churches and ecclesial communities separated from the Roman Apostolic See," not only of our "separated brethren." This acknowledgment of separated churches marked a significant advance in our thinking. Whilst speaking of the divisions in the west, the Decree further states:—

"Among those in which some Catholic traditions and institutions continue to exist, the Anglican communion occupies a special place." (para. 13).

Such a change of climate led to the visit of Dr. Ramsey to Pope Paul VI in 1966. The Archbishop has never made any secret of his desire to see the long-standing breach between the two Communions healed, and he has emphasised this in his sermon in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 1972.

At the historic meeting between the Archbishop and the Pope, it was decided to set up an Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission, which duly began its series of three meetings in 1967. A representative cross-section was sought in the membership of each team, and it was emphasised from the beginning that it was a preparation for a dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion right across the world. Hence the setting up of an international body. A programme was evolved, which is set out in the Malta Report of 1968, and the aim was firmly stated that we should work for "the full organic unity of our two Communions."

So in 1969 the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (A.R.C.I.C.) was set up upon the completion of the work of the Preparatory Commission. The original title of "Permanent" being changed to "International," to avoid the suggestion of an interminable discussion until the Parousia! Work began at Windsor in 1970, and so far there have been three meetings.

The Commission includes a body of bishops and theologians of widely different backgrounds and, therefore, of differing approach. From a purely theological point of view there is no one voice. What we set out to do was to establish the faith revealed to the world through the Church in the Person of Jesus Christ the Word of God. This gives a clue to the method we eventually arrived at, for in our initial meeting we were to some extent floundering and at a loss. Doctrinal positions in the Catholic and Anglican Churches had become historically polarised, and we now had to find a way, not to deny our past, but to escape from the constricting limits of particular controversies and especially from polemics. Hence, like children, we asked questions of ourselves, of each other, about what we believe to be the Eucharist. We adopted the counsel of St. Ignatius of Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises*:—

"It is necessary to suppose that every good Christian is more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it as false. If an orthodox construction cannot be put on a proposition, the one who made it should be asked how he understands it." (para. 22).

Of course, at the beginning it was not just the Eucharist. We had reduced our areas of immediate discussion to three main disagreements in doctrine between the two Churches: "The Church and Authority," "The Eucharist," and "Ministry." At first we tried to keep these three subjects going at the same pace, but it gradually became clear that there was a priority almost forced upon us by the dynamics of our discussions. One might have thought that, as the Church became fragmented at the Reformation particularly in the doctrine as to what constitutes the authentic Eucharist of Christ, this mystery of faith would have been relegated to a later date in the dialogue. To me it remains a source of wonder that it was not so. No one, only a few years back, could have believed that it would be seriously asserted that there is substantial agreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics today as regards our faith in the Eucharist. I do not mean to suggest that work in the other doctrinal areas has stopped, but by 1971 we had decided to concentrate our efforts, whether in South Africa or in America, on the central mystery of the Christian faith.

The meeting of the Commission at Windsor in September 1971, from which the Agreed Statement stems, was preceded by a Sub-Commission meeting in Norfolk at Easter in which a position paper was drawn up; and the most important contributory factor to the success of the September meeting was an important article by Fr. Jean Tillard, O.P., himself a member of the Commission, which appeared in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, for June/July 1971, entitled: "Catholiques romains et Anglicans: L'Eucharistie."⁽²⁾

(2) "With a thorough understanding of the writings and particular concerns of Evangelicals as well as Catholics in the Church of England, the author indicated lines of convergence that suggested a way forward in theological agreement. Allusion was made to the doctrinal section of "Growing into Union" (Buchanan et al. S.P.C.K., 1970) where Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical scholars had succeeded in achieving a considerable measure of agreement without compromising their basic convictions." (cfr. Julian W. Charley, op. cit., p. 8).

Naturally the Statement, dated September 7th 1971, was referred back to the respective authorities involved. It was greeted with pleasure and joy, though no official approval was either sought for or could be expected until, on its publication, the reaction of the churches could be known. It still carries no greater authority than that of an officially appointed Commission, but at the same time it is no mere private document, nor a complex of private opinion. It has, however, provoked differing reactions. Apart from obvious misunderstandings, which have a way of proliferating, there is genuine concern as to whether there have not been serious omissions in what claims to be a statement of faith—a credal statement, one might say. Only patient and charitable dialogue, especially within our own communities, will enable us to reach the consensus one hopes to achieve. In some ways the Statement had produced shock, but this is not necessarily unhealthy. It is time for all of us to reflect on our faith and to know it yet more deeply. It is here that one must spend a moment to identify what sort of a Statement it is.

Purpose and Method

Catholics go into dialogue with their Christian brethren confident in their faith that the Church has the mission to give to each succeeding generation the revelation of Christ. To quote the Holy Father:—

"The Catholic Church . . . is sternly aware of her fundamental duty to defend and transmit the doctrine of the faith in unequivocal terms. Orthodoxy is her first concern; pastoral magisterium her primary and providential function . . .

"The Apostle Paul's order: "Depositum custodi" (1 Tim. 6: 20; 2 Tim. 1:14) is for her such a commitment that it would be a betrayal to violate it. The teaching Church does not invent her doctrine; she is a witness, a custodian, an interpreter, a transmitter. As regards the truths of the Christian message, she could be called conservative, uncompromising . . .

"It still remains to be explained how this original revelation is transmitted through words, study, interpretation, application. That is, how it gives rise to a tradition which the magisterium of the Church receives and verifies, sometimes with decisive and infallible authority.

"It should also be recalled how knowledge of the faith, and the teaching that sets it forth, namely, theology, can be expressed in different measure, language and form. In other words, a theological "pluralism" is legitimate when it is contained within the limits of the faith and the magisterium entrusted by Christ to the Apostles and their successors." (3)

(3) "It would also be necessary to explain that the Word of God, preserved in its authenticity, is not for that reason dry and sterile, but fruitful and alive, and meant to be listened to not merely passively, but to be lived, always renewed and ever embodied in individual souls, in individual communities, in individual churches, according to human gifts, and according to the charism of the Holy Spirit, which are at the disposal of all those who become faithful disciples of the living and penetrating Word of God" (Cf. Heb. 4:12). (*Osservatore Romano*: General Audience: 19th January 1972).

These profound words of Pope Paul VI give the context and the programme of a Catholic when seeking, in dialogue, to establish the truths of the faith. These truths are always greater than the statement which expressed them, yet when these statements are confirmed by infallible authority, then their essential content marks a definitive stage in the understanding of the Church of the word of God. It is because of the presence of the Word of God to the Church in Person that an absolute content is enshrined in a contingent statement. This in no way contradicts growth in understanding and new formulations of doctrine. To quote the *Constitution on Divine Revelation*:—

"There is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down . . . As the centuries succeed one another the Church constantly moves towards the fullness of divine truth, until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in her" (*Dei Verbum*: para. 8).

This is not the moment to enter into the extremely complex contemporary problem of the relationship of changing language to the authentic understanding of revelation. But it is sufficient to indicate that no conceptualising of the faith is ever fully adequate. The point must be made that the same truth can be expressed in different ways and the content of faith can be reached by different routes.⁽⁴⁾

These comments, I feel, are necessary, because it would be wrong to expect to find in the Agreed Statement we are discussing the familiar terminology of Trent or of the Anglican Articles. **The whole purpose of this Statement is to express the understanding of the Eucharist that underlies these formulæ, to express the present faith of both Churches, and to do so in language which people can understand today.** Whether or not there are areas of ambiguity in the document, one must be careful not to qualify as ambiguous language which is simply not traditional to our own usage. It should also be born in mind that the Agreed Statement confines itself to what is of faith, and so attempts to avoid matters of theological elaboration or of Eucharistic devotion. It can be argued that this is not acceptable, but the methodology described was the one we followed. Quite evidently (as paragraph 12 recognises) areas of disagreement remain here—but the Commission feels that these "can be resolved on the principles here established," since all must stem,

(4) "(We) recognise that Christians who are orthodox in their faith may express it in varying formulations, as the Bible and the Creeds of the Early Church so well exemplify. This does not mean that all formulations are equally appropriate. Some may in fact express, and conduce to, a misapprehension of God and His relationship to man, and thus be impediments to the Christian life." (The National Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission in the U.S.A. (A.R.C.): "Doctrinal Agreement and Christian Unity").

in the long run, from an understanding of the two central points of Eucharistic faith—the sacrificial character of the Eucharist, and the Real Presence of Christ in the consecrated species.

One further point should be made. There is concern as to the representative character of both the Anglican and Catholic contribution to this Statement. There are obviously those, in both our Churches, who are not satisfied. Even at a quite high level evaluation of the Statement, there are some few who are finding the Statement, on one point or another, either too vague, or too restrictive as an adequate expression of the essentials of Eucharistic faith. The limitations of the Commission make this inevitable and the formulation is rightly under judgment.

2. THE AGREED STATEMENT OF THE ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

WINDSOR: SEPTEMBER 7th, 1971

Introduction

The following Agreed Statement evolved from the thinking and the discussion of the International Commission over the past two years. The result has been a conviction among members of the Commission that we have reached agreement on essential points of Eucharistic doctrine. We are equally convinced ourselves that, though no attempt was made to present a fully comprehensive treatment of the subject, nothing essential has been omitted. The document has been presented to our official authorities, but obviously it cannot be ratified by them until such time as our respective Churches can evaluate its conclusion.

We would want to point out that the Members of the Commission who subscribed to this Statement have been officially appointed and come from many countries, representing a wide variety of theological background. Our intention was to reach a consensus at the level of faith, so that all of us might be able to say, within the limits of the Statement: this is the Christian faith of the Eucharist.

ALAN ELMHAM }
HENRY OSSORY } Co-Chairmen.

THE STATEMENT

1. 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. The eucharist has become the most universally accepted term.) An important stage in progress towards organic unity is a substantial consensus on the purpose and meaning of the eucharist. Our intention has been to seek a deeper understanding of the reality of the eucharist which is consonant with biblical teaching and with the tradition of our common inheritance, and to express in this document the consensus we have reached.

2. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ God has reconciled men to himself, and in Christ he offers unity to all mankind. By his word God calls us into a new relationship with himself as our Father and with one another as his children—a relationship inaugurated by baptism into Christ through the Holy Spirit, nurtured and deepened through the eucharist, and expressed in a confession of one faith and a common life of loving service.

I. THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

3. When his people are gathered at the eucharist to commemorate his saving acts for our redemption, Christ makes effective among us the eternal benefits of his victory 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 centred in, 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. 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 him present among us, we look forward to his final appearing in the fullness 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). When we gather around the same table in this communal meal at the invitation of the same Lord and when we "partake of the one loaf," we are one in commitment not only to Christ and to one another, but also to the mission of the church in the world.

II. THE EUCHARIST AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

5. Christ's redeeming death and resurrection took 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 world. There can be no repetition of or addition to what was then 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 the christian faith.* Yet God has given the eucharist to his church as a means through which the atoning work of Christ on the cross is proclaimed and made effective in the life of the church. 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—has opened the way to a clearer understanding of the relationship between Christ's sacrifice and the eucharist. The eucharistic memorial is no mere calling to mind of a past event or of its significance, but the church's effectual proclamation of God's mighty acts. Christ instituted the eucharist as a memorial (*anamnesis*) of the totality of God's reconciling action in him. In the eucharistic prayer the church continues to make a perpetual memorial of Christ's death, and his members, united with God and one another, give thanks for all his mercies, entreat the benefits of his passion on behalf of the whole church, participate in these benefits and enter into the movement of his self-offering.

III. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

6. Communion with Christ in the eucharist presupposes his true presence, effectually signified by the bread and wine which, in this mystery, become his body and blood.** The real presence of his body and blood can, however, only be understood within the context of the redemptive activity whereby he gives himself, and in himself

* The early church in expressing the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection often used the language of sacrifice. For the Hebrew sacrifice was a traditional means of communication with God. The passover, for example, was a communal meal; the day of Atonement was essentially expiatory; and the covenant established communion between God and man.

** The word *transubstantiation* is commonly used in the Roman Catholic Church to indicate that God acting in the eucharist effects a change in the inner reality of the elements. The term should be seen as affirming the fact of Christ's presence and of the mysterious and radical change which takes place. In contemporary Roman Catholic theology it is not understood as explaining how the change takes place.

reconciliation, peace and life, to his own. On the one hand, the eucharistic gift springs out of the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, in which God's saving purpose has already been definitively realised. On the other hand, its purpose is to transmit the life of the crucified and risen Christ to his body, the church, so that its members may be more fully united with Christ and with one another.

7. Christ is present and active, in various ways, in the entire eucharistic celebration. It is the same Lord who through the proclaimed word invites his people to his table, who through his minister presides at that table, and who gives himself sacramentally in the body and blood of his paschal sacrifice. It is the Lord present at the right hand of the Father, and therefore transcending the sacramental order, who thus offers to his church, in the eucharistic signs the special gift of himself.

8. The sacramental body and blood of the Saviour are present as an offering to the believer awaiting his welcome. When this offering is met by faith, a lifegiving encounter results. Through faith Christ's presence—which does not depend on the individual's faith in order to be the Lord's real gift of himself to his church—becomes no longer just a presence for the believer, but also a presence with him. Thus, in considering the mystery of the eucharistic presence, we must recognise both the sacramental sign of Christ's presence and the personal relationship between Christ and the faithful which arises from that presence.

9. The Lord's words at the last supper, "Take and eat; this is my body," do not allow us to dissociate the gift of the presence and the act of sacramental eating. The elements are not mere signs; Christ's body and the blood become really present and are really given. But they are really present and given in order that, receiving them, believers may be united in communion with Christ the Lord.

10. According to the traditional order of the liturgy the consecratory prayer (*anaphora*) leads to the communion of the faithful. Through this prayer of thanksgiving, a word of faith addressed to the Father, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit, so that in communion we eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood.

11. The Lord who thus comes to his people in the power of the Holy Spirit is the Lord of glory. In the eucharistic celebration we anticipate the joys of the age to come. By the transforming action of the Spirit of God, earthy bread and wine become the heavenly manna and the new wine, the eschatological banquet for the new man: elements of the first creation become pledges and first fruits of the new heaven and the new earth.

12. We believe that we have reached substantial agreement on the doctrine of the eucharist. Although we are all conditioned by the traditional ways in which we have expressed and practised our eucharistic faith, we are convinced that if there are any remaining points of disagreement they can be resolved on the principles here established. We acknowledge a variety of theological approaches within both our communions. But we have seen it as our task to find a way of advancing together beyond the doctrinal disagreements of the past. It is our hope that in view of the agreement which we have reached on eucharistic faith, this doctrine will no longer constitute an obstacle to the unity we seek.

3. COMMENTARY

This introduction to the Statement is, in my opinion, required reading in order to approach it in a judicial and sympathetic frame of mind. Much sympathy has been shown to what the Commission has endeavoured to do, but a sympathy rightly tempered by a profound reverence for God's Word. What, then, is the framework of this relatively short account of what is put forward as a substantial consensus in the faith of the Eucharist?

In the introduction of the two Co-Chairmen, the conviction is expressed that "though no attempt was made to present a fully comprehensive treatment of the subject, nothing essential has been omitted." Whether this conviction is justified can only be commented upon at the end of a summary analysis of the Statement itself.

It is obvious that unless we can achieve a substantial consensus on the purpose and meaning of the Eucharist, then our progress towards organic unity is threatened with failure. For, as the first four paragraphs of the Statement say so vividly, the Eucharist is at the centre of the Church's life.

We speak of "the tradition of our common inheritance" as the basis of our effort to express the contemporary faith of Anglicans and Catholics in the Eucharistic mystery.⁽⁵⁾

In all this we are being faithful to the method enjoined on us in the Malta Report of 1968, which read as follows:—

"Each accepts the basic truths set forth in the ecumenical Creeds and the common tradition of the ancient Church, although neither Communion is tied to a positive acceptance of all the beliefs and devotional practices of the other." (para. 7).

Roman Catholic delegates

The Rt. Revd. Alan Clark,
Auxiliary Bishop of Northampton
(Co-Chairman)

The Rt. Revd. Christopher Butler, O.S.B.,
Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster

The Revd. Fr. Herbert Ryan, S.J.,
Professor of Historical Theology, Pontifical
Faculty of Theology, Woodstock College, New
York

Professor J. J. Scarisbrick,
Professor of History, University of Warwick

The Revd. Fr. Georges Tavard, A.A.,
Professor of Theology, Methodist Theological
School, Delaware

The Revd. Fr. Jean M. R. Tillard, O.P.,
Professor of Dogmatic Theology in Dominican
Faculty of Theology, Ottawa.

The Revd. Fr. P. Duprey, W.F.,
Under Secretary, Vatican Secretariat for Pro-
moting Christian Unity

The Revd. Fr. E. J. Yarnold, S.J.,
Master, Campion Hall, Oxford

The Revd. Fr. Barnabas Ahern, C.P.,
Professor of Sacred Scripture, Rome—was un-
able to attend the Windsor meeting, 1971

Secretary

The Very Revd. Canon W. A. Purdy,
Staff Member of the Vatican Secretariat for
Promoting Christian Unity

World Council of Churches Observer

The Revd. Dr. Gunther Gassmann,
Research Professor at the Centre d'Etudes
Oecuméniques, Strasbourg

Anglican delegates

The Rt. Revd. H. R. McAdoo,
Bishop of Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin
(Co-Chairman)

The Most Revd. F. R. Arnott,
Archbishop of Brisbane

The Rt. Revd. J. R. H. Moorman,
Bishop of Ripon

The Rt. Revd. E. G. Knapp-Fisher,
Bishop of Pretoria

The Very Revd. Henry Chadwick,
Dean of Christ Church, Oxford

The Revd. J. W. Charley,
Vice-Principal, St. John's College, Nottingham

The Revd. Professor Eugene Fairweather,
Keble Professor of Divinity, Trinity College,
University of Toronto

The Revd. Professor H. E. Root,
Professor of Theology, University of
Southampton

The Rt. Revd. A. A. Vogel,
Bishop-Coadjutor of West Missouri

Consultants

The Revd. Dr. H. R. Halliburton,
Tutor, St. Stephen's House, Oxford

The Revd. Dr. H. R. Smythe,
Director, Anglican Centre, Rome

Secretary

The Revd. Colin Davey,
Assistant General Secretary, Church of England
Council on Foreign Relations

(5) "There is no polemical intent in the document. The Statement does not attempt to refute polemicists of the past, however influential they may have been within our separate traditions. Although it seeks to incorporate the insights and concerns of the sixteenth century, the intention of the document is to remain faithful to the early tradition of the eucharistic faith of the Church prior to the estrangement of the Roman and Anglican Communions from one another. On the other hand, the document is not an exercise in archaic theology or a compromise statement arrived at after eighteen months of debate. It is a joint statement made after shared research on the meaning of the eucharistic mystery as celebrated and apprehended in the Church from the apostolic age to the present time. The Statement is based on the tradition which both the Roman and Anglican Communions share." Fr. Herbert Ryan, S.J., an American member of the Commission: WORSHIP; Vol. 46, No. 1, p. 8.

I. The Mystery of the Eucharist (paras. 3—4)

In the third and fourth paragraphs the context of the Eucharist in the life of the Church is summarised. Answering the question: what happens when we attend the Eucharist, or in our own terminology, when we celebrate Mass, we recognise an indivisible connection between the Body of Christ distributed to us in communion, and the Church which is itself, in St. Paul's terminology, Christ's body. St. Paul himself never hesitated to express that connection:—

"The loaf which we break, is it not a participation in the Body of Christ? Because the loaf is one, we, who are many, are one body, for we are all partakers of the one loaf." (1 Cor. 10:16f).

Christian tradition, therefore, uses the word **communion** (*koinonia*) to express both the fellowship of Christians in the Church and their participation in the Lord's Body given in the Eucharist. It is through our receiving the Body of Christ that the Church grows in communion. In the celebration of the Eucharist the Church becomes fully actual as a community, a community in the bond of a mutual charity, and corporately enters into the mysterious unity with God, which is Christ's gift. As theologians will remember, St. Thomas says that the unity of the Church is the **res**, or result, or fruit of the Eucharist. There is a profound interpenetration of understanding when we name the Eucharist and the Church the **Sacrament of Christ**.

It is, then, in the light of faith that we discover the presence of Christ operative in the world through the Church which is his body. This world he redeemed once for all, but each succeeding generation must enter into that redemption.

This is the thought behind these paragraphs. They necessarily lead the Statement into a discussion of the relationship of the celebration of the Eucharist to the Sacrifice of Christ. For it is through the Eucharist that this Sacrifice embraces the world in its whole history.

In short, here is set out the answer the Commission gives to the fundamental question as to what the Church believes it is doing when it celebrates the Eucharistic mystery.

II. The Eucharist and the Sacrifice of Christ (para. 5)

This section starts off with a firm assertion of the once-and-for-all nature of Christ's redeeming death and resurrection. One can sense the history behind this assertion, i.e. the contention of the Reformers that the Mass was an attempt to repeat Calvary. One acknowledges at once that we are approaching a mystery here and are all too aware that our formulation of the connection between the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Eucharist is inadequate. Nevertheless, it is firmly pointed out that in the Eucharist Christ is really acting in his Church in a sacramental way.

Though, as has been noted by several critics, there is no categorical assertion that the Eucharist is a sacrifice (for reasons which will become clear), neither has this been excluded. In fact the whole thrust of the reasoning here is that the Eucharist makes present the once-for-all Sacrifice of Christ here and now. If that is so, then it cannot be anything but a sacrifice in one sense or another. However, the Commission were conscious that the word "sacrifice" has been indiscriminately used, without due attention being given to its meaning. Pages of theological treatises have been written in an endeavour to apply the notion to the Eucharist. There is no definition of the Church as to what constitutes a sacrifice, for the word obviously admits of analogy. It would, therefore, be theologically and doctrinally dangerous to construct one's idea of sacrifice merely from Old Testament ideas, let alone ideas current in primitive religions. What we want to find is the meaning given in the traditional thought of the Church when this idea was applied to the Eucharist. Here we must all admit that we come face to face with the dimension of mystery. The Eucharist is indeed a "magnum mysterium."

In faith we recognise an identity between Christ's personal sacrifice in the mystery of his Death and Resurrection and the celebration of the Eucharist. At the same time we recognise an element of non-identity well expressed in our traditional catechism definition. It is here that the Commission resorted to the notion of **memorial** (*anamnesis*) as given us in Tradition, and in that notion offered a reconciliation of the polemical difficulties of the past.

The Statement says the atoning work of the Cross—"the totality of God's reconciling action in Christ"—"is made effective in the life of the Church." By the power of the Holy Spirit, what happened once in the Person of Christ is present on our altars because he is present and active in our celebration. We are not just remembering a past event, we are celebrating it in person. It is noteworthy that "memorial" is used in this sense in the **Constitution on the Liturgy** (para. 47); and one remembers St. Thomas' "*Recolitur memoria passionis eius*" and his "*O memoriale mortis Domini*."

The final sentence of this section describes what the Church does in the Eucharist, for it is an action of the Church with its Head. Many have felt that too little attention is given to the Eucharist as an action of the Church, especially in so far as it is an offering of the members of Christ's body, of Christ himself, to the Father. It could be that the sentence is clumsy, but the Commission wished to underline that we do not offer ourselves apart from Christ, but "enter into the movement of his self offering"—for he alone is the ever acceptable Victim to the Father.

III. The Eucharist and the Real Presence (para. 6)

The first sentence of this section is cardinal.

"Communion with Christ in the Eucharist presupposes his true presence effectually signified by the bread and wine, which, in this mystery, become his Body and Blood."

It is in this sentence that the central dogma of Eucharistic faith is asserted. The word "become" could only be ambiguous if taken out of the context of the purpose for which Our Lord gave us this Sacrament. Later, in para. 9, further clarification, if necessary, is given.

"The elements are not mere signs; Christ's Body and Blood become really present and are really given."

Then in para. 10:

"Through this prayer of thanksgiving . . . the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit, so that in communion we eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood."

and para. 11:

"By the transforming action of the Spirit of God, earthly bread and wine become the heavenly manna and the new wine, the eschatological banquet for the new man."

I do not think the objective presence of Christ could be more clearly asserted. It is, as many have noted, to the first of these sentences that a widely discussed note on transubstantiation is attached. Some praise it, some find it poverty-stricken, a few condemn it. Yet one would assert that it contains the restrained doctrine of Trent, which concentrates on the "mirabilis conversio" as the centre of Eucharistic faith in the Real Presence.

This is not to deny for a moment that the Council found **transubstantiation** as the most apt way (*aptissime . . . convenienter et proprie*) of making the meaning of the "mirabilis conversio" clear. As the note says, it indicates that God, acting in the Eucharist, effects a change in the inner reality of the elements while the sense data remain. It is equally true that the Council had no wish to lock itself to a particular philosophy of substance and accident, but did wish to indicate unequivocally that what I perceive through my senses as ordinary bread and wine are no longer bread and wine, but the Body and Blood of Christ, thus illustrating "the mysterious and radical change which takes place" (so the note).

It was, therefore, the purpose of the Commission to underline the truth that the dogma of the Real Presence is based firmly on the "mirabilis conversio." This is not to set aside the doctrine implicit in the term Transubstantiation but to emphasise its real meaning in terms of a "mirabilis conversio." It belongs to theology to reflect on this—hence the developed notion of Transubstantiation to be found in our text-books. But the development of this idea rests on a particular philosophical framework and should not be inserted in what is a credal statement and no more.

It was therefore no attempt to avoid real doctrinal controversies or divergencies that made us relegate an explanation of the term to a footnote, but a conviction that this Catholic doctrine can be misinterpreted even by ourselves. The query among some whether the Catholic doctrine (that a conversion involving a change of nature really takes place) is covered in the Statement is, I think, answered by the explanation.

In para. 7, there is a remarkable similarity with the words of the **Constitution on the Liturgy** regarding the presence of Christ in various modes in the Eucharist.⁽⁶⁾ This affirmation in no way detracts from his unique presence in his Body and Blood.

In the next paragraph, para. 8, there is an insistence, further developed in para. 9, that Our Lord gave us his Body and Blood for a purpose, namely, that it should be eaten and drunk. At the same time we respond to this gift in faith, and without that faith—one remembers the words of St. Paul—"we eat and drink judgment to ourselves." But it is vigorously asserted that though Christ demands the faith of the communicant, his presence does not depend on that faith.

The personal union of the disciple with his Lord, so dear to Catholic tradition, is not only recognised but emphasised. " (Christ's Body and Blood) are really present and given in order that, receiving them, believers may be united in communion with Christ the Lord."

It is at this point (para. 10) that the Statement reasserts that the Eucharist is a liturgical celebration through which the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. Reference is to the prayer consecration (*anaphora*), which is the Church's prayer, and, as many have noted, no assertion is made regarding a particular point in this prayer wherein we may say in faith that Christ is uniquely present among us in the Sacrament of Bread and Wine. This is no denial of the importance of 'the Words of Institution' in all liturgies (though there is one strange exception in antiquity). The question of 'a moment of consecration' is not irrelevant, but the Commission considered

(6) "To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical actions. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of his minister, . . . but especially under the eucharistic species. By his power he is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptises it is really Christ who baptises. He is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for he promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mat. 18.20) (para. 7).

it secondary to its declaration that the elements become the Body and Blood of Christ, independently of the faith of the communicant, in the Eucharistic Prayer.⁽⁷⁾

The final paragraph of this section refers to the eschatological character of the Eucharist, which belongs to the new age which Christ inaugurated,—the age of the Spirit of God whereby each day men receive forgiveness of their sins and are re-made and re-fashioned in the image of Christ in which they are created, and an anticipation of the final kingdom is given to us.

The last paragraph (para. 12) represents the conclusion of the members of the Commission. We say simply: "We believe we have reached substantial agreement on the doctrine of the Eucharist."

The claim is made seriously. In the reactions to the Statement some feel quite strongly that "substantial agreement" seems over-generous. Many others, on the other hand, prefer to point to sections where greater fullness and clarity are demanded. This is the reason for offering this commentary.

Conclusion

It is obvious that this document cannot be a definitive statement, for this would imply full agreement. Even within its own limitations it must be developed. However, it seems fair to conclude, in the light of criticisms received, that:—

1. the claim to have reached substantial agreement is justifiable.

The key-points to the issue are the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, and the objective reality of Christ's presence (because bread and wine become His Body and Blood). Both these doctrines are contained in the Statement as it stands.

2. The claim to have reached substantial agreement may, nevertheless, be in need of fuller justification. The points just referred to are there; but they may need more precise expression.

Also, while these key-points do provide principles on which to solve any remaining and consequential differences and disagreements, it is largely by reference to these consequential matters (e.g. the adoration of the Eucharist) that many Catholics will judge the real extent of agreement about the two key-points of doctrine.

(7) In adopting this attitude, the Commission was reflecting a development in Catholic theology (exemplified by Pope Pius XII's determination of the matter and form of the Sacrament of Order in 1947) which sees as the form of a sacrament the whole consecratory prayer, within which certain words are essential. In the Eucharist such words, in Catholic and other traditions, are "the words of Institution," even though, in the Eastern tradition, for example, the emphasis is on the epiclesis rather than on the Consecration.

Nevertheless, the underlying question concerns the very precise meaning given in Catholic tradition to gestures of adoration once these words have been recited. For some comment on this question cfr. Appendix p. ...

If these be so, the Statement marks a profound advance in the growth towards unity, which is the path we are commanded to follow. Many criticisms are forestalled by the fact that from Pentecost, 1972, the whole effort of the Commission will be directed to the study of the doctrine of the **Ministry** which Christ has confided to the Church. To say that this is a consideration of the validity of Anglican Orders is too limiting. What we will be concerned with in particular is the nature of **Ordained Ministry** in the context of the total mission of the Church. It is only in the light of answers to the profound questions involved in this subject that one can really give a complete presentation of Eucharistic faith.

4. APPENDIX

Apart from obvious differences of emphasis and presentation which cannot fail to arise in a group of different theological traditions, it still remains true that there are areas wherein the members failed to agree. It seemed necessary, therefore, to add some comments concerning two important features of Catholic life which are not directly touched in the Statement.

(1) THE ADORATION OF THE EUCHARIST

A Catholic attaches serious importance to the adoration of the Eucharist because, under sacramental signs, it is Christ, the Son of God, who is given us as our heavenly food and drink. When, therefore, a group of bishops and theologians, who unreservedly acknowledge his Divinity as a matter of faith, speak of his Real Presence, why do they not agree in adoring Him and expressing this in an identical Eucharistic practice?

This question deserves an answer. It would, however, be an error to equate adoration with a particular bodily gesture, such as genuflection, prostration, etc. Consequently, the absence of such a gesture in a particular tradition must be carefully examined if it is not to be misinterpreted. Adoration is our response in worship and love to God, Creator and Lord, and that response, from heart and mind, is the basic attitude of every Christian. Yet it would seem to require external expression, and in fact it is given in different Christian communities according to the spirit and genius of a particular Christian tradition. But the query remains why, over and above a real and prayerful reverence, it is not the universal custom in the Anglican Church to adore Christ sacramentally in the Eucharist by one of the traditional and recognisable expressions of adoration?

It would be improper for a Catholic writer to attempt a comprehensive answer to this insistent question. All members of the Commission were in agreement that the Catholic practice was "legitimate." At the same time some members did not accept that Eucharistic belief required it,—an objection rooted historically in the Cranmerian tradition.

This reaction becomes intelligible if it were to be thought that Catholic devotional practice hinged on the belief that Christ is present "physically" (through dimensional contact and contiguity) like the material objects of human experience. However real and unchallengeable his presence, this presence is "in mystery." We recognise it and reach out to it in faith, not by sense data.

Another approach to an understanding of Anglican hesitancy in the face of Catholic explicitness is to acknowledge that Christ gave us his Body and Blood in the Eucharist to be received in Communion. Hence there is truth in the assertion that He did not do this to be adored, even though this is by no means the whole truth.

The question, nonetheless, that requires answering is: should He be adored? The Catholic gives a joyful 'yes,' for the mode of presence in no way affects the reality of His presence. The mode of adoration is to a large extent a matter of custom.

It is clear that in this respect we remain in some disagreement. Yet this disagreement does not diminish the unanimous acceptance by the Commission of the reality of Christ's presence through the 'mirabilis conversio' of the bread and wine. The disagreement is centred on the consequences or demands of that belief.

(2) THE RESERVATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Questions concerning the practice of Reservation are closely linked with the practice of adoration.

There is no universal custom in the Anglican Church in this matter. Neither is the practice of the Eastern Churches identical with that of the Catholic Church of the Western rite. The real question at issue concerns the permanence of Christ's presence in the sacramental species. Some readers of the Statement have objected that, since this point is not explicitly touched upon, there can be no question of our having reached substantial agreement.

It must be admitted that the rubrics of the Anglican Communion Rite do not give an unambiguous answer. At the same time, they cannot be said to deny the continuing presence of Christ even though they do not assert it. They enjoin, nonetheless, that whatever remains after the administration of Holy Communion is to be treated with careful reverence.

However, it must be firmly repeated that in the Statement the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not made dependent on the faith of the believer, even though it is a presence for the believer (cfr. para. 8). The implications of this assertion were not pursued.

For the moment the Commission are content to accept the practice of Reservation as "legitimate." The deeper question is still open and unanswered.

The Catholic may feel that this is unacceptable. Yet it is not immediately apparent why the failure to give an explicit and doctrinal answer to the question dissolves the substantial agreement of the Commission regarding the two essential elements of the Eucharist mystery.

This Appendix has been added to meet what can be called Catholic objections. While it is true that it reveals remaining areas of disagreement, I would not hesitate to re-assert the conclusion of the Commission:—

"Although we are all conditioned by the traditional ways in which we have expressed our eucharistic faith, we are convinced that, if there are any remaining points of disagreement, they can be resolved on the principles here established." (para. 12).

5. STATEMENT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC NATIONAL THEOLOGY COMMISSION

The Theology Commission, on 20 January 1972, discussed the Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine, issued by the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission; and made the following comment:

1. We note that the Statement is not intended to be a fully comprehensive treatment of Eucharistic Doctrine, as is made clear in their preliminary note by the Bishop of Ossory and Bishop Clark.

We welcome the serious effort made to break new ground by opening up the possibility of finding new patterns of thought and language. We acknowledge, with the Statement, 'the variety of theological approaches within both our communions' (para. 12). The delicate and difficult task remains of specifying the relationship between diverse theologies of the Eucharist and the fundamental doctrine to which Christians are committed.

2. The Statement contains nothing contrary to the Catholic faith.

A minority considered it inadequate on certain points in a way which could be misleading.

3 The references to the Eucharist and the Sacrifice of our redemption by the life, death and resurrection of Christ, would benefit from a detailed treatment or thorough commentary in order to bring out

(a) the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist and its relation to the once for all atoning work of Christ;

(b) the rôle of the Christian people in the abiding offering of Christ.

4 The Statement clearly maintains the real and true presence of Christ. The substantial nature of the change of the bread and wine we consider to be asserted by the phrases in the Statement that they 'become his body and blood' (para. 6); and that this change is 'mysterious and radical' (note on transubstantiation); and the careful description of the rôle of the faith of the individual (para. 8).

One member of the Commission, however, held that the word 'substantial' must be retained for an adequate statement of the change in the bread and wine.

Once it is granted that the change in the elements is of a unique nature, totally mysterious and supernatural in character, it must follow that this cannot ever be adequately expressed in words. We note that paragraphs 8 and 9 exclude any merely symbolic or receptionist doctrine. On the other hand the change can be acknowledged by actions, namely by adoration of the consecrated elements. While adoration is not excluded by the Statement, some explicit recognition of it as doctrinally sound would be welcome.

5 The Statement envisages that in further discussion 'points of disagreement can be resolved on the principles here established.' This has been done in one instance by the note on transubstantiation. A similar exercise needs to be done on, for example, the 39 Articles and the 'Black Rubric.'

6 Our overall comment is one of warm welcome for the Statement as an important advance in mutual understanding of the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Unity.

Rt. Rev. George Patrick Dwyer, President Hierarchy Theology Commission.

Mr. John Coulson, University of Bristol.

Rev. Joseph Crehan S.J., Farm Street, London.

Rev. Cornelius Ernst O.P., Blackfriars, Oxford.

Rev. Nicholas Lash, St. Edmund's House, Cambridge.

Rev. John McHugh, Ushaw College, Durham.

Rev. Robert Murray S.J., Heythrop College, London University.

Rev. Michael Richards, St. Edmund's College, Ware.

Rev. Sister Romain H.H.S., Holy Rood House, London.

Rev. Francis Thomas, Oscott College, Sutton Coldfield.

Rev. Patrick Kelly, Oscott College, Sutton Coldfield; Secretary.

In particular the meeting had the benefit of the presence of the other two Episcopal members of the Commission, Bishop Butler and Bishop Clark, who are both signatories to the Agreed Statement.