

Christian Unity, answered "no."

Cassidy was present at the May 25 papal meeting and had his own meetings with Carey. Cassidy also participated in an evening prayer service celebrated by the archbishop May 24 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Rome, but did not speak.

Carey told journalists that his encounter with the pope was "excellent, excellent."

"I've come away from this meeting very encouraged indeed from the warmth of the personal welcome," he said later. "I feel this was a very promising start to my archepiscopate in my church." Carey took office in April 1991.

"Even on the issues where we divide — the ordination of women and so on — there was an understanding that we are going to move together," he said.

One sensitive topic, raised by Carey a week before his meeting with the pope, did not come up during the meeting with the pope: contraception. Carey told a London newspaper May 18 that the Catholic Church should rethink its teaching on artificial contraception in light of concerns for world population growth and threats to the environment.

Carey also expressed apprehension that the Catholic position would thwart discussion of population control at the June 3-14 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The Vatican denied, however, that it had tried to keep population control off the agenda of the Rio de Janeiro conference, commonly called the Earth Summit.

In his interview with the London newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, Carey said he had tried but failed to fully understand the Catholic position on birth control. He said he thought Pope Paul VI's encyclical "*Humanae Vitae*" had "actually stopped theological thinking" on the issue. And Carey said the population explosion is taxing the world's resources.

He related that when he

Archbishop of Canterbury

Avoiding Defeat by Ecumenism's Perplexing Issues

Issues involving women priests, authority and personal ethics "will not defeat us if the end of our pilgrimage is Christ and we walk with him," Anglican Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury said May 24 during an evening prayer service at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Rome the evening before his meeting with the pope. "Theological truth is hard to describe and even harder to achieve," he said. Examining the importance of truth for ecumenism, he asked: "How do we bring together the richness that we have inherited and yet remain willing to be learners again? How may our communions walk and change together without condemning what has benefited past generations of Christians?" Carey said he is aware that the ordination of women in some Anglican churches "presents a problem to the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. It does so for many Anglicans as well. But I have to recognize that in parts of the Anglican Communion, the ordination of women has not destroyed the church, but, they believe, given it new life." Canterbury's archbishop expressed his belief that "ecumenism in the '90s is likely to take the form of the sharing of mission." Central to the ecumenical gains already made, he said, "is a recognition of our common baptism." Theologians of different communions "are urging us to make baptism the starting point for unity" and to place to the side the "issues that divide," he observed. But, he added, "members of the same family who have become separated for hundreds of years have developed different traditions, different understandings and different liturgies. We cannot simply brush these aside as of no consequence." The prepared text of his remarks follows.

A verse from Romans 13:11: "Salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed."

St. Paul lived in a dangerous world by any standard. The world of the Roman Empire, the heart of which was here in the Eternal City, was a world of uprisings, intrigue, disasters and uncertainties. For the growing but tiny Christian congregations in places like Rome, Antioch and elsewhere the anchor of their hopes was the certainty of Christ's salvation. This verse seems to express Paul's feeling that final salvation was imminent. Two thousand years later, in this same Rome, we still await that final salvation. We long for it with a desire equal to St. Paul's because our world is at least as perilous. We think of the collapse of the Soviet empire. Even though we

welcome an end to this and other regimes which curtail political and religious freedom, it still reminds us of the precariousness of human institutions. Then, too, the fragile aspirations for European unity are threatened by nationalistic tendencies. Racial tension, sectarian violence and apocalyptic nightmares concerning our environment place in jeopardy our desires for a tranquil world order.

"The recognition of our common baptism means that we meet not as strangers but as fellow pilgrims and brothers and sisters in Christ."

But in a real way St. Paul could say with confidence, "Salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed" because obviously, every day takes us nearer to that time when God will make all things new. But does this verse have anything to say to our ecumenical situation today? I believe it does in three ways: Salvation is rooted in our common baptism; it is made known in our common search for God's truth, and it is expressed in our common mission. Let us begin with baptism. My meeting with Pope John Paul tomorrow is anchored in an obvious but crucially important theological point; we recognize one another as fellow Christians and pilgrims. Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity is a family sign; it is the sacrament of our membership of the family of God.

Although there is a slowing down of ecumenical progress compared with a generation ago, we take a great deal of comfort from what has been achieved. In particular, bearing in mind our history, we rejoice in how Rome and Canterbury have been converging toward that unity which is the will of our Lord.

Many coalescing factors have contributed to where we are today. We think of the Second Vatican Council. We think too of the Secretariat for Christian Unity and the many national Roman Catholic and Anglican networks which have helped draw us together. We think of the initiative of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1966, on that occasion at St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls, which brought ARCIC to birth. And particularly tonight, I want to express my admiration to the theologians who have contributed so remarkably to the work of ARCIC. My own longing for unity with the Roman

Catholic community emerged with great intensity from two visits which I made to this city some years ago when I studied Roman Catholic history and dogma.

Alongside all this we have grown together so much. We have reached remarkable agreement concerning the nature of the eucharist; we have acknowledged the priesthood of the ordained ministry without denying the priesthood of all believers. We have reached agreement concerning that most controversial of Reformation doctrines — justification by faith. Although much remains to be done, the gains are enormous. Central to those gains is a recognition of our common baptism. Divided and broken though we may be, separated from one another by the tragic divisions which we personally did not cause, we can still say of one another: "We are fellow Christians." Yet we remain broken at the very point where true unity is manifested in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Well did William Temple once declare: "The essential scandal of Christian division is the inability of devout Christians to meet at the Lord's table."

"It is not that doctrine is supremely important and that life proves its importance; it is that life is supremely important and doctrine illuminates it."

But let me return to our common baptism. For common baptism offers us a challenge as well as hope. It offers a challenge because if we are really members of Christ through this charism, why are we still separated from one another at the table? What have we done to separate the sacraments? How can we reunite them? Theologians from different communions are urging us to make baptism the starting point for unity. They ask us to put on one side issues that divide. Why wait for full communion, they cry? We are already one through our baptism. Yes, they have a point. But it is not that simple. Members of the same family who have become separated for hundreds of years have developed different traditions, different understandings and different liturgies. We cannot simply brush these aside as of no consequence.

But there is also hope because it is undeniably the case that the recognition of our common baptism means that we meet not as strangers but as fellow pilgrims and brothers and sisters in Christ. So baptism is the sign and seal of our salvation. But it is also the source of our common search for truth.

"What is truth?" was the cynical question that Pilate asked. As he spoke he looked upon the one who is the epitome of truth, Jesus himself. Of course, theological truth is hard to describe and even harder to achieve. It belongs to each of our communions to emphasize the importance of truth for doctrine and for living the Christian life. All our churches are rooted in the faith once delivered to the saints. The search for

truth requires humility. The moment one's communion insists on embodying it we deny it to another. The problem is compounded by the fact that we cannot deny what God has given us. How do we bring together the richness that we have inherited and yet remain willing to be learners again? How may our communions walk and change together without condemning what has benefited past generations of Christians? Surely the kernel of an answer is to be found in following Christ today. It is not that doctrine is supremely important and that life proves its importance; it is that life is supremely important and doctrine illuminates it. The Lutheran theologian Jurgen Moltmann said so splendidly years ago: "The nearer we come to Christ, the nearer we come together."

And that common search for the truth in him may well be the way we shall overcome the remaining issues that divide. Yes, I am aware that the ordination of women to the priesthood presents a problem to the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. It does so for many Anglicans as well. But I have to recognize that in parts of the Anglican Communion the ordination of women has not destroyed the church, but, they believe, given it new life. There are other issues — over authority and personal ethics, for example — which are equally perplexing. They will not defeat us if the end of our pilgrimage is Christ and we walk with him and to him together. We do know that "salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed" since we have traveled already a long way with one another in our common search for God's truth.

But talk of salvation introduces too the note of mission. For St. Paul the task of the church was to proclaim Christ. Baptism, the gift of salvation, is a sign of the Spirit's empowering for mission. It commissions all the people of God for service in the world. We look out on a divided and confused world; such need and so many problems. The need for the Gospel today is as great as it has ever been. But the task is too great for one Christian body to achieve alone. Mission is thus a challenge as well as an opportunity. That challenge is to share mission together. I have often said that ecumenism in the '90s is likely to take the form of the sharing of mission. Here is a potential for practical unity. Working from the common baptism of which I spoke earlier, we can share in that mission and service to people everywhere. But the challenge is one that has to be addressed to every local church — Anglican, Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed or Roman Catholic. The challenge is to cooperate, to share in liturgy whenever possible. Our priests already show deep cordiality and affection. Our lay people can learn from one another and appreciate the enormous riches which our different heritages have to offer. In such ways the challenge becomes an opportunity for God's grace to reach those at present outside the boundaries of the church.

So I come to Rome as many pilgrims and visitors have done. I come to pray here in this city of the apostle Peter. I come to share in the

◀ recently asked why the question of population control was not to be on the Earth Summit agenda, U.N. officials had lapsed into "uncomfortable silence."

"We were faced with religious issues and, I have to say — with respect — the dominant dogma of the Roman Catholic Church about contraception," he said.

A statement by Vatican press spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls vehemently denied press reports that the Vatican had tried to remove birth control from the Rio de Janeiro agenda. On the contrary, it said, the Vatican has an interest in discussing the topic, in part because of church concerns about coercive birth control programs.

"Whoever states that the Holy See tried to eliminate the theme of population at this conference is not only making a mistake but is telling a falsehood," the statement said. Navarro-Valls noted that demographic problems are, in fact, scheduled for discussion at the Earth Summit.

Anticipating the Vatican's position at the conference, Navarro-Valls said the church is particularly worried about population control programs that end up imposing limits on family size and ignoring cultural and religious traditions. Such programs amount to "neocolonialism," he said.

Some birth control programs seem to assume that "the poor, by the very fact that they exist and are numerous, are the cause instead of the victims of lagging development or ecological degradation," he said.

Cardinal G. Basil Hume of Westminster, England, responded to Carey's remarks, saying "one of the principal causes of high population growth in the Third World is poverty."

"Strategies for the future of the planet inevitably require a coordinated and constructive approach to all three issues of population, the environment and poverty," he said, "none of which should be tackled in isolation."

"This may well demand of the developed world sacrifices and restraint," he said.

life of this bustling modern city. I come to this very place of which St. Paul wrote so long ago with his call to follow Christ. Salvation in the sense that he meant it may be a long way off. For the Christian, however, what is undeniable is the reality of God in his church today, with you and me. It is that reality which gives us the strength to persevere and which steadies our nerve when the ecumenical pilgrim's journey

seems tough. Our common baptism, our common pilgrim's journey seems tough. Our common baptism, our common search for God's truth and the urgent and common task to reach all people everywhere with the claims of God's love and care call us to a fresh commitment and an ecumenical discipleship. It is in that spirit, and with a heart warmed by hope in Christ, that I make my pilgrimage to Rome.
