

REPORT ON THE SECOND MEETING OF THE ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSIONVenice: September 21st - 28th 1970.

My dear Lord Archbishop,

I have pleasure in making a report on the Commission's second meeting held at Venice from 21st September to 28th September, 1970.

1. The arrangements were made by the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity and the Commission was housed in the Istituto Ciliota and the meetings were held at the Fondazione Cini on the island of S. Georgio (this patron seems destined to be concerned with the affairs of the Commission as our first and next meetings were arranged for St. George's House, Windsor!). The chapel at the Istituto Ciliota was used for worship and there were two Eucharists daily - one for each rite. It is worth commenting that most of the Anglican and certainly some of the Roman Catholics would have preferred one Eucharist daily, and this is something that must be looked at more closely in the arrangements for the third meeting in September 1971. The Commission is indebted to Canon William Purdy of the Secretariat for making the rather complex arrangements involving daily boat trips to and from the island of S. Georgio and for the care which he took in making all necessary provisions for the efficient running of the conference.

2. Papers and Subjects

Four papers were presented on moral theology, following the recommendations of the Malta Report. These were written by three moral theologians, Professor Gordon Dunstan (Anglican); Mgr. P. Delhaye, Dean of the Faculty of Theology Louvain (Roman Catholic); and Fr. Maurice O'Leary (Roman Catholic). The subjects were "The Making, Commending and Enforcement of Moral Judgments Within The Church" and "The Relations of Men and Women". The papers covered the sources of moral knowledge as visualised by both Churches and questions of sexuality, marriage and divorce.¹⁾ These papers were extremely useful in bringing to the surface various interesting

1) Officially, Anglicanism appeared as having the most unyielding attitude on divorce of all Christian Churches and the need for Nullity Courts was stressed. The point was raised by an Anglican that Vatican II permits limited communicatio in sacris with the Orthodox who permit re-marriage during the lifetime of the original partner. Implications of this were discussed.

convergences and fewer divergences. A particularly interesting convergence was that on the nature of breakdown in marriage and the emergence of a view of the consummation of marriage which took account of the psychological aspect of the whole relationship rather than the physiological relationship taken by itself. This was seen in discussions on the nature of marriage as contract, as sacrament or as covenant with its direct bearing on the question of indissolubility. As to convergence in moral theology generally, it was borne in on Anglicans that there are now in fact two kinds of Roman Catholic moral theology, i.e. that founded on natural law and canonical law, and that which has recourse to scriptural teaching as its basis. The latter, as exemplified by the works of Häring, shows a very similar structure to that of traditional Anglican moral theology. For example, there is the basing of moral theology on scripture and the kerygma; there is the merging of what used to be called ascetic theology with what used to be called moral theology, with the consequent emphasis on "The new life"; there is the stress on the normative role of charity and on response and responsibility, on the imitation of Christ and incorporation in Him; there is the frequent use of the category of the disciple rather than of the penitent. It was evident that the rôle of psychology has brought about certain changes in moral theology which bring us closer together. There is need for investigation of the nature and the role of the magisterium in moral questions and of the relation of conscience, freedom and authority. A divergence was felt to exist in that Anglicans stress the process of moral reasoning as opposed to what sometimes seems to them to be morals by decree. It was unfortunate that pressure of work made it impossible for these papers to be fully discussed and considered opinions on them drawn up by the Commission. The Commission considered that they should be made available for wider reading and debate (see final paragraph of this report).

3. Main Business of the Commission

The main business of the Commission was to carry further the work begun at Windsor in January this year, upon which the Commission's sub-commissions had been at work in England, the U.S.A. and South Africa in the intervening period. This was to give consideration to the subjects of (a) The Church and Authority; (b) The Church and Ministry; and (c) The Church and Eucharist. Copies of the Drafts on each of these subjects

are being forwarded to Your Grace by the Rev. Michael Moore who acted as Anglican Secretary at Venice.

4. Method of the Conference

The nature of the material and the necessity for handling it in depth meant that it was necessary to give a considerable part of the time to Sub-Commissions whose draft findings were then discussed in detail at plenary sessions. It became evident that, because of the amount of material to be dealt with, the Commission would be obliged in the future to concentrate on one subject at a meeting and to endeavour to produce an agreed statement on that subject. This plan has been adopted for the next meeting of the Commission in September 1971 (see paragraph 6 of this report). It has been arranged that the members of the Commission should work on specific aspects of the one subject between now and the next meeting, producing work for comment by all members of the Commission in the intervening period.

5. Comments on the Main Subjects Discussed

(a) The Church and Authority

The Commission was indebted to the Rev. Dr. R.J. Halliburton, St. Stephen's House, Oxford, who very kindly got together writers and their material on this subject. Copies of these papers will be forwarded by the Secretary to Your Grace. This preliminary work opened up the subject and it became clear that the infallibility/indefectibility area was not only of great importance but one in which a good deal of theological movement could be discerned (see, for example, Father E.J. Yarnold's paper "Towards a Re-examination of the Concept of Infallibility"). With regard to the Draft received by the Commission on The Church and Authority, may I make a few brief comments, First of all, it is important that, in paragraph 4, the three elements constitutive of a Church are recognised, namely the profession of the apostolic faith, the use of the sacraments, and the oversight of a fully accepted apostolic ministry. It seems that there is a good deal of development going on in Roman Catholic teaching on the koinonia (see paragraph 7 of the Draft), and it appeared to Anglicans on the Commission that, while some Roman Catholics would still make the papal office and communion with the papacy a criterion in practice of what constitutes the true Church, this position would not be held, at any rate in that form, by all Roman

Catholic theologians today. This basic question of ecclesiology underlay the whole discussion of this subject. Anglicans still require proof of the papal claims and they maintained, with the Orthodox, that the indefectibility of the Church does not imply an infallible magisterium since what was given to the Church was not infallibility but an infallible Guide, the Holy Spirit. The inability of Anglicans to accept papal infallibility as stated by Lambeth 1968 was set over against the possibility of a primacy of service and honour. It is worth commenting that paragraph 16 of the Draft agrees that the truths necessary to communion between the Churches "are those which directly relate to the Incarnation and Redemption as recorded in the scriptures." This has to be seen in connection with the concept of the hierarchy of truths in the Decree on Ecumenism. The Commission and the Churches will sooner rather than later, having delineated the areas of divergence, be obliged to face the question: must these divergences permanently separate Christians or are they such as can be lived with? This, too, raises the further point of the nature of an interim stage on the way to unity, (see paragraphs 17 and 18 of the Draft).

(b) The Church and Ministry

It will be seen from the Draft on The Church and Ministry that the same problem of the papal office and primacy came up for discussion under this heading. Possibly the most important aspect of the discussion under this heading was that which hinged on Anglican Orders and the Bull Apostolicae Curae of 1896. In this connection, I would particularly refer Your Grace to the line of reasoning developed in the paper entitled "Ministry in a Divided Church" by Herbert J. Ryan, S.J., which was among the preparatory material in this section. I think that Anglicans must view sympathetically the dilemma of their Roman Catholic brethren (even if they consider the situation to be artificially induced) and realise that, from the Roman Catholic point of view, a hopeful way round is to endeavour to show that there is a genuine development of Roman Catholic doctrine in respect of some of the assumptions underlying Apostolicae Curae. This line of approach has the possibility of opening up a new approach to the question of Anglican Orders for Roman Catholics, (compare Draft, paragraphs 15 to 17). At the same time, both parties would have to recognise that a theologically valid approach to the question of the Ministry must go back to origins and must face squarely the ecclesial implications of the fluid situation in respect of Ministry

which obtains in the New Testament (this, of course, has been considered by such Roman Catholic writers as Küng, O'Hanlon and Colson).

(c) The Church and Eucharist

This Draft has more of the nature of a paper setting out the position. This was not because the members of the Sub-Commission and Commission saw no hope of convergence, but rather the reverse; (see Draft on Church and Eucharist, final note on page 8). In fact, the Commission, as noted in its Press release, saw this as a most hopeful area of convergence, noting the work done on the subject by the Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue in the United States. It was for this reason that the Commission singled out this subject as the chief topic for discussion in September 1971; (see paragraph 6). Obviously, the discussion of various aspects of eucharistic theology at this future meeting will involve some at any rate of the matters arising under the heading of "Ministry". I would refer Your Grace to paragraph 20 of my report on the first meeting of the Commission at Windsor.

6. Proposed Future Work of the Commission

It was decided at Venice, as I have already indicated, that the Eucharist should be the main topic of research and it was decided to do this investigation under three headings, various members of the Commission to work on three Sub-Commissions in the intervening period, presenting their findings to the Commission with a view to the Commission producing a statement for publication in September 1971. It was proposed that "The Notion of Sacrifice in the Eucharist in Anglican and Roman Catholic Theology" should be the subject for a group based in England, the conveners of which would be Father Yarnold and Dr. Halliburton; Bishop Butler, Dean Chadwick, Professor Root and Dr. Charley to be the other members. The second subject, "The Real Presence in Anglican and Roman Catholic Theology", would be the task of a group based in Canada and the U.S.A., consisting of Fathers Ryan, Tavard, Ahern and Dr. Vogel; the conveners being Professor Fairweather and Father Tillard. The Third subject, "An Examination in Depth of our Various Eucharistic Rites", would be studied by the South African Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission, with the Bishop of Pretoria as convener. The Commission considered that it would best serve its primary purpose if it could concentrate on one subject

and make its work available to the Church at large. This brings me to a matter of some importance for the future usefulness of the Commission and to which I referred in my report to Your Grace on the first meeting of the Commission at Windsor (paragraph 8).

7. Publication of Material

The members of the Commission were unanimous in requesting the Co-Chairmen to ask the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope for permission to publish material in connection with the Commission's meetings. For example, the three draft reports already referred to on The Church and Authority, The Church and Ministry and The Church and Eucharist might be published, making it clear that these were not official statements of the Churches, or even final pronouncements of the Commission, but a stage in the Commission's on-going work. It was also felt that some of the papers on these subjects and also the papers on moral theology, might also be published, it being made clear on each document that it was no more than a working paper presented to the Commission. The suggestion was made by Professor Dunstan that a number of Theology could be devoted to material from the Commission. My own view, which I have already expressed to Your Grace, is that such publication is important if the Commission is to fulfil its function of promoting and guiding dialogue on a wider scale throughout the Church. Such an extension of interest seems an essential preliminary to official movement and advance. I do not know what the protocol is in this matter, but both Chairmen undertook to make this point to the authorities of both Churches and I would hope that Your Grace would think well of giving permission for action along these lines.

8. My general impression as a result of this second meeting is one of moderate hopefulness. I do not share the gloom of one or two members of the Commission, believing that what lies ahead for both Churches is a patient seeking for convergence, an honest recognition of divergences, and, in the not too distant future, the joint facing of the original question as to whether such divergences as are established must be regarded as insurmountable obstacles to unity or whether in fact they need necessarily present an interim stage on the way to organic unity. One would compare the limited communicatio in sacris with the Orthodox, a Church which rejects papal primacy and infallibility.

I have the honour to be Your Grace's humble servant,

(Signed) HENRY OSSORY
Anglican Co-Chairman

EDDDEED