

International Commission on
Roman Catholic/Anglican Relations

Subcommission on the Eucharistic Sacrifice

Paper 11

At a meeting of the Windsor/Venice Subcommission on the Eucharist held at Poringland, Norwich from April 12th to April 16th, the following statement was made on the basis of the Venice draft document. quote here three extracts, relevant to our theme.

I The Mystery of the Eucharist

(We agree that 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. By Christ's activity through the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist the life of the Church is built up, its fellowship strengthened and its mission furthered. [In the Eucharist the Church becomes most intensely itself.] 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 bread and wine, the Crucified and Risen Lord, according to his promise, offers himself to his people.

In the Eucharist we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Receiving a foretaste of the kingdom to come, (we are spurred on to hasten its present realisation on earth.) 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 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" (I Cor.15:28). By partaking of the one loaf and gathering around the same table in this communal meal at the invitation of the same Lord, 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

(As for the relation which exists between the Eucharist and the unique sacrifice of Christ, we all accept Christ's death and resurrection as having taken 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 whole world. 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" (cf. the Bristol Document accepted at Uppsala, 1968). (A recourse to) 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 this relationship. (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 (cf. op.cit.))

(The document was signed by +Alan C. Clark, E.R. Hardy, Barnabas Ahern, C.P., Julian Charley, Jean Tillard, O.P., Pierre Duprey, S.F.)

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