

Eucharistic Sacrifice (Fr. M. Yarnold)

This is an attempt to produce a statement avoiding the term sacrifice and indicating what seem to be points of disagreement as well as agreement.

1. The Eucharist is the anamnesis of the Last Supper and Calvary
2. As Calvary was the culmination of Christ's entire life of obedience and kenosis, the Eucharist is also the anamnesis of the whole of this life (cf. Phil.2:6 - 8; Heb.10:5-7). The Evangelical tradition, however, wishes to stress that the death has a unique saving role
3. As the death is meaningless without the resurrection, the Eucharist is also the anamnesis of the resurrection. We receive the risen Lord
4. The Eucharist is the anamnesis of the incarnate life, death and resurrection of Christ, not simply as events, but as saving events.
5. The Eucharist is the anamnesis of these saving events, not only as a reminder of them for us and a consequent help to faith and prayer but also (the Catholic tradition would say primarily) as the means by which there is made visible to the Church the intercession of the ascended Christ for the Church, in which he asks his Father to apply the fruits of his life death and resurrection to his whole Church, in particular to this particular congregation on this particular day.
6. It is also appropriate that each member of the congregation should pray that these fruits be applied, not only to himself, but also to others, whether they are present in the congregation or not. (The congregation's role of asking the Father to apply the fruits to themselves and to others is called in Catholic theology a share in Christ's priesthood).
7. At baptism, we become one with Christ, die and rise with him. At the Eucharist therefore, the congregation is associated with the death and resurrection of Christ, the fruits of which are applied to the Church.
8. This does not mean that the Church's life of obedience which is thus associated with Christ's life, death and resurrection has saving power of itself. On the contrary, the members have power to save others only as channels or instruments of Christ's saving work. (When Catholic tradition says that at Mass we are associated with Christ as victims, what is meant is simply what is explained in paras 7 and 8. It seems to me similar to what the evangelical tradition means when it links the Eucharist with the Church's 'sacrifice of praise'. However, the evangelical tradition sees this as a result of the Eucharist, rather than as something which occurs during the Eucharist).
9. This association of the Christian's life with the saving events of Christ's is symbolised in some traditions by the offering of the bread and wine.
10. For any member of the congregation the Eucharist is incomplete if he participates without communicating: he has not performed what the Lord instituted. Indeed, if no one communicates, there is no Eucharist at all. The Evangelical tradition would, I think, further hold that there is no Eucharistic anamnesis for those who do not communicate, though they can still receive grace in a non-eucharistic way. The Catholic tradition holds that the anamnesis begins with the real presence of Christ after the words of consecration, and is completed by communion.
11. All agree that the Eucharist neither repeats nor adds to the saving work of Christ's life, death and resurrection. Catholic tradition

prefers to use words like 'made present', 'actualised', 'applied', 'perpetuated'. The fairly common phrase 'present again' is not free from objection.

12. It is neither possible nor desirable to produce a single set of devotional and liturgical terms that will satisfy all traditions.

What is essential for reunion is that each party should be able to explain its language of prayer, at least in essentials to the satisfaction of the other parties.

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It will be remembered that the Venice meeting appointed a sub-commission consisting of Bishop Butler, the Dean of Christchurch, Professor Root, Dr. Charley, Dr. Halliburton and myself to produce a report on eucharistic sacrifice. We met in January and discussed two papers, expressing Anglican and Roman Catholic views. (Professor Root was unable to attend). As it was felt that justice was not done to the Evangelical position, Dr. Charley was asked to produce a statement, which is appended. So Dr. Halliburton and I decided that the next move should be the attempt to produce an exposition of this area of Eucharistic doctrine without using the word 'sacrifice', in order to try to define the extent of our agreements and disagreements. This paper represents a very imperfect first draft, to be either amended or replaced by a better attempt.

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