

A Note on Some Beliefs and Practices

Beliefs and practices relating to Purgatory and the Departed, Indulgences, and the Invocation of the Prayers of the Saints, have often been seen as detracting from the merits of Christ's all sufficient redemptive work on the Cross and from faith in him alone for salvation. These beliefs and practices must be understood against the background of Christian faith in the Communion of Saints within the whole Body of Christ. Rightly understood, they are intended to be expressions of God's loving forgiveness and the Church's indulgent application of the divine mercy to the sinner. But these beliefs and practices must constantly be scrutinized by the Church in the light of the Gospel to determine the extent to which they reflect rather than obscure our basic agreement on salvation and the Church.

Anglicans and Roman Catholics can agree that in Christ the living and departed are bound together in prayer in a relationship of mutual solidarity; that belief in the possibility of a purification of the justified before they see God must not imply that God's judgement can be swayed; that the Church's penitential authority can be mercifully exercised in the disciplining of sinners whom God has forgiven but whose sins have continuing consequences.

We believe that our basic agreement in faith can receive a variety of devotional expressions, and that differences of perception, emphasis and devotion need not be inconsistent with our common faith.