

ARC IV Statement on the Eucharist

“Since the time of the Reformation, the doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice has been considered a major obstacle to the reconciliation of the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church. It is the conviction of our commission that this is no longer true.

“We have made a careful study of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Lambeth Conference Report of 1958, the 1949 statement of faith and order of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S. and other statements of the contemporary position of both our Churches. From these statements it is clear to us that the findings of modern biblical, theological and liturgical studies have transcended many of the polemical formulations of an earlier period.

“We believe that it is of utmost importance for the clergy and laity of our two Churches to acknowledge their substantial identity in this area of Eucharistic doctrine and to build upon it as they go forward in dialogue. Whatever doctrinal disagreements may remain between our churches, the understanding of the sacrificial nature (of the Eucharistic) is not among them.

“Here is an effort to sum up the consensus at which we have arrived:

“The Church is the Body of Christ and is built up by the Word through the Eucharist.

“Baptism is the entrance into the Eucharistic community. In the Holy Eucharist, Christians are united with Christ as the fulfillment and perfection of their baptismal union with Him.

“In the Lord’s Supper, we participate at the same time in Christ’s death, Resurrection and Ascension; the Christian community is thus transformed in grace, and the pledge of future glory is given to us.

“Our communion with Christ in the Holy Eucharist is also communion with one another. Such union is achieved through the Holy Spirit.

“Christian people participating in Christ’s priesthood through Baptism and Confirmation are meant to be a living sacrifice to God. That sacrifice finds its fullest expression in the Eucharistic offering of the priesthood of the people of God. Such sacramental offering of the whole people is made possible through the special action of the ministerial priest who is empowered by his ordination to make present Christ’s sacrifice for His people.

“The sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist is not just the sacrifice of the Cross, but the sacrifice of Christ’s whole life of obedience to the Father, which culminated in His death on the Cross and His glorious Resurrection. We offer nothing we have not first received; because of our incorporation into Christ at Baptism, He offers us in Himself to the Father.”

Milwaukee, Wis.—May 29, 1967