

Diocesan Bulletin for Christian Unity
Archdiocese of Southwark

June 2012
No. 93
£1



**T
O
G
E
T
H
E
R**

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Eulogy Joy Peck**
- **Unity: What do we pray for?**
- **Global Christian Fellowship**
- **Methodist Catholic Dialogue
on the Eucharist**

R IN CHRIST

**Together in Christ, Diocesan Bulletin for Christian Unity,
Archdiocese Southwark, Vol 30, No 93, June 2012**

CONTENTS

Page

1 Editorial

2 Eulogy Joy Peck,

Stella Worthington

4 What do we pray for when we pray for Unity Part I

Bishop C. Chessun

9 Global Christian Fellowship

Desmond Miller

11 Methodist–Catholic Dialogue on the Eucharist

David Carter

21 Interview with Deacon Jolyon Vickers

Michael Baldry

EDITORIAL

Dear Supporters of *Together in Christ*, in this Issue the latest (9th) report of the Methodist Roman Catholic International Commission *Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments*, is given a thorough review by David Carter. It is long but worth the effort.

Those of you in Kent have a new Area Chair in Southwark's Christian Unity Commission. In a Question & Answer session with your Editor, Deacon Jolyon Vickers tells us a little about his plans.

Many of you knew Joy Peck for her total commitment to ecumenism. The eulogy from her Funeral Mass is given here. Please pray for the repose of her soul+ and for her family.

Churches Together in South London invited three church leaders to talk on praying for Unity. Bishop Christopher Chessun's contribution is given now. The others will be produced in due course.

Dr Desmond Miller has been finding out about the Global Christian Forum. He gives an outline of its hopes and how it seeks to bring together most of the churches and Christian communities into a single space to listen and learn from each other.

Michael

EULOGY FOR JOY PECK

Joy Peck was a woman of quiet poise, dignity and elegance – always grounded but deeply spiritual too. She knew how to get stuck in and when it was wise to withdraw. She loved gardening, collecting wild flowers and mushrooms, cooking and helping out in a variety of community projects. If she could help someone, she would, in her inimitable practical and thoughtful way. Above all Joy was a sensitive and loving mother to Abigail and Esther and a devoted grandmother to Jake and Scarlett. What underpinned her life was an unshakable belief in God's love and a desire to love Him in return by choosing to do His will whatever the circumstances.

Joy was born and brought up in Australia and studied at Melbourne University, a couple of years ahead of Germaine Greer. Like her she knew her own mind. She would have liked to have studied psychology but at that time her only options were nursing or teaching. She chose teaching.

After working in Australia for a while she and her best friend, Wendy, decided to do the 'Grand Tour of Europe', a tradition among Australians. It was on the boat over that she met her future husband, Philip Peck. She raised her family and embarked on a teaching career here in Wandsworth and rose to the rank of Senior Teacher at St Thomas of Canterbury Middle School, Mitcham. Her particular gift was with children who were troubled or disruptive. Joy was just the person to settle them down; calm, firm and with the knack of getting the best out of them. She was determined that the children in her care should leave school reading and doing maths to the best of their ability.

In her later life Joy had the time to deepen her commitment to the Church and to follow her passion for ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue. She took to her heart Churches Together and was Chair of the Unity Commission for many years. She always attended the Women's World Day of Prayer. She was also a close friend of the Focolare Movement which has at its core the desire of Jesus *That all may be one*. She shared a vision of a united world where race, religion, colour and creed is not an obstacle to mutual love.

Joy not only read the Gospel but lived it too and up until very recently facilitated a Word of Life group, the members of which take a sentence or phrase from the Gospel each month and try to live it out

in daily life. She took this very seriously and without doubt it sustained her during the two years of her terminal illness. She saw her suffering as part of God's plan for her and a way to love Jesus crucified and forsaken. In this way she gave witness to society to the values Jesus brought on earth: service to neighbour, understanding, forgiveness, honesty, justice, integrity and faithfulness.

It was also in her later years that Joy formed a special bond with her dear friend, Vincent. He would be the first person to admit that they were soul mates. Their friendship was a cause for good and her loss is keenly felt by him.

Despite her illness Joy continued to lead a full and active life making her contribution felt. I have rarely met such a selfless person. She underwent her treatments in Suffolk with the unceasing care and support of Abigail and her family. Joy did all that was asked of her medically and when she had strength and energy she headed back to London and with a smile resumed as many activities as she could. She even travelled to Italy to attend an ecumenical meeting despite a recent failed liver intervention. At times I found it difficult to believe that this was someone whose health was so poor that she had just a little time left, so involved was she in other people's lives and concerns.

Joy was aptly named. She really was a fruit of the Holy Spirit. She brought true joy and warmth to many. She died as she always lived, putting others first. She wrote to me not long before her death assuring me that she was at peace. She wasn't sure how much longer she would live, but hoped her death wouldn't coincide with her granddaughter's birthday on December 22nd or be on Christmas Day. This degree of sensitivity was typical of Joy.

In the event, she died on December 23rd and the children weren't told until after Christmas, so she got her wish. Joy passed away peacefully in the care of St Nicholas Hospice, Bury St Edmunds.

Dear Joy, may angels guide you to paradise and may you be rewarded for your innumerable acts of kindness and of love.

Given at St Thomas a'Becket Catholic Church, Wandsworth
by Stella Worthington

WHAT DO WE PRAY FOR WHEN WE PRAY FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY?

Three presentations were made during a meeting of the Council of Churches Together in South London (CTSL) on 8 November 2011 at Trinity House, Chapel Court, Borough High Street, London, SE 1 and are summarised here and in future issues.

The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Anglican Bishop of Southwark and former Chair of Churches Together in South London described his personal journey of faith, including his realization that, in a mission context, ‘we cannot afford the luxury of division’ and his acknowledgement that ‘getting to know each other’ was essential. He gave examples of many fruitful ecumenical interactions and spoke of the need to persevere in the hope and promise of unity.

The Rt Revd Paul Hendricks, Auxiliary Bishop in the Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark and current Chair of CTSL, made a plea for interpreting the current situation, including our differences, in a positive rather than a negative way. He illustrated this by looking at two of the Thirty-Nine Articles – the one sacrifice of Christ and the sufficiency of scriptures – in ways that spoke positively of our relationship with Christ rather than in a limiting way. He prayed for the day when we could overcome our misunderstandings that had led to condemnations in the past and could recognise and embrace the positive affirmations and traditions of each other’s churches

The Revd Nicola Furley Smith, Moderator of the United Reformed Church Southern Synod, described how the URC was meant to die as it was a step to a wider union of churches. Taking John 17:21 as her starting point, she commented that we did not pray for unity as an end in itself, we certainly did not pray for uniformity, we prayed for a commitment to the belief that we are more authentically the Church when we are together, and we should always be mindful of the mission imperative.

John Richardson, Ecumenical officer, Churches Together in South London, T: 01462 422502, john@ctslondon.org.uk

PRESENTATION ONE

Rt Revd Christopher Chessun Anglican Bishop of Southwark

On my first visit to Africa in the summer of 1981, while training for the priesthood at Westcott House, part of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges, there was a moment of revelation for me about the journey towards Christian Unity. The legendary Fr Robin Lamburn (who had been sent out as a young missionary priest by Universities' Mission to Central Africa in the 1930s) came to meet me in Dar-es-Salaam and we journeyed together by bus to the River Rufiji in Masasi Diocese. We boarded canoes, with a decoy sent on ahead of us to divert and distract the Hippos, crossing a vast expanse of water to reach the village settlement of Kindwitwi where in retirement Fr Lamburn cared for a community of Muslim men and women living with Leprosy, administering medical supplies, having agreed not to proselytise them in any way. Nevertheless his very evident prayerful and faithful love of the Lord won souls for Christ.

On my first Sunday we walked several miles to the nearby town of Utete where Fr Lamburn regularly celebrated the Eucharist. At one point I asked a little naively about sacramental ministry for other denominations. The old missionary priest with a rather reproachful and exasperated tone in his voice said: 'don't you realize, we cannot afford the luxury of division here'. Those words have reverberated through nearly thirty years of ordained ministry and continue to challenge me in very different ecumenical territory and contexts. I often reflect whether the search for unity would be advanced for us if our mindset enabled us also to recognize the truth of those prophetic words: 'we cannot afford the luxury of division here'.

At that stage of my journey of faith I had a strong sense that I would live to see structural reunion among the ecclesial communities of the Western Church – Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant. Our Gospel reading for the third Sunday before Advent was the parable of the Ten Bridesmaids from Matthew 25:1-13; five foolish and five wise having prepared themselves for a long wait with enough oil for their lamps to greet the bridegroom when he came. When reflecting over the weekend on this passage, for the first time I made a connection between those disciples of the early centuries having to wait longer

than they had anticipated for the coming again of the Lord in Glory and our waiting, also longer than expected, for Christ's will that we should be one to be fulfilled. Thirty years on from my walk with Fr Robin Lamburn I realize that I continue to pray with strong hope that this will indeed come to pass but also acknowledge with what I trust is a good dose of realism and a deepened understanding about the journey to unity, which I now realize is likely to continue beyond my life time.

Two years ago John Richardson, whom we are very blessed to have as the Ecumenical Officer serving Churches Together in South London, asked Bishop Paul Hendricks to give a paper on *Receptive Ecumenism* followed by one from me on *Spiritual Ecumenism*. Two years on I continue, in terms of prayer and commitment, to be aided and helped by the thinking behind spiritual ecumenism, which makes ours the prayer of Christ on the eve of his Passion, *that they all may be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe you have sent me.* (Jn 17:21)

During a visit to participate in a summer course at the Anglican Centre in Rome in 2009 I came to appreciate more deeply insights into spiritual ecumenism and realized that it lies at the heart of understandings of the ecumenical journey from the perspective of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and its then President, Cardinal Walter Kasper, a devoted servant of recent fruitful ecumenical dialogues between the Churches. It lies at the heart of recent Papal teaching on ecumenism and indeed of efforts to unite divided Christians.

David Richardson, the current Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome directs us to consider the early days of the ecumenical movement: It is winter now for our ideas; probably we shall not see the new spring. A familiar phrase? Perhaps so, yet it dates not from the present scene at all but rather from 1912 and was written by the Roman Catholic, Abbé Fernand Portal, in a letter to his friend Viscount Halifax. The years since he penned those words have seen an unprecedented, unpredictable and unimaginable series of ecumenical springs and summers. No doubt there are innumerable difficulties in the way, but with God everything is possible. Have a little imagination, a little faith. We must be daring if we expect great results so wrote Halifax in the same series of letters. Halifax also saw that ecumenism needs conversations and meetings; For all this we must get to know each

other, he wrote, people are led much more by their hearts than their heads.

‘Getting to know each other’ and being led by the heart is part of what is an accompanied journey and characterizes all fruitful ecumenical interactions. Indeed, this is part of the pilgrimage towards unity in which we are fellow travellers and companions. It is a journey of hope and promise, already bearing fruit. This is evident in a number of ways. I give just a few examples:

Words spoken by Cardinal Basil Hume at Wesley’s Chapel in the early 1990s during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: *Our journey towards unity must be accompanied by friendship and supported by prayer.*

Cardinal Kasper at the end of his time as President of the Pontifical Commission for Promoting Christian Unity in publishing *Harvesting the Fruits* which looks back on forty years of ecumenical dialogues between the Churches and challenges us implicitly not to forget all that has been achieved, not to lose heart, but to persevere.

The warm embrace between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Benedict XVI in Westminster Abbey during the Papal Visit to the United Kingdom a year ago, reminding us that signs and symbols are often able to speak louder than words.

For the Church of England, the Porvoo Agreement of 1992 with the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches (The Lutheran Church of Denmark the latest to join), which has established communion and mutual recognition of orders with these churches, thus helping to overcome some of the divisions in the Western Church brought about by the Reformation. In the Diocese of Southwark we are especially thankful for the blessings of the Porvoo Agreement with the great blessing of three Porvoo Churches – Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish – in Rotherhithe.

For the Church of England, claiming to be ‘part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church’, living with the tensions and opportunities of an inheritance and identity which is both Catholic and Reformed, itself seemingly at times its own ecumenical movement!

Our capacity to unite in common purpose when we are Christ centred and outward focused on the needs of others, something very evident for example in the Robes Project which brings together local churches across the denominations in the Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark to reach out with Christ's love in engagement with homeless people during the winter months.

The work of Street Pastors, extending a ministry of care at night to people on the streets of each of our South London Boroughs, again is an expression of ecumenical common purpose serving the common good in Christ like ways.

The inspiration and encouragement we find when brothers and sisters in Christ dwell together in unity, something which I experience annually when accompanying groups of young people to the Ecumenical Community at Taizé.

Each of you will have your own additions to these, for which I give special thanks, not least in focusing my own prayers and journey on the hope and promise of Christian unity.

As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe you have sent me. (John 17:21)

From *L'Osservatore Romano* 17/01/2012

The new evangelization which the Holy Father has wanted in a particular way, must therefore have an ecumenical dimension, a dimension to which Pope Benedict XVI made an explicit reference in announcing the establishment of the New Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization at the celebration of First Vespers of the Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul in 2010: "The challenge of the new evangelization calls into question the universal Church and asks us to continue with commitment our search for full Christian unity". Since the new evangelization consists in bringing men and women close to the mystery of God and introducing them into a personal relationship with God, at the centre of all new evangelization must be the question of God that we must take on ecumenically, in the conviction that at the root of all evangelization lies not a human plan of expansion but rather the desire "to share the inestimable gift that God has wished to give us, making us sharers in his own life" (*Ubcumque et Semper*).

THE GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM

Recently I came across an account of a gathering of the *Global Christian Forum* (GCF) in Manado, Indonesia in October 2011.¹ Wanting to know more about this organization I looked it up on the internet.² The stated aim of the GCF is:

To create an open space wherein representatives from a broad range of Christian churches and inter-church organizations, which confess the triune God and Jesus Christ as perfect in His divinity and humanity, can gather to foster mutual respect, to explore and address together common challenges.

The ecumenical movement has come a long way since its beginnings in the early part of the 20th century. Many churches have moved beyond their historical divisions into new relationships of trust and cooperation. Various institutions have emerged, such as the *World Council of Churches* and the *World Evangelical Alliance*. Historic denominations have entered into dialogue with each other. Since the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church has taken ecumenism seriously. Now we are familiar with ARCIC and other dialogues with Lutherans, Pentecostals and the Orthodox Churches. Yet there has been no place where representatives of all the main Christian denominations and ecclesial communities can join together around one table.

The GCF aims to create such a place. The concept of a new, independent *space* was proposed by the Rev. Dr. Konrad Raiser, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in 1998. An International Consultation was held at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, USA, in September 2000 and June 2002. The latter brought together sixty participants from Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Holiness and African churches from around the world.

¹ Charles Whitehead, *Christian Unity*, GoodNews 217, Jan/Feb. 2012, p. 22, and a personal communication from the author.

² www.globalchristianforum.org

Representatives of the Pontifical Council for promoting Christian Unity are now involved in the coordinating Committee. A *Purpose Statement* and a four year plan was drawn up. Regional consultations took place with the theme: *Our Journey with Jesus Christ* in Hong Kong, May 2004; Lusaka, Zambia, August 2005; Warburg, Germany, June 2006; Santiago, Chile, June 2007.

The First International Global Christian Forum took place in Limuru, near Nairobi, Kenya, 6-9 November 2007. It was attended by 226 representatives from all the main Christian traditions and especially the many Charismatic, Evangelical, Holiness and Pentecostal groups accounting for about 50% of the total. This has been a feature of all GCF meetings reflecting the significant growth of these movements in the past century. The gathering was characterized by a remarkable spirit of openness and eagerness to listen to one another. There was an awareness of being part of an 'historic' event.

The Second International Forum met in Manado, Indonesia, 4-7 Oct. 2011. The participants met regularly for prayer, worship and bible study in small groups. Excellent talks were presented at the plenary sessions followed by group discussion. In-depth discussion of potentially divisive issues was avoided though of course our divisions caused no small amount of pain and struggle. The main focus was two-fold: consideration of the great shifts occurring in world Christianity, and the upsurge of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. The main question was: what is the Holy Spirit saying to the Church today, and what is the Spirit's direction as we seek to be good stewards of all that God has given us?

It was felt that the Global Christian Forum offers a helpful model for building authentic Christian relationships facilitating unity for the sake of mission.

Desmond Miller

METHODIST CATHOLIC DIALOGUE ON THE EUCHARIST

In the late summer, the ninth report of the international Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue *Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments* was presented to the World Methodist Council at Durban. It represents a further important step in convergence, particularly where the eucharist is concerned. For the first time, baptism has been discussed in some detail with particular emphasis on the pastoral problems in baptismal practice faced by both communions and, indeed, many others. There is also further progress in convergence over the doctrine of ordained ministry, understood in terms of service of the baptised and within the context of the total apostleship of the Church. Important differences remain, particular in relation to the understanding of the need of continuity in ministerial succession.

For forty five years, the dialogue has proved remarkably fruitful but little known in comparison with the other contemporaneous dialogues which Rome has held with western partners, the Anglican-Roman Catholic (ARCIC) and Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues. Little work has been put into the reception of the documents in either communions. British Methodism, for example, made no attempt at a faith and order response until the report of the eighth dialogue in 2006. The international MRCIC Commission has been increasingly aware of this problem and, in 2010 produced a summary of the achievements of the dialogue to that point, entitled *Synthesis: Together to Holiness*.

It is strange that not more work has been done on this. Even before Vatican II, some Methodists were aware of the possibilities for future relationships with Rome. I remember the late Rupert Davies saying at a conference which I attended as a sixth former in about 1961 that relationships between the two churches might blossom. He based this on the common stress within both communions on the universal call to holiness. I would add that Methodists also share with the Roman Catholic Church a profound missionary vocation and record plus a very strong sense of the necessary

interconnectedness and mutual accountability of the Church at every level.

However, it is never too late to hope that both churches will find much on which to ponder fruitfully in this latest report, particularly in its section on the eucharist which shows a remarkable degree of convergence, especially on the thorny issue of eucharistic sacrifice. The Commission is modest in its claims. Throughout its history, MRCIC has combined realism in not prematurely claiming too much while consistently holding before it the ultimate goal as being nothing less than full unity in faith, sacramental life and mission.

The Commission note that there remain problems and issues to be addressed on the eucharist that they hope to consider later. They mention the Catholic practice of offering Mass for the faithful departed which involves a whole raft of eschatological issues, including the doctrine of purgatory. They also note the widely differing views within Methodism itself of the eucharist and could perhaps stress that the recent British Methodist report *His Presence Makes the Feast*, which they cite often, is not an official Conference statement on the matter even though it does give a valuable indication of the variety of eucharistic practice and faith within present day British Methodism. They reiterate a point made in the earliest stages of the dialogue that Roman Catholics should not assume that the hymns of Charles Wesley on the eucharist necessarily reflect current Methodist faith and practice. Nevertheless, the hymns were made central to the most recent phase of the dialogue¹. They are cited at almost every point of the thesis advocated by the Commission.

As has already been hinted, the eucharist was considered in the earliest stages of the dialogue (1967-76), receiving quite a bit of attention at that stage. By 1976, the Commission was able to record a greater degree of convergence than had been expected, a degree which is from time to time cited in the present report. However, little more, apart from occasional asides, was said until the last session of the Commission.

¹The Wesleys (mainly Charles) wrote 166 hymns relating to various aspects of the eucharist. They can best be studied through the great classical work, Rattenbury, J. E. *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley* (Epworth, 1948), the entire corpus being reproduced at the back of the book.

In the meantime, of course, much ecumenical water has flowed under the bridge. The *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* project of the World Council of Churches was published in 1982, proposing its own reconciling statement aiming at closer consensus on these three matters. The Methodist responses to it underlined the point made at other times that there is a wide variety of views within world Methodism on all three subjects. In the period between 1976 and 2011, there were important changes in British and American Methodism. In the former, two new worship books appeared (1975 and 1999) and bedded themselves into much of Methodism. Communion ceased to be thought of as something that happened after a main preaching service and with only the specially devout in attendance. On the wider ecumenical scene, there were further developments, the British and Irish Catholic bishops' statement, *One Bread, One Body* which provoked responses, particularly Anglican, questioning whether the other western churches were quite as far from Rome as the bishops had clearly thought. In 2008, the distinguished American Reformed scholar, George Hunsinger, published a highly significant book on the eucharist in which he claimed that it was possible for the Lutheran and Reformed communions, following certain leads within their own theological heritage, to come to a consensus on the nature of the real presence and the eucharistic sacrifice.

The Commission place all their thinking about the two major sacraments in the context of the paschal mystery, stressing that the question of how Christians live 'in union with Christ's death and resurrection' is clearly a fundamental one and 'one to which Catholics and Methodists must be able to give a united answer' if they are to establish the unity that they seek. Stress is placed on the *enduring* nature of Christ's paschal experience. 'His death and resurrection are now embodied in the living Lord of our faith ... any encounter with the risen Lord is therefore immediately an encounter with the mystery of his death and resurrection ... participating in Christ we participate also in the paschal mystery'.

It is this participation that is the key to the whole of the Commission's eucharistic theology. It is never a matter of what we can do or offer in our own right but always of what Christ enables

us to do as he joins us to himself by grace. The Commission stress that the Church, as the Body of Christ, 'is caught up in the two fold movement of Christ himself. It participates in the outward going ministry and service of Christ ... and also in the priestly offering of himself that Christ made and in His praise of the Father in the Holy Spirit'.

This last sentence also points us towards what one may regard as the climactic paragraph of the section of the Report on the eucharist where it is related to the whole saving economy of the Holy Trinity into whose circle of love we are drawn through Christ and the Holy Spirit. It reads:

This very sacrificial self-giving of Christ is something 'made flesh' once for all in human history on the cross, but the innermost reality of Christ's 'Grand Oblation' is an eternal mystery at the very heart of the Holy Trinity. God the Father eternally begets the Son-who is true God from true God and the Son eternally responds to the Father in total self-giving. Jesus' death on Calvary can be understood as the 'sacrament – the making tangibly visibly available to all humanity for our salvation – of this eternal self-giving of God the Son to God the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit, and of the Father's ready welcome and acceptance of that sacrifice.

The Commission begins its survey of the eucharist with a consideration of the real presence. It restates an earlier consensus that this is objective, independent of the faith of the worshippers but also records a continuing difference, that Methodists are content to assert the presence without reference to its exact mode whereas Catholics have traditionally used the language of transubstantiation. Methodists would stand by Charles Wesley's 'sure and real is the grace, the manner is unknown'. A preliminary Wesleyan definition of the eucharistic sacrifice is given.

The Wesleys taught an understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice as one in which the offering of obedient hearts and lives of the communicants was united by grace to the perfect, complete, ever- present and all-atoning sacrifice of Christ.

The convergence that follows is constantly related to a joint re-reading by the two teams on the Commission of the heritage of the eucharistic hymns of the Wesleys.

The convergence is explored and stated under nine section headings, followed by a brief conclusion. The first, entitled 'We encounter Christ anew in a way which ensures the living presence of Christ at the heart of the Church' deals with the real presence, emphasising both its uniqueness in the eucharist while not denying the presence of Christ in the other sacraments and acts of worship and fellowship. The eucharistic presence is specifically related to the power of Christ who 'utilizes elements of his own creation to give himself to that creation'. The Commission might also have related this to the passionate declaration of St Maximus the Confessor that 'God so passionately loved his creation that he willed his embodiment within it' and apply the patristic saying both to the Incarnation and to the eucharistic presence. The role of the Holy Spirit is also mentioned.

The second section is entitled 'We enter more deeply into the saving mystery of Christ'. It begins by stating the divine *purpose* behind the sacrament. 'Christ is present in the eucharist so that his disciples can be one with him and be drawn more deeply into his saving mystery'. Great stress is placed on the fact that the mystery is 'entirely God's gift to us'. It is not something that we can activate or offer independently. It is always the once for all and all-sufficient offering that is made present to us, never any independent or repeated offering. Thus are traditional Methodist and wider Protestant fears about eucharistic sacrifice laid to rest since all is of grace. It is grace that calls for a response, but the doctrine of responsible grace is one on which Catholics and Methodists already agree and one which has played a powerful role in the dialogue.

The third section on the Grand Oblation, a Wesleyan phrase, further assures us that it is Tridentine as well as Wesleyan teaching that nothing can be added to Calvary.

The fourth section relates to the eternal priesthood of Christ, a doctrine perhaps rather neglected in modern British Methodist theology. Both churches stress Christ's pleading and offering of his sacrifice as central to his intercession. It is noted that Methodists

tend to talk of pleading the sacrifice, Catholics as offering it, the two terms being regarded as complementary rather than exclusive. The Commission draw attention to the fact within both churches an excessive former emphasis upon the death of Christ has been replaced by a common stress on the fact that it is the risen, ascended and exalted Christ who meets us in the eucharist. A further key common stress is upon the fact that Christ comes to us in the eucharist to unite us with Himself so that we can become one with Him in his eternal self-giving to the Father.

We note that, in this approach, the stress is on what Christ enables us to do as branches united to the Vine, as people who are a new creation in Him and still absolutely dependent upon Him and His grace. We neither plead nor offer apart from Him but in Him, as taken up by Him into the very heart of the trinitarian Love. This stress corresponds with the realised eschatology that is at the heart of Charles Wesley's hymnologically expressed ecclesiology and experience of worship, both eucharistic and non-eucharistic.

It is of course pre-eminently expressed in the eucharistic hymns including many magnificent ones cited in this report but which, alas, which have never featured in standard British Methodist hymnals. One which is particularly vibrant with eschatological expectation is no 93 in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*.

Come, let us join with one accord
who share the supper of the Lord.

The second verse is especially striking.

The wine which doth his passion show,
we soon with Him shall drink it new
in yonder dazzling courts above;
Admitted to the heavenly feast,
we shall His choicest blessings taste,
and banquet on His richest love.

We soon the midnight cry shall hear,
arise and meet the Bridegroom near,
the marriage of the Lamb is come;
Attended by His heavenly friends,
the glorious King of saints descends
to take His bride in triumph home.

The whole spirit of this passage can be summed up in two sentences. First, in the statement that ‘We do not simply follow after Christ, but enter into the way which is of Christ himself’. Secondly, ‘God has revealed the innermost secret, God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit’.

Considerable emphasis is currently being placed on the revival of Methodism as a discipleship movement. However, in the light of the resurrection and the gift of the Spirit, Christians are something more than purely disciples, they are people in Christ upon whom the Spirit is poured out without measure.

Section Five, ‘Participants not Bystanders’ follows on logically. The title derives from Charles Wesley’s words.

Would the saviour of mankind
without His people die?
No, to Him we all are joined
as more than standers by.

And it concludes, ‘Christians do not merely receive the benefits of Christ’s sacrifice; they are united with it, and can say to Christ’ (with Wesley!)

We jointly before God appear
to offer up ourselves to Thee.

Within this the stress is on what the Commission call ‘the dynamic of graced participation’. It is through this that we are empowered by God to act and to offer that living sacrifice of themselves of which Paul speaks in Romans 12.

Section 6, ‘Christ unites us with his self-offering’ then follows. Drawing on ARCIC, it asserts that ‘Christ in the Holy Spirit unites his people with himself in a sacramental way so that the Church enters into the movement of his self-offering’. It is an expression of the intimate unity between the Bridegroom and the bride, the Church. Once again, there is a strong stress on the fact that ‘it is Christ who makes the offering and we are drawn into it by Him’. Finally, the bold assertion of convergence is made. ‘When we ask ‘who offers the eucharistic sacrifice?’, our answer together as Methodists and Roman Catholics is Christ our Head, united with His Body, the Church’.

Finally, the ‘Grand Oblation’ and ‘our mean offering’ are combined, ‘mingled in a common flame’, so that the Saviour and his people form a single offering’.

Both in a common flame arise,
and both in God’s account are one.

The seventh section ‘Do this as a memorial of me’ contains little that is new in contemporary ecumenical terms but does hold that a Christian can only enter into the movement of Christ’s self-giving ‘only if that sacrifice is present in some way here and now’. The eucharist is the sacrament and memorial-the making present here and now of Christ’s pleading and offering of himself for our salvation¹.

Section 8, ‘the memorial of the things to come’ stresses the future orientation of the eucharist, which is characteristic both of the eastern Christian tradition and of the Wesleyan tradition as exemplified in the existence of the section of hymns entitled ‘as it is a pledge of heaven’.

The final section is on the role of the Holy Spirit as the ‘remembrancer Divine’. That the eucharist can be celebrated on innumerable different occasions across the ages and continents ‘until He come’ is owing to the Spirit who ‘in each celebration...makes the unique mystery present’. ‘The Holy Spirit unites the Head and the Body, and so the self-offering of Christ’s people with Christ’s eternal self-giving’. The role of the Spirit was strongly stressed by Charles Wesley in his hymn,

Come, Holy Ghost thine influence shed
and realise the sign.

Though it was not until the twentieth century that under ecumenical and eastern influences an epiclesis was restored to Roman Catholic and most Methodist eucharistic rites.

In the Conclusion, the Commission sums up thus:

At the heart of our common understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice is the intimate union between Christ and His Church, between the high priest and his priestly people. It is the risen

¹*Encountering*, pp 39-40. Behind this consensus lies the work of scholars in recovering the dynamic nature of the biblical concept of memorial/anamnesis and, of course, the work of the WCC Faith and Order Commission, resulting in the *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* statement 1982.

and ascended Christ himself, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who unites his once-for-all yet eternal self-giving and ours as one single offering, pleased and presented to the Father and accepted by Him. We come to the eucharist to enter into Christ's self-gift to the Father, and are taken 'through him, with him and in him' in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to the Father.

Three developments have particularly helped the Commission in the search for this consensus. The first, of course, is the rich resource of the Wesleyan hymns on the Lord's Supper, commended for study to both churches and in particular to Methodists who need to recover this and with it the deeply sacramental heritage of the Methodist Revival which tended for so long to be rather eclipsed by the evangelical heritage.

The second is the intertwined heritage of the Liturgical and Ecumenical Movements of the twentieth century which allowed the vital recovery of the dynamic understanding of the concept of memorial alongside a renewed pneumatology. In many respects, Vatican II was the finest fruit of these movements.

Finally, and far from least, is the recovery of a profound and experiential trinitarian theology, foreshadowed, as far as Methodism is concerned in the hymnody of the Wesleys and some of the classical nineteenth century Wesleyan systematic theologians, but a movement that also flourished within the wider context of twentieth century ecumenical dialogue.

Catholics too will see the report as further evidence of the transformative power within their tradition of the Liturgical Movement and of the Decree on Ecumenism. For Dom Lambert Beauduin, the liturgy was seen not as a means of humanity's reaching up to God, but as humanity's response to the Father's reaching down to us in Christ and the Spirit. It is our assent to the Father's great plan for the world. The whole work of our salvation is nothing other than the return of humanity to the Father in union with the Son through the work of the Holy Spirit¹. In the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, we pray through the Son and with Him.

¹My summary of Dom Lambert's thinking on this is based on a loose translation of a quotation from him in Mortiau, J. and Loonbeek, R. *Dom Lambert Beauduin, visionaire et precurseur*, (Paris, 2005), pp. 47-8.

The recent report represents a particular flowering of the hope expressed in the Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II when it called upon Catholic theologians to engage in ‘searching together with separated brethren into the divine mysteries’, a hope that was further endorsed by the late John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint*¹.

As always, of course, the reception issue remains of paramount importance. The report was enthusiastically received at the most recent meeting of the Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee, but it needs also to be received at the popular level. Its use within British Methodism would powerfully enrich its sacramental awareness. It may also prove ecumenically fruitful beyond the two communions immediately involved. Already, one or two Anglicans have spoken appreciatively of how its approach might have enriched the earlier ARCIC (Anglican-Roman Catholic) dialogue had it then been available.

David Carter

Note: Unless otherwise stated all the quotations were from:
Encountering Christ the Saviour; Church and Sacraments.
(World Methodist Council, Lake Junaluska, 2011)

¹ *Decree on Ecumenism*, para 11; *Ut Unum Sint*, section 32.



THE REVD DEACON JOLYON VICKERS

At a recent meeting with Deacon Jolyon who has taken over leadership of the Kent area for Southwark Unity Commission, I questioned him as to what plans he has for it's future.

Jolyon, tell us something about yourself.

I retired from the NHS after forty years' service, first as a sick children's nurse, then undertaking various administrative roles, and eventually as practice manager of a large primary care centre.

(Jolyon was ordained as deacon in 2011)

What is your experience in Unity?

My experience in unity is limited to assisting in the re-building of our local town 'Churches Together Group' and being married to a practising Church of England member for over forty years.

What are your hopes and plans for 'unity' in Kent?

To be able to catalogue the current position across our wide and diverse county; to make contact and support our Roman Catholic outreach in the arena of unity; to represent the Roman Catholic branch of Christianity in the county.

What do you expect from those who read this?

Prayer, help and ideas.

How can ecumenical minded people get involved?

Contact me and let me know what good practice is happening in Kent in joint Christian witness with our fellow churches.

(Jolyon's details are on the back cover)

So how can they meet you?

At St Andrew's, Tenterden, at our proposed regular meetings and possible sharing, learning, and prayer sessions.

Thank you, Jolyon. I hope this will generate a great response.

Michael Baldry

