

*Diocesan Bulletin for Christian Unity  
Archdiocese of Southwark*

Oct 2013  
No 97  
£1



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

**YEAR OF FAITH  
2012–13**

**IN THIS ISSUE**

- New CUC Constitution
- Lesnes Abbey Procession
- Theology of Ecumenism
- Bishop M Evans Methodist Eucharist

**IN CHRIST**

## **CONTENTS**

**Page**

- 02 Christian Unity Commission:  
Beginning a New Chapter Robin Orton**
- 06 Blessed Sacrament Procession goes Ecumenical  
Gwen Chiosso**
- 08 A Naïve Theology of Ecumenism  
John Richardson**
- 12 Bishop M. Evans on Methodist Eucharist  
Various extracts**
- 15 The Eucharistic Hymns of Charles Wesley  
Bishop Michael Evans**

## **EDITORIAL**

As this edition arrives the glorious Summer of 2013 will be one of memories. Gwen Chiosso writes about the surprising effect of the Lesnes Abbey Procession at Abbey Wood in SE London had on fellow Christians. I discovered it has been held for 40 years. While other Processions are being revived or have disappeared this one is still well supported.

The RC Diocese of Southwark Christian Unity Commission is having an overhaul. Dr Robin Orton describes the changes for us. John Richardson gives an insight into some of the reasons he's ready to pursue the search for Unity especially among the churches in South London.

The late Bishop Michael Evans worked tirelessly through his final years guiding the Commission for Christian Unity of the Catholic Bishops' Conference for England and Wales. In memory of that work we bring you his essay on the Eucharistic hymns of the Wesleys.

*Michael*

## SOUTHWARK ARCHDIOCESE CHRISTIAN UNITY COMMISSION: BEGINNING A NEW CHAPTER

Archbishop Peter Smith has recently agreed a new constitution for the Southwark Archdiocese Christian Unity Commission.

This represents a significant milestone in the life of the Commission, which, since it was first set up in 1977, has provided an important focus for the ecumenical mission of the Catholic Church in Southwark. (Amongst its other activities, it is of course the publisher of *Together in Christ*.) For much of that time its work was led and inspired by Bishop Charles Henderson, an assistant bishop in the archdiocese, who was chair of the Commission from its inception until his death in 2006. His contribution to the continuing search for Christian unity was enormous.

### The background

The original constitution of the Commission, as approved by the then Archbishop Michael Bowen in 1977, provided for a maximum of twenty-seven Commissioners, to be nominated by deanery pastoral councils and deanery clergy conferences. It also incorporated lots of detailed and rather inflexible provisions about how the Commission should operate.

The 1977 constitution has never been formally reviewed or amended. New ‘guidelines’ were however issued in 1992, following the establishment of the current three episcopal areas, South West, South East and Kent, within the archdiocese.

The aim was substantially to alter the way the Commission carried out its business. Henceforth, rather than working principally at diocesan level, the Commission was to operate principally through three Area Commissions. These should ‘relate to the Area Bishops in their work for Christian unity’ and work more or less independently.

In practice however much of the Commission’s work has, in recent years, been to some extent centralised again at diocesan level. It was in any case envisaged that regular joint meeting of the

officers of the three Area Commissions should have a strategic and coordinating role across the diocese. Much of the practical work of the Commission, in terms particularly of organizing events such as study days and discussion forums, has in fact increasingly been done in the ‘officers’ meeting’. (As well as the Area Commission officers, this is currently attended by the diocesan president, Bishop Paul Hendricks, the diocesan chair, Mgr Tim Galligan, and the diocesan vice-chair, Fr Michael Lovell.)

Another important change introduced in 1992 was the suggestion that parish unity contacts (PUCs) should be appointed in each parish of the diocese. PUCs were meant to attend meetings of the appropriate Area Commission at least once a year. In recent years however their role has developed somewhat. The prescribed system for appointing members to the Commission has, for one reason or another, failed to operate as intended and no formal appointments have been made for some time. This has meant in practice that at area level PUCs have got increasingly involved in the Commission’s work. Indeed the majority of the lay people who actively participate in that work are now technically PUCs rather than Commissioners.

Against that background, the officers’ meeting decided last year that a fundamental review of the Commission’s constitution should be undertaken. Four basic issues were identified:

- The aims and objectives of the Commission set out in existing documents needed updating.
- The distinction between the Commissioners (at diocesan or area level) and PUCs (at parish level) had become blurred. The system for appointing members to the Commission needed to be reviewed.
- Distribution of the Commission’s functions between the central (diocesan) level and the local (area or deanery) level needed to be clarified so that duplication could be avoided.

- Any new constitutional provisions should be as simple, flexible and informal as possible.

### The new constitution

*The new constitution, as now approved by Archbishop Peter, can be found on the website of the Archdiocese of Southwark. (Go to 'Diocesan Links', then to 'The Diocesan Commissions – Commission for Christian Unity', then to 'Commission'.) Its main provisions are summarized below.*

The aims and objectives of the Commission are now defined as those suggested for diocesan Christian Unity Commissions in *The Search for Christian Unity - A popular version of the Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, published by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 2002.

The new document makes it clear that the main focus of the work of the Commission in terms of policy and overall strategy should in future be done mainly at diocesan rather than area level.

There will no longer be any prescribed upper limit on the number of Commissioners. The size of the Commission 'should be kept to the minimum necessary for [it] to do its work effectively.'

The Archbishop will continue to appoint the president, chair and vice-chair of the Commission. He will also formally appoint the Commissioners, on the basis of recommendations put to him by the chair, who will be expected to have consulted those with an interest within the diocese. In practice, it may be that the initial core of the reconstituted Commission will be those who attend the existing 'officers' meeting', with other members added later.

Members will be appointed for a term of three years initially - at the end of that term they can be recommended for reappointment for another three years at the chair's discretion. There is a power to invite people from other Christian denominations to attend meeting of the Commission as observers.

In drafting the new constitution, we recognized the invaluable work done by the existing Area Commissions. Formally, the Area Commissions will be replaced by a more flexible system of ‘local groups’, each to cover an episcopal area, a deanery, or a group of deaneries, charged with helping the Commission to further its work at a more local level. In practice, we envisage that the existing South West and South East Commissions will for the moment continue as now, but under the new name of ‘local groups.’ (The position in Kent, where the large size of the geographical areas covered has caused problems, is under review.) Each local group will consist of all the Commissioners and PUCs who are based in its area, but it may invite other people to its meetings if it wishes. Local groups are to be required to submit to the Commission annual reports on their work.

New arrangements are being introduced to help the Commission plan and to be accountable for its work. Every year it is to be required to prepare a statement of its medium and long term objectives and an action plan for the forthcoming twelve months. It is also to be required to prepare an annual report on its work, incorporating the reports submitted by local groups. All these documents are to be submitted to the Archbishop, and publicised, e.g. on the diocesan website.

The Commission is to be required to hold a general meeting once a year (as it does now), to which PUCs and others with an interest in the Commission’s work will be invited. The documents described in the previous paragraph will be presented and explained to the meeting. People will be invited to make comments on or suggestions about the Commission’s work.

Our hope is that these new constitutional provisions will make the work of the Commission in helping to promote Christian unity in the archdiocese more effective. We would welcome any views on the way the new arrangements should be implemented. They should be sent to Mgr Tim Galligan at [svpclapham@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:svpclapham@yahoo.co.uk).

Robin Orton, Vice-chair, SE Area CUC

## Blessed Sacrament Procession goes Ecumenical

The procession of the Blessed Sacrament took place in the ruins of Lesnes Abbey, situated in the parish of St. Benet's, Abbey Wood, on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June. The two deaneries of Greenwich and Bexley are involved in this annual event which has been taking place on the last Sunday in June as far back as I can remember. Altar servers lead the procession, with the Blessed Sacrament coming next with priests and deacons of the deaneries, followed by Eucharistic ministers then First Communion children in their finery. Finally come representatives from each parish who gather behind their church banners to process round the beautiful grounds.

It is a typically Catholic event which has taken over from Corpus Christi processions which used to be held by each parish in days gone by when there was less traffic on the roads. Although numbers attending this have gone down over the years, it's still an impressive sight for passers-by who often stop to watch and sometimes even sit and listen to the homily. Because it's such a Catholic event I had never thought of inviting my ecumenical friends from the other churches of Welling. However, at a Lenten House Group a Catholic friend of mine told her group about the forthcoming procession and some members of a high Anglican church were keen to attend. This is what Andrew Lewis had to say:

Four of us from St. Michael's Church, Welling attended the Catholic service on St. Peter and St. Paul's day at Lesnes Abbey, Abbey Wood. The afternoon was sunny and warm but the first impression that I had was one of great celebration and joy. We had been invited to the Bexley and Greenwich event by the people of St. Stephen's, Welling and soon found them by their banner. After a few brief announcements, the procession began – hymns and prayers and readings – as we processed around the perimeter of the remains of the abbey. People of all ages and all manner of



costumes were all joyfully involved to the interest and bemusement of those who had come to the grounds for a sunny Sunday afternoon. When we had completed the circuit, a priest gave an address and the benediction. It had been a wonderful experience of Christian worship and joy.

It was great to hear that our Anglican friends had enjoyed the experience so much and are keen to go again next year. In fact, later that same day I was at a Fifth Sunday Evening Service at another local Anglican church – Welling Churches have an evening service at a different church in rotation when there are five Sundays in the month. Here I overheard Andrew telling someone from a low Anglican church about the procession, and he wished he'd known about it too! So next year I must make sure all the other local churches know about it so no one will be disappointed. The Greek Orthodox Church in Welling have invited the other churches to join in their Blessing of the Waters ceremony for the last few years and, despite being mainly in Greek and usually on a very cold day, this has gained a following from the other churches. So why not our Blessed Sacrament Procession?

Whilst I don't imagine the event will officially be made ecumenical for some time yet, it's good to know that there is an interest in these events and who knows what one day we might be able to do together publicly to honour our blessed Lord?

Gwen Chiosso



## A NAÏVE THEOLOGY OF ECUMENISM

Notes of a presentation by John Richardson,  
Ecumenical Officer, Churches Together in South London  
at the Café Théologique in St Peter's Walworth, 13 June 2013

*Naïve* can mean 'unaffected, straightforward' or 'foolishly credulous'. Obviously, in this presentation I want to emphasise the former, but I fear it may sometimes be the latter.

I think of my personal story as a journey from bigotry to big picture. My upbringing in Lancashire Methodism was warm, loving and all embracing. I sometime say that I appreciate it because it taught me to believe, to pray, to read my Bible, to get on with all ages, and also to play darts, snooker and cricket! It was nourishing in many ways, but it was also narrow and bigoted. Roman Catholics were beyond the pale and Anglicans were iffy.

My time at university changed all that and it was the Student Christian Movement that affected me most deeply. It was through that organisation that I became an ecumenical enthusiast, discovering to my surprise first that non-Methodists were Christian and, more significantly, that I could learn from and be strengthened by people of different Christian traditions.

Over the 50 years since then, I have been a naïve (in the 'unaffected, straightforward' sense, I hope) supporter of just about every development in the ecumenical movement.

A selection of my enthusiasms (literally 'in-God-isms')

- The Student Christian Movement approach, i.e. reading the Bible and changing the world (usually in a leftward direction)
- Organisational unity: especially Anglican-Methodist union
- Various covenants between churches to achieve more unity by a certain date

- The World Council of Churches statements on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry
- International/national dialogues: Anglican/Roman Catholic, Roman Catholic/Methodist, Roman Catholic/Reformed, Roman Catholic/Pentecostal
- The ‘churches together’ concept and its local and national implementation
- Practical co-operation between churches for caring and justice
- Making connections, the current ‘motto’ of Churches Together in South London

A flip-side to all the above is my frustration when things haven’t worked out as I hoped and the failure of others to share my passions – though these days I think am more sanguine, with a greater trust in things being ‘all in God’s time’.

Why have I been so keen on ecumenical progress? Maybe I’m temperamentally someone who wants people to get on with each other but I dare also to believe that unity is at the heart of the Christian message. Profoundly, or naively, I’m an ecumenist because the Bible tells me to be one.

In 2008, Churches Together in England and Bible Society produced a booklet ‘One light: one world’ which aimed to re-establish the scriptural basis for our ecumenical calling. ‘Ultimately,’ it stated, ‘the reason we are involved in the ecumenical journey is because there is a divine mandate’. It then gave a selection of passages showing ‘the vision of the unity of the Church within the purposes of God’. These are set out in sections and I gave these below with some of the verses that are quoted.

The unity of God

Deuteronomy 6:4-7, Psalm 89:5-8, Mark 12:28-31

The unity of creation and the human race

Genesis 1:26-31; Isaiah 40:21-26; Psalm 24:1-4; John 3:16;  
Romans 8:19-23; 11:33-36.

The unity of God's people

Genesis 12:1-3; Psalm 95:1-7; 1 Cor.1:2-3; 1 Peter 2:9-10.

Christ's work in bringing us into unity

John 10:14-16; John 12:32; John 17:20-23; Rom. 5:10-1;  
1 Cor. 15:24-28; Ephesians 2:13-22; Colossians 1:15-20.

The Spirit's gifts of unity

Acts 2:1-6; Rom. 12:3-5; Ephesians 4:7; 11-16, 1 Peter 4:8-11.

Recognising that we belong together (the longest section)

Jn 15:1-16; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor.13; Gal.3:26-29; 1 Jn 4:19-21.

The overall message to me is powerful, an overwhelming declaration that ecumenism is 'a good thing'. And when I add some of the dangers of disunity, resulting as it does in violence ('Divided churches cost lives' said one Irish churchman) and a ridiculous image of faith, plus the practical advantages of unity – it makes sense to outsiders, it makes us more effective in evangelism and the promotion of social justice etc. – then my case feels unassailable. And yet ...

I do ask myself whether I am being naïve in its less attractive sense. I want more one-ness among churches and perhaps I see it a bit too readily – to use a descriptive phrase common in my family, 'my geese can be swans'. I can therefore ignore what I once heard called 'the intractable snags' that affect the quest for greater Christian unity and I need to remind myself that they exist. Let me put them as questions:

- Doesn't the Bible also acknowledge our divisions – family and state violence in the Old Testament and 'parties' in the New?

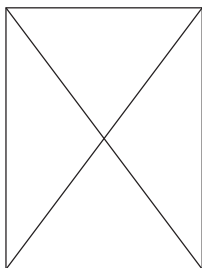
- Haven't the centuries since Christ's earthly ministry resulted in deeply-held convictions which we cannot underestimate and which cannot be overcome at a stroke?
- Is there not an awful lot of accumulated baggage within each one of us?
- Is it not true that some of the greatest theological writing has divided rather than unified?
- Is it not also true that the most effective missionary advances have been individual and denominational rather than ecumenical?
- Isn't church life for the most part geared to traditions and denominations?
- Don't we all need the comfort of our traditions and customary practice?
- Isn't ecumenism a bit too abrasive for most people?
- Isn't co-operation hard work?

The answer to all the above is probably yes and I'd be a fool to ignore these realities.

Which prompts a final thought. Maybe naivety in pursuing the ecumenical vision is a foolish task blessed by God. Maybe some of us have a simple calling to pursue unity even when the counter-forces are strong. Our persistent enthusiasm may occasion a patronising response – 'Ah, bless him...' – and it often does inspire boredom, irritation and rejection. But we press on – and I personally am grateful to the many companions who join me in this naïve pursuit.

John Richardson  
(revised 6 Sept. 2013)

## BISHOP MICHAEL EVANS ON METHODIST EUCHARIST



On Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2011 Bishop Michael Evans, a Southwark priest, who became the Bishop of East Anglia, died from cancer. On his second anniversary it was announced that a Romero Cross and Memorial was to be erected in St George's Cathedral Southwark, to honour the martyred Archbishop Romero and also be dedicated to Bishop Michael.

The three-dimensional painted Salvadoran Cross, by Fernando Llort, will contain a fragment of Archbishop Romero's blood-stained alb and his zucchetto.

The Archbishop Romero Trust has commissioned it especially for St George's. The Cross will stand between the St Joseph and the St Patrick chapels alongside a bust of Oscar Romero. This special place for prayer will honour the celebrated martyr-priest, assassinated in San Salvador while celebrating Mass in 1980.

The creation of this Romero Space in St George's was a great joy to the late Bishop Michael Evans before he died. He had a special devotion to Archbishop Romero as a great witness to Christian faith and the model of a bishop who inspired his own episcopal ministry.

The Romero Space celebrates the life and death of Archbishop Romero, but the Cross also provides a very fitting memorial to Bishop Michael, to whom it will be dedicated on 19 Sept. 2013.

Pope John Paul II appointed Fr Michael as the third Bishop of East Anglia in 2003. On his appointment he said he was "astonished" and felt "unworthy".

Three years later he was told that he was suffering from an aggressive form of prostate cancer. But he continued to work tirelessly in the diocese despite worsening health.

In January 2011 Bishop Evans informed his diocese that he did not have long to live. He wrote:

Rather than resign, I would like to continue among you as your bishop and the father of our diocesan family until this stage of my life ends. I do not know how long that will be. I am most grateful for the ways you have cared for and so prayerfully supported me in recent years. You remain very much in my thoughts and care.

As I live now under the shadow of death, my prayer is very much that of St Paul that I may know something of the power of Christ's Resurrection and a share in his sufferings, trusting that the Lord is with me. I pray that even now I can joyfully witness something of the good news we are all called to proclaim.

His predecessor in East Anglia, Archbishop Peter Smith said:

As a priest of the [Southwark] archdiocese, Michael was totally committed to his priestly ministry both as a pastoral priest and professor of theology for many years at St John's seminary.

Having known him as a fellow student, a friend and brother priest involved in the formation of future priests, I was delighted when he was appointed as the third Bishop of East Anglia. There Bishop Michael continued that dedication, emphasizing the bishop's role as a teacher of the faith and spending himself in building up the diocesan family of East Anglia. He was unstinting in using his time and great talents in the service of the clergy, religious and people of the diocese.

He added:

Even during his long period of ill-health, although increasingly restricted in what he was able to do, he refused to give up. I have no doubt that he will be greeted by the Lord

he served so faithfully, with the words: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the Kingdom prepared for you.’

The Rt Rev Stephen Conway, Anglican Bishop of Ely, also paid tribute. “I am very sad to learn of the death of Bishop Michael Evans,” he said. “Like Pope John Paul II, Michael’s living with his illness was more eloquent than any sermon about living through human weakness the joy of Christ’s Resurrection. “He will be remembered in our prayers across the Diocese. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.”

From 1991 he was a member of the British Methodist/Roman Catholic Committee and in 1997 was appointed by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity to be one of the eight Catholic members of the International Joint Commission for Dialogue.

Bishop Evans was also one of the four Christian co-presidents of the Christian-Muslim Forum established by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

A regular writer of articles and pamphlets on theological issues, Bishop Evans always focused on ecumenical dialogue as an important part of his ministry.

*Extracts from the RC Dioceses of  
Southwark, and of East Anglia websites*

In his role as Chairman of the Committee for Christian Unity in the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales he worked closely with the leaders of many churches and ecclesial communities. His work with the Catholic/Methodist Dialogue led to the following article being written by him.

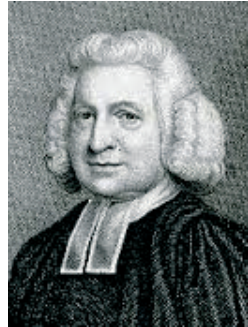


## “FIT CHANNELS TO CONVEY THY LOVE”

### **The Eucharistic Hymns of Charles Wesley**

On 18<sup>th</sup> December last year [2007], many Christians throughout the world celebrated the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Charles Wesley in 1707. With his brother John, Charles was a key figure in the foundation of the evangelical renewal movement in Britain which eventually became Methodism.

On 3 December last year, I was in Rome for a special celebration of the anniversary, led by Cardinal Walter Kasper from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and by the President of the World Methodist Council. But why on earth should Catholics pay any attention to the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a founder of Methodism?



Some of you know that I have long been involved in Catholic/Methodist dialogue, as a member of the British Methodist/Catholic Committee for 16 years, and of the international Commission for the last ten years.

In 18<sup>th</sup> century England, many Christians were only nominally so. Sadly, the same is true today. John and Charles Wesley shared a passionate concern to preach to all people God's call to personal holiness, a holiness understood as perfect love for God and for one another. If they had been Catholics rather than members of the Church of England of that time, I suspect that Catholics would be venerating them today as founders of a

wonderful religious congregation, dedicated to holiness and mission.

Both Wesley brothers were also concerned that people should receive Holy Communion more often, and that receiving the Lord's life and love in this way should transform their lives.

Charles Wesley was England's greatest hymn writer. He wrote well over 6000 hymns, many of which Catholics sing regularly.

Some well-known hymns by Charles Wesley

- Christ the Lord is risen today; alleluia!
- Come, thou long-expected Jesus
- Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go
- Hark the herald angels sing
- Love Divine, all loves excelling
- Rejoice, the Lord is King!

Among those hymns are some on the Eucharist which fit well into this year's diocese theme in East Anglia on receiving Holy Communion: 'Given for you, shed for you – receiving and being the Body of Christ'. In 1745 Charles Wesley published 166 Eucharistic Hymns. Sadly, these have been largely neglected, even among Methodists.

Methodists and Catholics are not yet fully agreed on the meaning of the Eucharist and Holy Communion, and I am not suggesting that Wesley's hymns fully capture Catholic teaching, but they can provide us with rich spiritual nourishment as we receive Holy Communion each Sunday or even more regularly. I suggest that you simply read each of the following hymns prayerfully. I will add a few thoughts after each of them.

Jesus, we thus obey  
Thy last and kindest word;  
Here, in thine own appointed way,  
We come to meet thee, Lord.

Our hearts we open wide  
To make the Saviour room;  
And lo! The Lamb, the Crucified,  
The sinner's friend, is come.

His presence makes the feast;  
And now our spirits feel  
The glory not to be expressed,  
The joy unspeakable.

With pure celestial bliss,  
He doth our spirits cheer;  
His house of banqueting is this,  
And he hath brought us here.

He bids us drink and eat Imperishable food;  
He gives his flesh to be our meat,  
And bids us drink his blood.

Whate'er the Almighty can  
To pardoned sinners give,  
The fullness of our God made man  
We here with Christ receive.

Why do we come to Mass? Because the Risen Jesus himself invites us to come and meet him there. We can meet people without coming any closer to them, and the same is true of meeting Christ. When we come to Mass and receive Holy

Communion, we should come with a deep reverence for his presence, but also with our hearts and lives open to welcome him, to make room for him, to receive him into our innermost selves. Such a presence brings ‘unspeakable joy’, because we meet and receive ‘the fullness of our God made man.’

Author of life divine,  
Who hast a table spread,  
Furnished with mystic wine,  
And everlasting bread,  
Preserve the life thyself hast given,  
And feed and train us up for heaven.

Our needy souls sustain  
With fresh supplies of love,  
Till all thy life we gain,  
And all thy fullness prove,  
And, strengthened by thy perfect grace,  
Behold without a veil thy face.

What do we receive when we receive Holy Communion? What do we need to sustain our souls? ‘Fresh supplies of love’, suggests Charles Wesley. Not just any love, but our Lord’s love, his total giving of himself to us. During the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass, God pours the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine to transform them into Christ’s presence, and upon us to transform us more truly into the Body of Christ in the world. And who is the Holy Spirit? The Love of God the Father and God the Son in person. The whole Mass is about God’s love, as Pope Benedict has shown so clearly in his letter calling it the *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the Sacrament of Love. The Creator pours out his divine love upon the bread and wine, a Love which can change anything – even us! The Love we receive at Mass is ‘Love divine,

all loves excelling, joy of heav'n, to earth come down' (Charles Wesley).

Come, Holy Ghost, thine influence shed,  
And realize the sign;  
Thy life infuse into the bread,  
Thy power into the wine.

Effectual let the tokens prove  
And made, by heavenly art,  
Fit channels to convey thy love  
To every faithful heart.

Continued discussion is needed between Catholics and Methodists about the way Christ is presence in Holy Communion, and the hymn above would be an interesting focus for such discussion, but Catholics can certainly understand the consecrated bread and wine as 'fit channels' to convey God's love to the faithful heart. Again, love is not just a warm feeling or a power. To love is to give oneself with another. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive the Risen Lord himself, giving his whole self to us. That is true Love! When you receive Holy Communion, ask the Lord to fill you with his love and his life, and to transform you deep within yourself.

How happy are thy servants, Lord,  
Who thus remember thee!  
What tongue can tell our sweet accord,  
Our perfect harmony.

Who thy mysterious supper share,  
Here at thy table fed,  
Many, and yet but one we are,  
One undivided bread.

One with the living bread divine  
Which now by faith we eat,  
Our hearts and minds and spirits join,  
And all in Jesus meet.

So dear the tie where souls agree  
In Jesus' dying love;  
Then only can it closer be  
When all are joined above.

Receiving Holy Communion is not only about meeting and receiving Christ. It is about meeting and 'receiving' one another. If each of us receives the self-giving love of the Lord, we should surely be united with each other in an extraordinary way. We are together the Body of Christ, Christ's presence for our world. And we too are called to be 'fit channels' to convey God's joyful Love to our world.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael".

.it is absolutely clear that ecumenism, the movement promoting Christian Unity, is not just some sort of "appendix" which is added to the church's traditional activity. Rather, ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does; it must be like the fruit borne by a healthy and flourishing tree which grows to its full stature.'

Pope John Paul II

*Ut Unum sint*

para 20, 25 May 1995

‘Indeed all the faithful are asked by the Spirit of God to do everything possible to strengthen the bonds of communion between all Christians and to increase cooperation between Christ’s followers.

*Ut Unum Sint*, para 101

‘Concern for restoring unity pertains to the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone according to the potential of each.’

Second Vatican Council

*Decree on Ecumenism*, para 5

