

Lutheran Church of Australia and Roman Catholic Church Conversations

1985

Sacrament and Sacrifice

Foreword

This report is the result of an intensive study and discussion of the Eucharist over a number of years by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church of Australia meeting in dialogue. The dialogue committees, working under the mandate of their respective churches at the national level took seriously the need to conduct their discussions in the light of the authentic witness of the Holy Scriptures and with the testimony of the historic confessions of the Church constantly in mind. However, participants also took into account the development of tradition within the dialoguing churches. These principles furnished the general guidelines for these discussions.

The attempt to arrive at mutual understanding of the teachings of the respective churches on the Eucharist called for in-depth study, particularly of Christ's presence in the Sacrament and of Christ's sacrifice in the context of the Eucharist. By responding to position papers which took up the key themes and issues involved, the dialoguing group strove to produce a statement which would be true to the faith of the partners involved in the dialogue, represent an acceptable expression of that faith and yet, at the same time, explore fresh avenues which would offer the hope of reaching deeper understanding and engendering further fruitful discussion.

It is with praise to God that we present this report, thankful for his blessing on our discussions and the measure of understanding we have been able to reach. *Sacrament and Sacrifice* is offered as a report to the two churches from the dialoguing teams in the hope that it will lead to further study and discussion in the two communions. Both churches will have to decide to what extent the conclusions reached in this document are an acceptable statement of the faith and whether it is helpful in our search for deeper understanding and a common affirmation of our teaching on the Eucharist.

Abbreviations

A.A.S.	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
A.C.	Augsburg Confession
Ap.	Apology of Augsburg Confession
D.S.	Denzinger-Schönmetzer, Enchiridion, 1965
E.M.	Eucharisticum Mysterium
Ep.	Epitome of Formula of Concord
E.S.	Eucharistiae Sacramentum
F.C.	Formula of Concord
G.I.R.M.	General Instruction on the Roman Missal
L.C.	Large Catechism
L.G.	Lumen Gentium
M.D.	Mediator Dei
M.F.	Pope Paul VI's Encyclical Letter Mysterium Fidei
S.A.	Smalcald Articles
Sac.Con.	Sacrosanctum Concilium
S.C.	Small Catechism
S.D.	Solid Declaration of Formula of Concord
S.T.	Summa Theologiae of Thomas Aquinas
Trent	Sessions of the Council of Trent

I. Introduction

1. After the completion of an agreed statement on Baptism, Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue in Australia concentrated on the doctrine of the Eucharist. Since October 21, 1977 there have been four meetings per year. This document has arisen directly out of our discussions during this period. It seeks to pinpoint areas of agreement and draw attention to those areas where it is not yet possible to make a common witness. Hence this statement points to the need for on-going dialogue.
2. Such dialogue is a vital aspect of the Church's nature, life, and mission (Eph. 4:3-6), as each group reaches out to the other in an effort to discover their common faith.
3. Although our dialogue is formal and official and has been commissioned by the Australian Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church and the General Church Council of the Lutheran Church of Australia, this Statement on the Eucharist is an expression of the findings of our dialogue team, indicating the level of understanding we have reached and summarising our discussion. All these dialogues are conducted with the intention of confessing and seeking the truth. Therefore, in accordance with the directives we have been given, we have seen the purpose of our dialogue: (a) to search mutually for expressions of faith in our traditions which are held in common; (b) to strive for mutual statements of faith acceptable to both traditions, without minimising real differences; (c) to seek a deeper understanding of the faith and theological tradition of the dialoguing partner; (d) to ask whether and to what degree existing differences may be regarded as church- divisive; (e) to provide information on the purpose, nature, and content of our dialogue to members of both churches, especially via the respective bodies to which we are responsible. We believe that the eventual outcome of our dialogue does not lie in our hands; it is the prerogative of the Lord of the Church.
4. We are engaging in dialogue against the background of other national and international discussions between the two churches, both in the USA as well as in Europe. The published findings of these dialogues on the Eucharist, together with the statement, *The Eucharist*, published by the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission, have been consulted regularly and gratefully in our own dialogue. It has become evident to us that in the doctrine of the Eucharist Lutherans and Catholics face the same questions in Australia as they do in other parts of the world. At the same time, we have not allowed international concerns or conclusions to determine the course or results of our own discussions.
5. The ultimate basis for all our discussions has been the witness of Holy Scripture, and this document is the result of our mutual and responsible study of and reflection on that witness. Since Catholic and Lutheran participants in dialogue are bound by the official doctrines of their respective churches, the eucharistic decisions of the Council of Trent, reiterated in the Second Vatican Council, as well as confessional statements on the Lord's Supper in *The Book of Concord* of the Lutheran Church, have been prominent in our discussions and have been examined in the light of Scripture. We have also considered eucharistic liturgies of our churches because they reflect eucharistic teaching and practice; and we have discussed eucharistic practices as they are found at the local level. Our commitment to official church teachings has encouraged us to write papers of a searching nature; the results of these are partially incorporated into this statement. In fact, as dialogue has progressed and deepened, it has been necessary for us to seek new forms of theological expression to contain the agreement which we have sensed and those areas of common faith which have been hidden before. It has been necessary in our discussions to investigate the background of traditional language on the Eucharist and propose alternative forms of

expression of traditional faith. This attempt has been made in order to crystalise underlying agreement in terms acceptable to and understood by both traditions, without sacrificing theological precision or the traditional faith to which the dialoguing churches are committed.

6. Both groups have seen some wisdom in separating discussion on the nature of the Eucharist from the relationship between Eucharist and Ministry. Certain important questions thus await further dialogue. Present dialogue has centred on two areas: (a) the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and (b) the Eucharist as sacrifice. At the same time, we have concerned ourselves with related areas: liturgy as an expression of eucharistic faith and practice; the question of the perduration and reservation of the sacrament; the question of the theology of the consecration of the elements. Dialogue in areas of eucharistic doctrine which have been traditionally controversial has taken place in a context within which there was a considerable agreement about the purpose and nature of this particular sacrament, both in God's saving plan for the world as well as in the faith and life of the people of God. Our dialogue in the theologically controversial areas should be seen in the light of this agreement. However, remaining differences should not be minimised. Specific aspects of eucharistic faith and practice still continue to separate our churches. At the same time, in our discussions we have come to realise that not all differences are of equal importance and we have had the task of analysing the extent to which they are ultimately divisive or non-divisive.

7. It needs to be remembered that a statement such as this joint statement on the Eucharist is made before God. As such it has the character not only of a theological document, but also, and wherever possible, of a joint witness and confession. Accordingly our joint statement seeks the response of all the members of our churches, encourages them to rejoice in signs of unity, and invites them to pray for further growth in the fellowship of faith. Indeed, the Australian Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue has been marked by a strong awareness of the importance of disseminating points of consensus, convergence and concern among the people we represent. It is clear that no statement can show all the details of a mutual learning process extending over several years; nor can all the details of questions discussed be incorporated in full. Yet we pray that our findings and recommendations will be received with the same openness that has characterised the dialogue.

8. The Eucharist is the Supper of unity. While we rejoice in the progress we have made and the agreement we have been able to reach in the areas under discussion, we are painfully aware of our continuing differences and separation. Indeed, the degree of consensus we have reached on the Eucharist only makes us all the more conscious of the urgency of the task which remains: to pray and strive for full unity of faith and confession.

II. The Eucharist within the Context of God's Saving Plan

9. The last meal of Jesus with his disciples before his death on the cross, reminds us of his frequent meals, both as host and as guest during his public ministry, e.g. his feeding of the four thousand (Matt. 15:32-39) and his eating with sinners (Mark 2:15-17). The significance of these meals is twofold and is, in each case, an anticipation of the last meal, the Eucharist, on the night on which he was betrayed. On the one hand, these meals signify a deep sense of fellowship, the establishment of a communion in which each is bound to the other, the host with his guests, and the guests with him and each other. On the other hand, these meals are Messianic in character, an anticipation of the great marriage feast (Mark 2:19; Matt. 22:1-14) and of the coming of the kingdom of God. All these aspects are present in a unique and unprecedented way as mysterious realities in the institution of the Eucharist.

10. The background and context of this first Lord's Supper is the Passover festival, celebrated as a meal in remembrance of the mighty act of God by which he rescued and

delivered his people from bondage in Egypt through his servant Moses (Luke 22:15). At the time of our Lord, an important aspect of this festival was the offering to God of the blood of a lamb, slain for the people's redemption. In this context, Christ institutes his new meal as fulfilment of the old Passover meal and the end of the old covenant of God with his people; indeed, as the beginning of a new covenant, grounded in a new and saving reality, namely in him and his death, as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). And so, by his will and declaration, expressed in his words of institution, this new Passover meal is to be repeated as a memorial in which Christ brings his sacrifice into the present. This saving reality is coupled with the gift of real communion with him as Messiah, as Prophet, Priest and King.

11. Of significance in this new meal is the breaking of bread and the distribution of the wine in the cup. There is praise and thanksgiving for God's created gifts, for eating and drinking, for nourishment and life. The Eucharist in this sense is an ever-repeated act of praise of the people of God in which they thank and glorify the Creator of heaven and earth for his good gifts, especially for bread and wine chosen by him as instruments for the sacramental presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

12. But the glorification goes further. Jesus, too, joins in this act of glorification. As indeed his whole life and work was to the glory of his Father (John 17:4), so now, as he institutes this new meal, he knows his imminent death to be God's will for him for the salvation of mankind. His obedience to that will is the climax of his glorification of the Father, expressed in the symbolical portrayal of his high-priestly work in his breaking of the bread and sharing of the wine as his body broken and his blood shed 'for the forgiveness of sins' (Matt. 26:28).

13. This active obedience of Jesus to his Father, and his deliberate acceptance of the role of representative of fallen mankind and of agent of God's saving work of reconciliation, is indicated by the fact that it is he who invites his disciples to this last meal, and that the institution of the Eucharist is by his decision (Luke 22:7-13). Both the invitation and the decision show that his acceptance of the Father's will for himself is a voluntary act of self-giving, a giving of himself both to the Father and to mankind. These aspects of the Eucharist continue to be proclaimed, portrayed, and spiritually and physically given to the people of God as an act of God's grace and are received in faith through the operation of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 11:26).

14. These basic facts, the institution of the Eucharist by the Lord as his testament and the obedient hearing and receiving, eating and drinking in faith by God's new people, constitute the very essence of this sacrament (Matt. 26:26-28). In so receiving it, God's people receive what Jesus himself declared and promised, his very self, and so they receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

15. So we are reminded of that great mystery of which the New Testament speaks, namely Baptism initiated in the life of the faithful is continued in a unique and saving way in the Eucharist. Jesus offers us his body given into death for us; he gives us his blood poured out for us. Thus he, the bread of life (John 6:48-58) and the true vine (John 15:1), fulfils in us his promise that, in receiving this bread and this wine, his body and his blood, we are received into that deep communion with him in which we abide in him and he in us (John 6:56; 15:5). Consequently, all who are in him in this way are also in a real union with one another (1 Cor. 10:17).

16. All this points us to another aspect of the Eucharist. The real presence of our Lord's body and blood (1 Cor. 11:23ff) is at the same time the real and substantial presence of his whole person as the crucified and glorified God-man. This means that he is truly and fully received in faith through the Holy Spirit as everything that the Father has assigned to him

from all eternity (Eph. 1:9f). He is present in the Eucharist as 'the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation', as he in whom 'all things were created' (Col. 1:15f), and as the one in whom 'all things hold together' (Col. 1:17). He is present as 'the head of the body, the church' (Col. 1:18). He is present, too, as the one in whom 'all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell' (Col. 1:19), as 'the firstborn from the dead' (Col. 1:18), and as he who will return in glory to judge all people (Matt. 25:31-46). Therefore we may also say that, in the Eucharist, God the Father reveals to us in the real presence of his Son, through the Holy Spirit, the ultimate meaning of creation and the inner thrust of all history.

17. The gracious self-giving of Jesus in the eucharist has rightly been described as a parallel with his act of humiliation in the incarnation; the Christ-hymn (Phil. 2:6-11) especially refers to this condescension. His redeeming sacrifice and the cry of dereliction on the cross, protrayed and actualised in the Eucharist, are the deepest depth of his humiliation and of his obedience to the will of his Father. At the same time, his glorious exaltation in the resurrection and ascension, together with his victory over death and the demonic power of Satan, are equally proclaimed and present in this sacrament. In short, the consecrated elements show forth the unity of all that Jesus was, is, and shall be; of all he did, does, and will do; the unity of person and work for and in all who receive this sacrament in faith.

18. The importance of faith must be stressed once more; all who receive the body and blood of our Lord need to receive these gifts in faith. It is indeed true that lack of faith in the person who receives the sacrament in no way invalidates the gifts of the body and blood of Christ, for he will not withdraw his presence and all that it signifies from the elements to which he has bound himself. But rejection of the offer and promise given in the Eucharist means a decision to continue in sin and alienation from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And so anyone who receives the body and blood of Christ unworthily is liable to God's judgment (1 Cor. 11: 27-30). The very nature, meaning, and purpose of the sacrament as a meal of redemption, forgiveness and reconciliation, in which our Lord offers his person and work, *as* praise and thanksgiving on the part of those who receive it, presupposes faith, the acceptance of God's grace and promises for us as undeserved and unmerited gifts. We have already received these very same gifts, in that same faith, in Baptism (Rom. 6:7) and in the word of the Gospel. Here in the Eucharist God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, imparts himself to us in a deep and special way, incorporating us through this saving mystery into a fellowship of life with him, inasmuch as in that same mystery we have been incorporated into the fellowship of death and life with Jesus Christ.

19. Finally, it is necessary to remind ourselves of the fact that it is within the Church that our risen and exalted Lord grants to the faithful all the gifts of his work of salvation which he won for us in the victory of his death. It is also in the Church that he who is the Christ *for* us, gives himself as the Christ *in* us, together with all that that means. It is in the Church that sinners are forgiven sinners and therefore saints who are members of Christ's body. These realities are grounded in the fact that Jesus as Priest and King is the head of his body, the Church .

20. It is significant that this term 'body' is used both for the Church and for the body of our Lord in the words of institution of the Eucharist. It is clear that Church and Eucharist are indissolubly bound together. The Church is the communion of believers, the people of God, and at the same time the body of Christ, incorporating within itself his real presence, and bound together in him through word and sacrament. As in Baptism, so in the Eucharist, the people of God are completely integrated into the death and sacrifice of their Lord (1 Cor. 10:17, 18; Eph. 4:4-6; Rom. 6:4). Every celebration of the Eucharist therefore points beyond itself to the mystery of the Church *as* the body of Christ. To celebrate the one is to celebrate

the other.

21. The Church is the people of God between the times, the pilgrim people, awaiting the day of our Lord's Second Coming and the consummation of all things. Every celebration of the Eucharist proclaims the death of the Lord "until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). Every celebration of the eucharist celebrated the real presence of the Lord now; and it celebrated in faith and hope his coming again in that consummation when he will hand over all things to his father. In that faith and hope the Church prays: 'Amen, Come, lord Jesus!' (Rev 22:20).

III Our Common Faith Regarding Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist

A. The Mystery of the Real Presence

22. Lutheran and Roman Catholic Christians hold in common the mystery of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist as taught in Scripture. Our churches stress the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist to highlight the central purpose of the sacrament, viz. that the crucified, risen, and exalted Lord gives himself to us fully, draws us to himself, and shares with us his saving work and glorious life. These purposes are achieved by him when he gives us his body and blood by means of and in the eucharistic bread and wine. We hold that this is the mutual confession of our churches.

23. There are three aspects which both churches profess concerning this mystery of the real presence:

- (a) The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is grasped by faith. Behind the variety of statements made by our traditions on the Eucharist lies the same faith in this God-given reality, held in common by Roman Catholics and Lutherans.
- (b) This common faith is in the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. Our shared faith concerning this presence is that it is the physical presence of the glorified Christ; therefore this physical presence is not to be understood in a crass way. It is the spiritual presence of the glorified Christ, but not in a way which denies his physical reality (1 Cor. 15:42-50; Phil. 3:20-21). It is certainly more than a merely moral presence. It is not natural in the way that human beings are usually present to each other. The presence of which we speak is a special kind of presence, unique to this particular God-given sacrament. Our churches have traditionally called this a sacramental presence.
- (c) This presence of our Lord in the Eucharist is real. 'Real' might be understood in a number of different ways: it could mean physically real, scientifically real, chemically real, psychologically real. All of these levels of reality could be tested by experiment and observation. The reality of which we speak is only discernible by faith. Faith affirms that the crucified, risen, and exalted Lord is present in the Eucharist with a special kind of reality, unique to this particular sacrament. It can therefore be called *sacramental* reality.

24. The reality of the sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharist is in no way inferior to the reality of the earthly presence of Jesus Christ to his disciples; that is, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, the totality of what Christ was and is, is communicated to us for our sakes.

25. Lutheran and Roman Catholic Christians have held firmly to their belief in Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. Over the centuries they have sought in different ways to safeguard this belief by protecting it from mistake, misunderstanding, or error.

B. The Place of Change in Affirming Faith in the Real Presence

26. In our churches we agree that there is a sacramental union between Christ and the

eucharistic bread and wine. However, it has always been difficult for Christians to express this mystery adequately. The difficulty lies in describing what kind of union this is.

27. On the one hand, we recognise that to ordinary observation bread and wine in the Eucharist remain what they always were. On the other hand, we join in affirming the wholeness and entirety of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. This unity between the reality of Christ's body and blood and the reality of bread and wine is brought about by the activity of God through the Holy Spirit and the risen and exalted Lord himself.

28. In order to respect the mystery, Lutherans have preferred to avoid any attempt to describe the manner of Christ's presence in terms of change of bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, although the terminology of change is found in the Lutheran Confessions (e.g. Ap. X, 2; cf. L.C. V, 9). On the other hand, Lutherans do employ an analogy to describe real presence, while avoiding the terminology of change; they liken the union between Christ and the eucharistic bread and wine to the union between the divine and human natures of Christ. In the case of the incarnation, two natures are united 'personally'; the union takes place in the person of the divine Word. So too in the Eucharist, the person of the divine Word unites himself 'sacramentally' with the bread and wine, so that the bread and wine become the full expression of himself. The force of this action is to create real union between the Lord and the eucharistic bread and wine (S.D. VII, 36-38). In this way, Lutherans are able to affirm the continuing reality of bread and wine, while simultaneously and equally affirming the full presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist.

29. Catholics are just as concerned to protect faith in the real presence from ultra-realist and ultra-spiritual attempts at expressing that faith. Their way of doing this has traditionally been to refer to a change by means of which the newness and reality of Christ's presence in the eucharistic bread and wine can be affirmed. Thus, *as* early as ca. 350, Cyril of Jerusalem can say: 'God... send[s]... his Holy Spirit upon the offering to make the bread the Body of Christ and the wine the Blood of Christ. For whatever the Holy Spirit touches is hallowed and changed' (*On the Mysteries* V. 7; cf. Chrysostom, *Sermon on the Passion*, quoted S.D. VII, 76; Ambrose, *The Mysteries* IX, 52). The change intended here is the result of a radical act of God's Holy Spirit, transforming the bread and wine into the body and blood of the risen and exalted Lord 'sacramentally'. In their concern to safeguard the reality of Christ's presence in his body and blood in the Eucharist, Catholics in the Western tradition have described this change in terms of *transubstantiation* [See Appendix 1].

30. Lutherans and Catholics are primarily concerned with the fact that the bread and wine and Christ's body and blood are sacramentally one with each other in the Eucharist by the creative activity of the Holy Spirit in and through the Word. Theological reflection on this oneness is of interest to both partners — not *as* if such reflection can pinpoint the process of God's action, but insofar as such reflection illuminates and supports our common faith in the real presence of Christ in the eucharistic bread and wine. The concept of 'change' has been a traditional part of this theological reflection. Scholastic theologians employed the concept and spoke of change of one 'substance' into another as a way of affirming the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. They did not mean that the physical or chemical matter itself was changed. Change of 'substance' was meant to distinguish the decisive reality of ordinary bread and wine from the decisive reality of the body and blood of Christ. It was never officially held that the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ entailed annihilation. The theory of annihilation condemned by the Lutheran *Formula of Concord* (Ep. VII, 22) was a view held by some Catholic theologians as an attempt to explain the change; it never attained official Catholic recognition.

31. However, the usage of 'change of substance' has been a matter of some controversy

over the centuries, and it has become evident to us that this is not a helpful way of describing our common faith in the mystery of the presence of Christ. This does not mean that 'change' cannot be recognised as a dimension of the eucharistic presence of the risen Lord. Thus Lutherans and Catholics in the dialogue can agree that the purpose, indeed the reality, of the bread and wine is changed by God's activity in the Eucharist. What is given to eat and drink is something quite new which was not there before. Although the eucharistic food is no longer ordinary bread and ordinary wine, to be used for the ordinary purposes of physical sustenance (cf. L.C. V, 9,10, 14; S.D. VII, 77; M.F. [1965]), the physical elements of bread and wine remain unchanged. However, bread and wine become the true body and blood of Christ. In the eucharistic food we encounter in faith the person of Jesus Christ in his body and blood, given for us to eat and drink. We can affirm together that in the eucharistic celebration the bread is the body of Christ and the wine is the blood of Christ. A sacramental relationship is set up between the crucified and risen Lord and the bread and wine (1 Cor. 10:16-22;11:27-32).

32. Both Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches confess together that in the eucharistic bread and wine the gift of Christ's very presence in body and blood is given. We believe that there is essential agreement between our two churches concerning the doctrine of the real presence. We believe that this agreement is sufficient for unity between our churches in this aspect of eucharistic faith.

C. The Place of Theological Reflection in Affirming Faith in the Real Presence

33. Theological reflection is employed by Christians to assist them in their understanding of the mysteries of Christian truth. Many of the divisions between Christians arise not from the shared beliefs which they hold in common but from the explanations and clarifications which they have employed to express these beliefs. In fact, our dialogue has recognised that such explanations and clarifications can be helpful in assisting Christians to understand their faith in the eucharistic mystery. However, they are not a matter of faith in themselves, and therefore need not be counted among those issues which are church-divisive.

34. Catholics regard transubstantiation *as* an explanation of the real presence and distinguish this explanation from their faith in the mystery of the real presence. Catholics recognise that transubstantiation is a particular explanation which seeks to describe, promote, and protect Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, without defining how that presence is constituted. The Catholic concern is not for transubstantiation *as* such, but for the mystery of the real presence to which it points. Hence, for Catholics, transubstantiation is a 'most apt' word (Trent, Sess. XIII, Canon 2) but not necessarily the only word to describe the change of reality which occurs in the Eucharist [See Appendix 1].

35. In the light of this statement, reference must be made to the formal condemnations of 'papistic transubstantiation' contained in the Lutheran Confessions (S.A. III, vi, 5; Ep. VII, 22; S.D. VII, 108). All of these condemnations are couched in scholastic terms and condemn the teaching of Catholic theologians who attempted to describe and defend the mystery of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist in terms of the change of the 'substance' of bread and wine into the 'substance' of the body and blood of Christ. Underlying these condemnations are the following Lutheran concerns:

- (a) the concern that the Catholic doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is distorted in the direction of rationalistic explanation of the manner of the real presence ('subtle sophistry', S.A. III, vi, 5);
- (b) the concern that the Catholic affirmation of transubstantiation involves the concept of an annihilation of the natural elements of bread and wine (explicitly: Ep. VII, 22), so

that 'the consecrated ... bread ... is no longer bread' (S.D. VII, 108);

- (c) the concern that the Catholic support of transubstantiation entails misuse of the sacrament apart from its action and administration (S.D. VII, 108): the Word of God, Lutherans argue, applies to the actual sacramental action of the Eucharist as instituted by Christ, especially the eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ by those who receive it — believers or unbelievers, worthy or unworthy (S.D. VII, 83-89).

36. With regard to the first two concerns, our dialogue considers that the stand taken by the Lutheran Confessions on transubstantiation does not impair the agreement in faith which we have been able to reach by our mutual exchange of convictions:

- (a) The Lutheran Confessions rightly remind us of the dangers of rationalising the doctrine of the real presence. However, in our discussions we have come to realise that traditional Catholic teaching on transubstantiation does not have the intention of describing the manner of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, but of safeguarding the objective and radical reality of that real presence — which is and remains an inviolable mystery.

- (b) The purpose of the traditional Lutheran insistence on the continuing 'reality' of bread and wine in the Eucharist has been to exclude the concept of annihilation of the natural elements, for that would tend, once again, to undermine the mystery of Christ's presence in the sacrament. However the notion of an annihilation of the natural elements has never gained official status as a dogma within Catholic teaching (see para. 30 above).

- (c) It is doubtful whether many Catholic theologians today would argue that transubstantiation is defined Catholic doctrine. Nor has the Catholic Church ever insisted on the scholastic theory and terminology of 'substance' and 'accident' as a matter of faith. Although the traditional Lutheran rejection of transubstantiation does point to dangers which any eucharistic doctrine must regard, we believe that it may be argued that the Lutheran condemnation does not apply to official Catholic doctrine on the Eucharist.

- (d) We consider that the notion of transubstantiation is not intended to have any independent doctrinal significance, but expresses from the Catholic viewpoint what we mutually confess as central, viz. Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. Hence, while Lutheran reserve towards transubstantiation will continue, we do not consider that transubstantiation as a theological theory is church-divisive. Christ's presence in the Eucharist is altogether a different matter, and in our dialogue we have reached agreement concerning this matter without recourse to the theory of transubstantiation.

37. Having said this, the problem of the traditional teaching about 'transubstantiation' is still under discussion among Catholics and cannot be taken as definitively settled. For example, the teaching of Pope Paul VI's Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei* must be taken into account. This encyclical was written in 1965 in a context where Catholic theologians were attempting to develop new approaches to the doctrine of the real presence. Some of these approaches spoke of the real eucharistic action as a 'transignification' (a change in meaning) or as a 'transfinalisation' (a change in purpose or finality). Paul VI welcomed these theological efforts and could agree that in the eucharistic action there is indeed new significance and new finality. However, he argued that these approaches, when taken in isolation, do not adequately safeguard the reality of the real presence. To safeguard what he called the 'ontological' reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, Paul VI wrote that it is necessary to attend to the Tridentine teaching that Christ is made present in the Eucharist by a change of substance, a change that the Catholic Church has called 'transubstantiation'.

38. Papal teachings must be understood in their particular context and interpreted according to their original purpose. Paul VI was writing in the context of the emerging theology of transignification and transfinalisation. He was not directly concerned with Lutheran and Catholic examination of the theory of transubstantiation. He invokes that theory simply to ensure that the truth it asserts will not be lost in the exposition of new theological theories. Catholic theologians, in examining his statements, discern three levels of thought:

- (a) When Paul VI uses terms such as 'ontological' reality, he is describing the radical, sacramental reality of Christ in the Eucharist which Catholics (and Lutherans) confess in faith. Faith employs philosophy in order to express itself, but faith is distinguishable from philosophy, even here.
- (b) Paul VI refers to the 'unique and truly wonderful change' through which the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is brought about. 'Change' and 'real presence' have been so closely linked in the minds of Catholics that to deny one has been to deny the other. Paul VI takes this close relationship for granted. Our dialogue believes that when Catholics speak of changed reality they mean what Lutherans refer to as the sacramental identification between the eucharistic bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ.
- (c) Paul VI describes this change in terms of 'substance transformed into substance'. In doing this he is employing the thought-patterns of scholastic philosophy. Many Catholic theologians argue that the theory of transubstantiation is distinguishable from an assertion of 'change' and certainly from an affirmation of faith in the real presence.

39. The work of a dialogue such as ours cannot evade such real concerns. We offer the distinctions which we have discerned as a possible way forward for Catholic thought. Lutherans may consider that these are issues which are of importance to Catholics only and have no relevance for Lutheran thought. Our dialogue has shown to Catholic and Lutheran partners that philosophy and theological reflection are inescapably employed by Christians in their efforts to express their faith, and notably their faith concerning the Eucharist. In the dialogue we have been assisted by the study of such theological concepts as *anamnesis*, transignification, transfinalisation, identity and identification, as well as by our efforts to understand the subtleties of transubstantiation. All of these concepts are employed solely to assist us in our mutual confession of the unequivocal reality of Christ's presence which is at the core and heart of the Eucharist.

40. The polemical bitterness employed by our churches in the past to criticise the thought patterns of the opposite party cannot be allowed to determine or influence our dealings with each other in this century. Where there is unity of faith, there must be room for a variety of theological explanations and expressions.

D. The Continuation of the Real Presence

41. The third aspect of the condemnation (para. 35(c)) found in the *Formula of Concord* (S.D. VII, 108) concerns the continuation or perduration of the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist apart from the sacramental action, viz. 'the entire external and visible action of the Supper as ordained by Christ' (S.D. VII, 86). Hence the *Formula of Concord* rejects the practice whereby the bread is 'locked up, or carried about, or exposed for adoration' (S.D. VII, 87). In our discussions we have come to the following conclusions:

- (a) Our dialogue agrees that the Lord *is* present in the Eucharist primarily within the action of the sacrament and that the reception of his true body and blood by the faithful is an essential aspect of the Eucharist as instituted by Christ.
- (b) We agree that the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not limited to the actual

moment of reception but endures throughout the total sacramental action (S.D. VII, 83-87; Trent, Sess. XIII, Canon 4).

- (c) Recent official Catholic pronouncements lay stress on the importance of Viaticum (communion for the dying) as well as Communion for those who cannot attend the regular celebration of the Eucharist within the worshipping community (E.M. [May 25, 1967], 39, 40, 49; *Pastoral Care of The Sick* [December 7, 1972], 26, 73, 175, 176; E.S. [June 21, 1973], 5). Following the practice of the early Church, it has also been Lutheran practice to take the sacrament from the altar to sick and dying parishioners. Our dialogue agrees that the ultimate purpose of reserving the sacrament outside of the actual celebration of the Eucharist is the administration of Viaticum and the distribution of Christ's body and blood to the sick and to those who are prevented from attending the eucharistic celebration. Such reservation of the sacrament must thus be regarded as an extension of the sacramental action to include those who would normally comprise the worshipping community. In this respect, too, Christ's real presence in the Eucharist transcends the limitations of time and place. The sick and dying are united with the worshipping community in its eucharistic celebration.
- (d) In our dialogue, we have disagreed on the practical consequences to be derived from this agreement. Catholics hold that while the practice of the adoration of Christ in the Eucharist is not the original and primary reason for the reservation of the sacrament, it is nevertheless a 'praiseworthy custom' (Pius XII, M.D.; A.A.S.39 [1947] 569) and 'essentially proper' as a public manifestation of faith in Christ's real presence (E.S. 5). For Catholics, the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist remains as long as the eucharistic bread and wine remain in their completeness. The consecrated bread and wine are to be treated with the respect due to the Lord himself.
- (e) Although some Lutheran Fathers (e.g. Luther and Chemnitz) similarly taught that the sacramental action continues until all consecrated elements are consumed, Lutherans believe that the point at which the total sacramental action — and therefore the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist — ceases cannot be firmly pinpointed, *as* the biblical accounts provide no certain information on the subject. Nevertheless, Lutherans have insisted that the consecrated elements remaining after the eucharistic celebration are to be treated with reverence. But they hold that when Christ instituted the Eucharist he intended it to be eaten and drunk and that it is not the purpose of the sacrament to be reserved for its own sake or carried in process or exposed for adoration. This understanding of the sacramental action as limited to the use for which it was instituted precludes neither the adoration of Christ's body and blood during eucharistic celebration nor the communion of the sick with the sacrament consecrated within communal worship (since the intention and goal in this case is clearly the reception of Christ's body and blood).

42. Our dialogue considers that the agreement we have been able to reach on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is unimpaired by the differences between us with regard to the practical consequences to be drawn from our mutual confession of Christ's real presence in sacramental action. This mutual confession challenges Catholics in their eucharistic practice to manifest even more clearly their recognition of this essential aspect of the sacrament, *viz.* the reception of Christ's true body and blood. It also challenges Lutherans in their eucharistic practice to treat the consecrated elements remaining after the eucharistic celebration with the reverence due to them and not to mix them with unconsecrated elements.

IV. Christ's Sacrifice in the Context of the Eucharist: Our Common Faith

43. Catholics and Lutherans hold in common that the Christ who is present in his body and blood in the Eucharist is the same Christ whose death on Calvary was the sacrifice for the sins of the hthe Eucharist is celebrated in the Church, 'proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes' (1 Cor. 11:26). In the eucharistic celebration, Christ is made present among us as the Lord who lived, died, and was raised to glory. Christ is present among us in a unique sacramental manner. By the power of the Holy Spirit in and through the word proclaimed in the institution narrative (Matt. 26:26ff), the person and saving activity of Christ the Lamb of God are made present. This proclamation reaches its consummation 'for us' (1 Cor. 11:24) in the eating and drinking of the sacramental bread and wine, the body and blood of the crucified and glorified Christ, sacrificed for us once for all on the Cross of Calvary. The risen Lord is given to us in his redemptive activity, so that he brings forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation with the Father through himself.

44. At the same time, our incorporation into Christ, established at Baptism, is nourished and strengthened by our participation in the Eucharist. Thus in the Eucharist there is a *koinonia* (community and fellowship) between Christ and the faithful and among all the fellow-redeemed who join in celebrating the Eucharist. In this way, the Eucharist, by virtue of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, shows the Church to be present and visible in faith as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17; S.D. VII, 44; L.G. 7).

45. In addition, through the work of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist, we who are incorporated into his sacrificial death are given the gift of an eschatological hope, our inner renewal, and the strengthening of faith and love. Although we have not yet reached the perfect fulfilment of our *koinonia* with Christ and each other, nevertheless all the benefits of the sacrifice on Calvary are present and effective for us through faith. In love toward one another and in hope, we anticipate the consummation at our Lord's return and the celebration of the great Eucharist in the kingdom of God.

46. The whole celebration of the Eucharist is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God. Both Churches share this overall perspective of the Sacrament of the Altar. Whatever differences otherwise exist in eucharistic doctrine, they cannot diminish this shared view of the Eucharist as the great sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

47. Lutherans stress this sacrifice of praise primarily as the response of the assembled congregation to God's gifts given in the Eucharist. As the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* explains, 'Faith ... uses the ceremony itself as praise to God, as a demonstration of its gratitude, and as a witness of its high esteem for God's gifts. Thus the ceremony becomes a sacrifice of praise' (Ap. XXIV, 74). And further: 'By [the eucharistic sacrifice]... those who have been reconciled give thanks or show their gratitude for the forgiveness of sins and other blessings received' (Ap. XXIV, 19). In this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving the faithful actively participate in Christ's sacrifice by offering up to God the gifts of themselves, their possessions, their talents, and their time, as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15). In the eucharistic celebration the faithful accept their role as those in whom Christ is glorified (John 17:10). In thankfulness to Christ for his sufferings and sacrifice they show their willingness in faith to suffer with him and to receive his sufferings and sacrifice on Calvary into their own lives. This identification in faith with Christ's suffering, the humble acceptance of God's will, and the sharing of God's gifts with others in love (Heb. 13:16), is an expression of faith and of thanksgiving to the Father for his mercy and grace in Christ. By offering themselves to God in the Eucharist the faithful offer him a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (Ap. XXIV, 26, 30, 32).

48. (a) In Roman Catholic teaching this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is closely linked with the sacrificial presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Because Christ's sacrificial

death is 'proclaimed' in the Eucharist (1 Cor. 11:26), and so becomes a present reality, the celebration of the Eucharist is itself an act of thanksgiving, as its name — *eucharistia*, thanksgiving — suggests. Vatican II says: "The Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the Eucharist ... "giving thanks to God for his inexpressible gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus' (Sac.Con. 6).

And further: 'The eucharistic sacrifice is the source and the summit of the whole of the Church's worship and of the Christian life' (E.M. 3.e.).

- (b) Catholics also link this praise and thanksgiving with the offering Christ makes of himself to the Father, which is his supreme act of praise. In Mark 14:26 he concludes the distribution of his body and blood to his disciples with a hymn of praise to the Father. Similarly, in the view of his impending suffering and death for the sins of the world, Christ offers a prayer of thanks to the glory of his Father (John 17; cf. 12:23-28; 13:31ff; Heb. 13: 12- 15). In the form of praise Christ accepts his death on the cross, through which the world will be redeemed. The proclamation of Christ's death and resurrection in the Eucharist by the faithful is a participation in Christ's supreme act of praise. Thus the faithful, 'remaining closely united to Christ..... enjoy intimate familiarity with him and offer heartfelt prayer to him for themselves, for all those who are dear to them, for peace and for the salvation of the world, offering their entire lives with Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit' (E.S. 80).

49. Therefore, our Churches agree in confessing that the eucharistic celebration of the assembled congregation is the great sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Each Church has distinct emphases in this matter, but our dialogue does not consider that these views are conflicting or divisive. Rather, they mutually enrich and complement one another. The proclamation of Christ's death in the Eucharist, in which he is present with all his redeeming power in his body and blood, is a celebration of the victory of his sacrifice for us, and that celebration is our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. And at the same time, we respond to his gift of himself and his saving death in the Eucharist in a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God by offering to him all that we are and have. Both of these aspects are reflected in our eucharistic liturgies and have their basis in Hebrews 13:15f.

50. The Lord's Supper commemorates the unique sacrifice of Calvary. This sacrifice includes passive and active elements. On the one hand, by the Father's will the sinless Christ accepted death on the Cross, suffering for our sins in our stead (Isa. 53:4-6, 12; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Phil. 2:8; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). On the other hand, he willingly handed over his life to the Father as atonement (Mark 10:45; John 10:18; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:14). Thus Christ was not merely Victim, but self-offering High Priest who in a unique mediation brought about reconciliation between God and sinful humanity and conquered sin, death, and the devil (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 2:2; 3:8f; Rev. 1:18).

51. This active sacrifice is an event which took place once for all and as such cannot be repeated. Our dialogue is unanimous in agreeing that there is no sacrifice which human beings can offer which can usurp the place of this unique, saving event on Calvary (Heb. 7:26f; 10:11f; 1 Pet. 3:18). The whole function of the Eucharist in God's plan of salvation hinges on the presence in the sacrament of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on Calvary as the one and only source of salvation. This sacrifice on Calvary, in which Christ exercises his unique mediation, alone gives meaning and content to the sacramental celebration.

52. The words of institution of the Lord's Supper contain certain important elements which link the celebration of the Eucharist with the sacrifice on Calvary. The accounts of the Supper are set in a context of expectation of Christ's imminent passion and death. When in future the Supper is repeated 'in remembrance of me ', this will be related to the death of the

Lord already accomplished. The celebration of the Eucharist will be 'remembrance' of the death of the Lord, sacramentally bringing that saving event into the present as an effective reality here and now (*anamnesis*). The institution narratives themselves use sacrificial language. The reference to the blood 'poured out for you' (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20) echoes the Jewish liturgical action of pouring out the blood of the victim. And the words, 'my body given for you', interpret the approaching death of Christ *as* the one who offers himself to God for the sins of all people (Isa. 53:3f; Mark 10:45; 1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:1, 25; 1 Tim. 2:5f; Heb. 2:14-17; 7:27; 9:14; 10:12).

53. Christ's sacrifice on Calvary and the Eucharist are inseparably bound together, because the same Lord is totally present for our sakes in the Eucharist who was once crucified and rose again. He is present, however, in a specific manner. He gives us his body to eat which was offered for us on Calvary. He gives us his blood to drink which was poured out for us on the Cross. Because of the presence of the crucified and risen Lord, his once-for-all saving death is made present in the eucharistic action, without losing its uniqueness, in the repetition of the Eucharist. In this way, Christ's sacrifice is present, and in faith we abundantly receive the fruits of his offering and suffering on Calvary.

54. The New Testament indicates that the sacrificial death of Christ is 'proclaimed' as a present reality through the eating and drinking of the eucharistic bread and wine. Christ himself has given the sacrament this meaning. The once-for-all sacrifice is not repeated, but that sacrifice which took place 'once' is nevertheless present (1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24). Because the Lord sacrificed on Calvary is the same Lord who is present in the consecrated bread and wine, the Eucharist gives access to Christ's sacrifice on Calvary and to its fruits. When Christ's passion is 'remembered' in accordance with his command, 'Do this in remembrance of me' (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24f), the Church 'comes in contact with the sacrifice of Christ anew: it receives new life from him and the power to die with him' (Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission, *The Eucharist*, 36, p. 12). Both Churches hold that the distinctive ways in which they interpret the Eucharist do not diminish the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary.

55. Our dialogue therefore affirms that there are no differences between us on the question of the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. That original sacrifice is unrepeatable, perfect, and complete, and the Eucharist can in no way supplement or add to it. A considerable part of our discussions has centred on another issue: in what sense the Eucharist can be regarded as a sacrifice or offering to God on the part of the faithful.

56. Since the Reformation this issue has been the subject of considerable disagreement. Indeed, the attack of Luther and his followers on the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass as sacrifice was directed not merely at irregular practices which they observed and which they regarded as a genuine expression of Catholic doctrine, but especially at a widely held theology of the Mass. The Lutherans objected to treating the Mass as a work of human merit offered to God to propitiate him and to placate his wrath. Although they agreed that the efficacy of the Mass did not depend on the individual's faith they rejected the view of the Mass as an offering which, if correctly performed by the priest, would automatically influence God. They opposed a widely held interpretation of *ex opere operato*, according to which the mere performance of a sacramental rite itself would confer grace [See Appendix 2]. They were concerned to show that God's grace and forgiveness in Christ is grasped and appropriated by faith (A.C. XXIV, 29; Ap. XIII, 18-23; XXIV, 11-13, 25ff).

57. Our discussions have revealed that this particular aspect of the question at issue between us is no longer divisive. In recent years, Catholic teaching, especially at Vatican II, has demonstrated a clear concern to counteract false interpretations of a popular kind which

regard the participation of the redeemed in the sacrifice of Calvary at the Eucharist as a work which will automatically influence God. Vatican II avoids the phrase *ex opere operato* and stresses the objectivity of the eucharistic action by referring simply to Christ's presence and action (Sac.Con. 7). At the same time, it holds the objectivity of Christ's presence in tension with a new stress on the sacrament as a personal encounter of Christ with his people; the Eucharist thus presupposes faith and nourishes it (cf. Sac.Con.59). Alongside the objective certainty of Christ's efficacious presence in the sacrament, Vatican II insists on the central role of faith. Hence the traditional Lutheran concern about the *ex opere operato* action of the Mass does not apply to official Catholic teaching today. In fact, Lutherans agree with the stress on the eucharistic action as *ex opere operato* insofar as it guarantees the objectivity and dependability of the sacrament as the action of Christ. His presence and his benefits can be relied on to be present in the Eucharist. Although the term *ex opere operato* is not often found in contemporary Catholic theology, Catholic teaching still emphasises that the action of God is effectively present in the Eucharist because of the unchangeable promise attached to the command of Christ in the Lord's Supper. This teaching is also held by Lutherans.

58. Another traditional aspect of this controversy has centred on the question whether the Mass as offered up to God by the faithful is a 'propitiatory' sacrifice. Our dialogue has paid particular attention to this question. The Council of Trent says of the Eucharist: 'This sacrifice is truly propitiatory, so that, if we draw near to God with an upright heart and true faith, with fear and reverence, with sorrow and repentance, through it "we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16)' (D.S. 1743). It is important to remember that Trent also taught that Christ's sacrifice was accomplished 'once and for all' on Calvary and that the efficacy of the Eucharist flows from Calvary. Catholics do not believe that their participation in the Eucharist constitutes a new propitiation beyond that of Calvary. They understand Trent's teaching that the Eucharist is propitiatory to mean first, that Christ's unique propitiatory sacrifice is made sacramentally present in the Eucharist and second, that the saving power of the Cross is applied to us in the Eucharist if we approach it with repentance and faith. Understood in this way, Lutherans can agree with this emphasis, although they question whether the term 'propitiation' should be used in connection with the Eucharist.

V. Christ's Sacrifice and the Eucharist: Questions at Issue

59. Although Lutherans and Catholics agree that Christ's sacrifice on Calvary is unique, unrepeatable, and complete, the question of the involvement of Christians of subsequent generations in this sacrifice has been a matter of long-standing dispute. The question at issue between us is not *whether* we participate in Christ's sacrificial death in the Eucharist. Together we affirm that in the Eucharist the faithful participate in Christ's sacrificial death. Because his sacrifice on Calvary is not merely a historical memory, but a reality which becomes present and effective in the eucharistic celebration, the faithful are drawn into *koinonia* with Christ and his sacrificial body and blood (1 Cor. 10:16). The question at issue is rather how the participation of Christians in Christ's sacrifice is to be understood. Do the faithful share in Christ's sacrifice in such a way that the Eucharist can be regarded as a sacrifice to God on their part? Does the worshipping community in the Eucharist 'offer Christ' to the Father, as Catholics teach? Or is the participation of the faithful in the sacrifice of Christ concentrated in the benefits which the faithful receive in the Eucharist, as Lutherans have stressed?

60. In the Catholic Eucharistic texts the words 'we offer' are used to express the church's offering of Christ, and of itself, to the Father. This usage depends on the theological understanding that through Baptism the faithful are incorporated into Christ, Through

Baptism they are made members of the body of Christ and because of this union with Christ they are constituted a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10). Because of this baptismal union with Christ, Catholics believe that in the Eucharist they are drawn into Christ's self-offering to the Father in such a way that they become participants in Christ's offering of himself. The eucharistic community 'offers Christ' only because of Christ's grace and because he draws the faithful into his own offering. Apart from Christ, apart from the offering of himself on Calvary, made sacramentally present and effective in the Eucharist, there is no offering we can make to God (John 15:5).

61. In general, Lutherans have considered that the prime purpose of the Eucharist is to communicate God's forgiveness to the faithful and to strengthen their faith in Christ. Because the risen Christ is truly present in the Eucharist in his crucified body and blood, the forgiveness of sins, promised at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:28) and won on the Cross (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:22), is imparted to the believer in the sacrament. Consequently, Lutherans have usually laid emphasis on reception of the Eucharist: the faithful receive what Christ has gained for them on the Cross, viz. the benefits and fruits of his sacrifice. For this reason Lutherans have traditionally been critical of any suggestion that Christ or his sacrifice on the Cross is offered up to the Father by the priest, by the people, by the Church. They fear that this understanding of the Eucharist leads to a confusion of Christ's action and ours, opens the door to a false stress on human achievement, and calls into question Christ's unique sacrifice.

62. Catholics in the dialogue have been able to assure Lutherans that when Catholics speak of 'offering Christ' in the sacrifice of the Mass they do not deny or undermine the once-for-all nature of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. They have pointed out that the offering of Christ by the eucharistic community is not a new offering. Rather, in the Eucharist the community, already one with Christ in Baptism, affirms his unique sacrifice in faith, participates in his self-offering to the Father, and pleads to God for mercy on the basis of his sacrifice on the Cross. In this sense, 'to offer up Christ' is an application of Christ's sacrifice in our own time. While Lutherans acknowledge the significance of the incorporation into Christ as a vital dimension of eucharistic faith, they have continued to ask Catholics whether this view of the offering of Christ by the Church is not in danger of undermining Christ's self-offering on behalf of the Church. In turn, in the light of our eucharistic incorporation into Christ, Catholics have asked Lutherans to consider whether a radical distinction can be made between our offering of praise and thanksgiving in Christ and the eucharistic offering of Christ to the Father.

63. In our discussions on the participation of the redeemed in Christ's sacrifice we have become aware of a difference of emphasis in our understanding of the significance of the Eucharist for the forgiveness of sins. The difference in our respective traditions applies both to theology and to pastoral practice. Lutherans have always summarised the purpose and benefits of the Eucharist in terms of the forgiveness of sins given in the sacrament (e.g. Ap. XXIV, 90; S.C. VI, 6; L.C. V, 22-32). Catholic theological concerns have centred on the offering up of Christ by the faithful, as they share in his one great offering to the Father, proclaimed and celebrated anew in the Eucharist. But Catholic pastoral practice is more complex. It has been traditional Catholic belief that the Lord Jesus present in the Eucharist is offering us mercy and the forgiveness of our sins (see D.S. 1743). Yet Catholic teaching requires that a member of the faithful who is in a state of *serious* sin must ordinarily be reconciled with God and the Church through the sacrament of Penance before partaking of the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion (D.S. 1661). While Catholics are aware of the link between the Eucharist and the forgiveness of sins, the latter is not the principal category by which they understand the purpose and benefits of the Eucharist. However, Catholic

participants in the dialogue have come to see that there is need for a clearer awareness by Catholics of the traditional belief in the presence of the forgiving Lord in the whole action of the Eucharist. In our discussions we have come to understand that when Christ's saving work on Calvary becomes a present reality in the Eucharist, the faithful share in all the benefits won by that sacrifice: forgiveness of sins, communion with Christ and with each other, and inner renewal. Our traditions therefore challenge one another to give fuller expression to all the implications of the Eucharist for the total life of the Christian and the Church. Indeed both Lutherans and Catholics could well benefit from a reappraisal of the Eucharist as food for a Church simultaneously redeemed and sinful.

64. The question of Mass for the dead has been a contentious issue since the time of the Reformation. According to the teaching of the Council of Trent, the Mass is offered 'not only for the sins, punishments, satisfaction and other necessities of the faithful who are alive, but also for those who have died in Christ but who are not yet wholly purified' (D.S. 1743; cf. 1753).

- (a) Lutherans have argued that if Masses for the dead have the intention of remitting satisfactions in purgatory, they are a denial of the doctrine of righteousness of faith in Christ (Ap. XII, 13-16; XXIV, 64). Furthermore, Lutherans believe that the benefits of Christ's death on the Cross are given in the Eucharist to those who participate in it in faith. Hence the benefits cannot be applied to others, whether living or dead (Ap. XXIV, 11, 64, 94).
- (b) Catholics see the offering of Mass for the dead within the context of the common Christian tradition of intercessory prayer, a tradition which finds its authorisation in the Lord's Prayer. They pray for the dead because of their conviction that 'purgatory exists, and the souls Am..., in pri there are helped by the prayers of the faithful' (D.S. 998 983). Purgatory is often understood in Catholic theology today as the purification that occurs in death and beyond it, as a person is freed from sinful attachments and received into communion with God. Because of their belief in this cleansing process Catholics believe in intercession for the dead. They offer the Eucharist for the dead because they see it as not only God's gift to us but also the highest form of our prayer to God. Ultimately this practice is based on the doctrine of the Communion of Saints: 'The Church offers the Paschal Sacrifice for the dead so that, through the union of all with each other in Christ, the dead may be helped by prayers and the living may be consoled by hope' (G.I.R.M. 335). A Mass 'offered' for the dead is a Mass in which the celebrating community, by virtue of its baptismal solidarity with Christ, includes in its intercession both living and dead.
- (c) Although the Lutheran Confessions do not forbid prayer for the dead (Ap. XXIV, 94, 96), it cannot be said that they encourage it. The Confessions make a distinction between the prayer said by the community gathered to celebrate the Eucharist and the transfer of the benefits of the Eucharist to the living or the dead.
- (d) The dialogue on Mass for the dead has raised many issues. The Catholic members of the dialogue recognise the need to clarify further the theology of purgatory, and they recognise that there are still pastoral problems connected with the practice of Mass for the dead. The Lutheran members have recognised the need to consider the question of prayer for the dead, and whether the Eucharist can be understood as intercessory prayer. We recognise that there are differences between us on the question of Mass offered for the dead, which still need to be resolved.

65. Different emphases lead to differing convictions and teachings. We acknowledge that questions concerning these different emphases remain for further discussion. However,

through our dialogue we have come to see that the different emphases of both churches can complement rather than contradict each other. We are hopeful that convictions held by both churches regarding our differences can be shared more closely, and the mutual understanding of these convictions may serve as a bridge between our two churches.

Addendum

Christ's Sacrifice and the Eucharist: A Contribution to the Ongoing Discussion

1. In our study of the Eucharist as Sacrifice we have identified areas of agreement, as well as areas of difference which require further deliberation. The question is, firstly, whether and how these differences can be overcome and, secondly, whether and to what extent remaining differences are church-divisive. The following is offered as a contribution to future dialogue.

A Lutheran Contribution

2. Catholics and Lutherans in our dialogue have agreed that in the theology of the Eucharist priority must be given to the unique action of Christ and his offering to the Father. In seeking to overcome remaining differences between Lutherans and Catholics we must draw attention to this priority of Christ's action over all human action. In the eucharistic celebration this implies that any reference to human action in the Eucharist must be understood within the context of the undeserved gift of God's grace. We receive that gift and celebrate it as those who acknowledge, in praise and thanks, the unique offering of Christ to the Father. When Catholics say 'we offer' (*offerimus*) the sacrifice of the Mass to the Father, the question is whether this is to be understood as human action enabled and empowered by Christ and his gifts of grace and forgiveness, or whether we are to understand this human offering as detracting from the uniqueness of Christ's self-offering. When Catholics assure us that their offering of Christ's sacrifice to the Father in the Eucharist is to be understood solely in the context of this unique, unrepeatable self-offering for us, given to us in the Eucharist, is it possible for Lutherans to accept this without denying essential aspects of Lutheran teaching? How might Lutherans seek to understand the expression, 'we offer'?

3. The Eucharist commemorates the complete sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. This sacrifice was not only one of passive obedience to the will of the Father; it was also one of active obedience of the incarnate Son who voluntarily and vicariously offered himself for us in death as atonement and reconciliation. Both the passive and active aspects of Christ's passion, death and resurrection are made present to us in the eucharistic action. In the Eucharist the faithful are united with Christ, and their incorporation into his mystical body which was effected in their Baptism is strengthened, nurtured and renewed. Furthermore, because Christ gives himself to us in the eucharistic action and permits his unique sacrifice to become a present reality in the Eucharist, the faithful are incorporated into him and drawn into his action through their union with him (although this action does not cease to be *his* action). So it could be said that his self-offering, made vicariously for the offering of ourselves which we owe God, is also our offering. We present him to the Father as the only one to whom we can refer before God. We point to him and to his unique offering, and that is our offering, a commemorative offering of his unrepeatable sacrifice on Calvary. Thus Christ's offering, when entrusted into our hands in eucharistic celebration, may also be called 'our' offering. That offering is a prayer, a plea, that God may graciously accept what the Church, the believers, recall and present in a commemorative way before the heavenly throne, as the only plea they can present, Christ's redeeming, propitiatory, all-sufficient death on the Cross

4. Although this attempt at a Lutheran understanding of the Catholic expression 'we offer' opens up dimensions of faith to which some Lutherans may not be accustomed, the question does arise whether it is necessarily in conflict with the Lutheran Confessional writings. At the same time, even if this should prove to be a possible path of future agreement, Lutherans will continue to stress the gift of Christ's unique work on the Cross given to the believer in the Eucharist, without seeing any need to reflect further on the anthropological implications of this emphasis. Thus Lutherans will continue to remain reserved towards the concept of our offering up of Christ in the Eucharist because they do not consider that faithfulness to the scriptural witness necessarily demands this thrust and because they are concerned to uphold the doctrine of justification by God's grace alone.

A Catholic Contribution

5. Catholics have much to learn from the Lutheran emphasis on God's initiative in the Eucharist; this is certainly not a foreign concept to Catholicism (Sac.Con., 10), but the Catholic members of the Dialogue can testify that the constant Lutheran witness to the priority of God's grace has been a powerful reminder to them.

6. Since Vatican II, Catholics have been emphasising the importance of the active participation of the whole community in the Eucharist. Our discussion in the Dialogue has helped the Catholic members to appreciate that stress on this participation must include first of all the importance of openness to receive the gift that God gives to us.

7. While Lutherans have seen forgiveness as a central fruit of the Eucharist, Catholics have stressed rather the nourishment of the soul, the communion with the head and the unity with the whole body of Christ as fruits of the Eucharist. The Council of Trent in fact rejected the idea that 'the principal fruit of the most holy Eucharist is the forgiveness of sins, or that no other effect can come from it' (D.S. 1655). This raises the important question: is contemporary Catholicism able to agree with the Lutheran stress on the forgiveness of sins as fruit of the Eucharist?

8. First, it is important to note that the Council of Trent makes it clear that it did not intend to exclude the forgiveness of sins as a fruit of the Eucharist. The Council specifically states that the Eucharist is a 'remedy to free us from our daily faults and to preserve us from mortal sin' (D.S. 1638). When dealing with the question of the Sacrifice of Calvary, the same Council insists that the power of the Cross is applied in the Eucharist for the forgiveness of sins: 'For the Lord, appeased by this oblation, grants grace and the gift of repentance, and he pardons wrong-doings and sins, even grave ones' (D.S. 1743). When Catholics hold, on the one hand, that the Eucharist is a sacrament of Calvary, and on the other hand, that among the effects of Calvary is forgiveness of sins, then Catholics necessarily see forgiveness as a fruit of the Eucharist.

9. Second, it seems clear that Trent's real intention was that a person not approach the Eucharist in a state of mortal sin. It intended to remind the faithful of the precept 'Let a man examine himself' (1 Cor. 11:28) before the reception of Holy Communion. The Council decreed that 'those whose conscience is burdened with mortal sin no matter how contrite they may think they are, must necessarily make first a sacramental confession if a confessor is available' (D.S. 1661). However, Catholics also teach that if such a person 'finds himself in a state of necessity and has no means of going to confession, he should first make an act of perfect contrition' (E.M. 35) and then approach the Sacrament. The Catholic concern, then, is that people should not presume to receive Holy Communion if they find themselves totally alienated from God by mortal sin. Normally such persons must approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation first. However, this does not deny that God's forgiveness is poured out upon our lives through participation in the Eucharist.

10. It would seem our two traditions have some convergence in this matter because the Lutheran position also recognises that some sins exclude a person from the Eucharist. The *Smalcald Articles* teach that it is indeed possible to fall into grave sin (III, 42-43) and at times this means exclusion from receiving the Sacrament. However, 'the lesser, that is the truly Christian excommunication, excludes those who are manifest and impenitent sinners from the sacrament and other fellowship of the Church until they mend their ways and avoid sin' (III, IX) According to the *Apology* (XXVIII), a bishop has the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty of public offences or to absolve them if they are converted and ask for absolution.

11. While accepting the discipline of the necessity of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for those who have committed mortal sin, Catholics can agree with the Lutheran conviction that in the Eucharist they encounter the forgiving love of God. There is less difference than appears at first sight, then, between the Lutheran emphasis on forgiveness in the Eucharist and the Catholic emphasis on the bonds of love between Christ and his community. Through the Dialogue, Catholic members have come to see that when Lutherans speak of forgiveness of *sins* they include much of what Catholics may express as communion with the head and body of Christ. In his recent encyclical on Reconciliation and Penance, John Paul II teaches that the Church is the sacrament of Reconciliation in our world. The initiative for reconciliation is God's and 'this initiative on God's part is made concrete and manifest in the redemptive act of Christ, which radiates through the world by means of the ministry of the Church' (10). He writes that 'all the sacraments are a source of life for the Church, and in the Church's hands they are a means of conversion to God and of reconciliation among people' (11).

Granted that the fruits of the Eucharist can be described in other ways, there is no reason why Catholics and Lutherans may not join together in seeing the Eucharist as God's great gift of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Conclusion

12. We encourage our churches to give further study to the differences in our teaching on the Eucharist outlined in this addendum in the hope that mutual understanding may be achieved as we strive for a common affirmation of our eucharistic faith.

Appendix I

Note on Transubstantiation

Etymology

A neo-Latin word, meaning 'essential change', that is, a change in the inner being of a thing, something is changed in its inner nature.

Early History

For more than a thousand years Catholicism preached the fact and mystery of the real presence in the Eucharist without any appeal to or knowledge of the theory of transubstantiation.

The word itself seems to have been first used by Rolland Bandinelli, the future Pope Alexander III, in the middle of the 12th century. Hildebert of Tours in the early 13th century was one of its first proponents and, by the middle of that century, Alexander of Hales had virtually summed up its meaning for classical scholasticism: a positive action 'by which an actual being, without being destroyed or annihilated, is changed according to its whole substance into another actual being'.

Its detailed meaning among the Scholastics:

- (a) 'Substance' is anything which can exist on its own, a reality in its own right. Applied to the Eucharist, it is that which, in its ultimate meaning, makes the bread what it is, viz. bread; and, after the eucharistic offering, makes the new underlying reality what it is, viz. the glorified body and blood of Christ.
- (b) 'Species' or 'accidents' are those properties which belong to a substance'; they cannot exist on their own, but only in something else. They form the shape, colour, size, smell, etc. of their 'substance'. Applied to the Eucharist, they are properties which, in the world of ordinary human experience, are accessible to us — such as the size and shape, etc. of the bread and wine.
- (c) 'Transubstantiation', then, as applied to the Eucharist, is intended to describe the assertion that the 'substance' or inner reality of the elements of bread and wine is changed into that of the glorified body and blood of Christ, while their 'accidents' or appearances remain those of bread and wine

Early Authorities

A Roman Council of 1079 asked Berengar of Tours to subscribe to an oath on the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. This appears to have been the first official document to declare that the bread and wine are 'substantially changed' into the body and blood of Christ (D.S. 700). The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 went further, using a striking phrase already found in a letter of Pope Innocent III in 1202 (D.S. 702); the Council referred to the bread and wine as being 'transubstantiated' into the body and blood of Christ (D.S. 802). By this time, the doctrine had reached the developed stage described by St. Thomas Aquinas:

"The whole substance of bread is changed into the whole substance of Christ's body, and the whole substance of the wine into the whole substance of Christ's blood. Hence this change is not a change in form, but of substance. It does not belong to the natural kinds of change, and can be designated by a name all its own, 'transubstantiation'. (S. T. III, Q. lxxv, a.4)

Thereafter, the term, in one form or another, appeared frequently in Church documents — Second Council of Lyons (1274), Council of Florence (1439) (see D.S. 860, 1321). Its meaning in these documents can be summed up as follows: In the Eucharist while the appearances of the bread and wine remain, the reality changes into that of Christ's body and blood, i.e. the reality of the bread and wine is changed into the reality of the glorified Christ's body and blood, now really present to us as our spiritual food.

Council of Trent

"It has always been the conviction of the church of God, and this holy council now again declares that, by the consecration of the bread and the wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of wine into the whole substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic church has fittingly and properly named transubstantiation.

(Session XIII, Chapter IV, D.S. 1642)

...a change which the Catholic Church very fittingly calls transubstantiation
(Session XIII, Canon 2, D.S. 1652)

In the mind of Trent, 'transubstantiation' was not necessarily the only word to describe the change of reality which occurs in the Eucharist but, in the 16th century, no better terminology with which to affirm that mystery could be found. Trent's authority was such that the term has come into general use in the Catholic Church ever since.

It remains true, however, that Trent endorsed 'transubstantiation', not as a theological theory, but as an appropriate expression for its faith assertion of the basic fact and mystery of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Contemporary Usage

For many people today, 'substance' has a totally different meaning from that which it had in the metaphysics of scholastic theology.

Catholics today remain loyal to Trent if they continue to affirm the mystery of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, whether or not they choose to continue to use the term 'transubstantiation'

Appendix 2

Note on *Ex opere operato*

Ex opere operato: a technical term (literally, 'by the work done') which expresses the teaching that the grace of the sacraments is present and offered by God when the rite is validly performed. This work of God is not dependent on the merits of the recipient or minister. The correlative term, *ex opere operantis* (literally, 'by the work of the doer'), refers to the attitude of heart and mind of the minister or recipient. The terms provided a clear way to distinguish between the certainty of the divine action in the sacraments and the importance of faith and a proper intention in the recipient for fruitful reception.

While it is clear that the notion of *ex opere operato* efficacy does not degrade the sacraments to the level of magical rites, it cannot be denied that on the popular level Catholics have often thought of sacraments as a matter of 'do this, say that correctly, and it will all happen'.

In recent years, this distortion of the concept of *ex opere operato* has largely given way to a personalist approach which attempts to re-establish the unity between faith and sacrament that predominated in the early church. The sacramental rites have been revised so that they better express the sacraments as God's loving offer of himself and human response to that offer.

Participants

The Eucharist as a topic for study was first raised in the eighth meeting held at St Francis Xavier Seminary on July 29, 1977. Study on the Eucharist began on Friday March 17, 1978, the tenth meeting of the plenum. It is from this later date that participants are indicated.

Roman Catholic Participants

The Most Rev. J.W. Gleeson, D.D., Archbishop, and then Archbishop Emeritus, of Adelaide, (March 1978 — August 1985)
Fr. J. O'Loughlin, P.P., S.T.L. (Secretary 1978; March 1978 — April 1981)
Fr. J. O'Rourke, C.M., S.T.D. (Chairman 1979; March 1978 — April 1982)
Fr. L. Dunlop, M.S.C., S.S.D. (March 1978 — March 1980)
Fr. G. Maloney, C.M., S.T.D. (Chairman 1981, 1983; March 1978 — June 1983)
Mons. W. Mullins, B.A., M.A. (Sydney University), M.A., Ph.D. (Catholic University of America) (March 1978 — March 1979)
Fr. M. Rodger, P.P. (Secretary 1980; Chairman 1983, 1985; June 1979 — August 1985)
Fr. A. Dean, C.M., S.T.L., S.S.L. (Secretary 1982, 1984; August 1980 — August 1985)
Fr. K. O'Loughlin, P.P. (June 1981 — August 1985)
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Fr. L. Finnegan, S.A.C., Dr.Theol. (June 1983 — August 1985)
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The Most Rev. P. Dougherty, D.D., Bishop of Bathurst, NSW (October 1981)

Lutheran Participants

Rev. L. Grope, D.D., President General Lutheran Church of Australia (March 1978 — August 1985)
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Rev. M.E. Schild, B.A., D.Th. (Secretary 1979; March 1978 June 1980)
Rev. S.P. Hebart, A.M., M.A., D.Th. (Chairman 1980, 1984; March 1978 — August 1985: on leave 1978)
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Rev. D.C. Overduin, D.Th. (March 1978 — August 1985)
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