

The Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the U.S.A.

ECCLESIOLOGY AND MORAL DISCERNMENT:

Seeking a Unified Moral Witness

Preface from the Co-Chairs

For almost fifty years, since 1965, the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church have been engaged in an official bilateral dialogue sponsored by the two churches, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the United States of America, sometimes known as ARC-USA. As a part of this dialogue, ARC-USA has produced a number of statements and reports on important theological subjects of concern to the two churches, often building on and responding to the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) established in 1967. Our own statement takes its place in this succession.

In 2008 ARC-USA was asked by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, to address questions of ethics and the Christian life in the context of ecclesiology, in an effort to achieve greater clarity regarding areas of agreement and disagreement. We were aware that our bilateral dialogue took place in a wider context of discussion of these questions, between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church on the international level, as well as other bilateral dialogues between churches.

To further our discussion, ARC-USA began by reviewing together the 1993 ARCIC document *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church* and the ARC-USA response of 1995, as well as the 1993 papal encyclical *Veritatis splendor*. In our meetings members of our dialogue offered papers on moral teachings in our two traditions. Poverty and immigration were chosen as particular issues, along with contraception, medical care at the end of life, and the blessing of same-sex unions. Through these papers and ensuing discussion we sought to understand more fully how our two churches pursue the work of teaching and learning within the Christian moral life.

In many ways our experience in this dialogue has reflected those issues of how we teach and how we learn. In our conversation we have learned from each other and also learned to receive the complementary gifts that the other had to bring. To borrow words from *Life in Christ*, our experience has been one of "listening, learning, reflecting and teaching. In this process each member of the community has a part to play. Each person has to learn to reflect and act according to an informed conscience. Learning and teaching are a shared discipline, in which

the faithful seek to discover together what obedience to the gospel of grace and the law of love entails amidst the moral perplexities of the world” (LC no. 80).

It has been a pleasure to work together in community with this group of pastors, teachers, and leaders of the two churches. This statement reflects that experience.

We would also like to take this opportunity to offer our heartfelt thanks to Bishop Ronald P. Herzog of Alexandria, Louisiana, who has served as Roman Catholic co-chair of this round from the very beginning. His commitment to the dialogue and wise counsel were much appreciated by all the dialogue members. We very much regret that his recent illness has prevented him from participating in the last meeting and the final stages of the drafting of this agreed statement.

Although the members of the dialogue do not speak officially for either of our churches, we have been asked to represent them in this dialogue, and it is in that capacity that we submit this statement to the leadership of our churches and to all their faithful for their prayerful consideration as a means of hastening progress along the path to full, visible unity. We hope that this statement will be received as a useful contribution on the way to that goal. It is for this unity that we continue to pray.

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Easter Tuesday, April 22, 2014

Notes on usage

In keeping with common ecumenical parlance, we refer in this document to our two *churches, communions, and communities*, and to the one *Church* of Christ confessed in the creeds. This marks a rough and approximate usage. The Episcopal Church describes itself both as a church and as a member of the Anglican Communion of churches. There is no precisely parallel Roman Catholic counterpart in the United States, for several reasons, though the Roman Catholic Church comprises a communion of distinct, local churches worldwide. As used here, the term “Roman Catholic” refers to all the local churches in full communion with the Bishop of Rome, and not simply the Latin Church.

Likewise in keeping with standard ecumenical and Roman Catholic parlance, we shift freely between *Roman Catholic* and *Catholic* without presuming a simple identification between the two.

Table of Contents

1–6	Introduction: Morals and Church Teaching
7–13	Part One: Seeking the Good Together
14–21	Part Two: Necessary Characteristics of Our Common Moral Tradition
22–33	Part Three: The Teaching Charism of the Church 22–25 <i>A Difference in Ecclesiology</i> 26–33 <i>Ecclesiological Implications</i>
34–59	Part Four: Case Studies 34–42 <i>Migration/Immigration</i> 43–59 <i>Same-Sex Relations</i>
60–68	Conclusion: On the Way to Unified Moral Witness

Abbreviations

ARCIC	Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission
BCP	Book of Common Prayer (the 1979 prayer book of the Episcopal Church, unless otherwise specified)
GS	<i>Gaudium et spes</i> , Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II, 1965
GTUM	<i>Growing Together in Unity and Mission</i> , IARCCUM, 2007
IARCCUM	International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission
LC	<i>Life in Christ</i> , ARCIC, 1998
LG	<i>Lumen gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, 1964
PCHP	<i>Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons</i> , Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1986
PT	<i>Pacem in terris</i> , Encyclical of Pope John XXIII, 1963
SRS	<i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i> , Encyclical of Pope John Paul II, 1987
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
UR	<i>Unitatis redintegratio</i> , Decree on Ecumenism, Vatican II, 1964
UUS	<i>Ut unum sint</i> , Encyclical of John Paul II, 1995
VS	<i>Veritatis splendor</i> , Encyclical of John Paul II, 1993

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ECCLESIOLOGY AND MORAL DISCERNMENT:

Seeking a Unified Moral Witness

Introduction: Morals and Church Teaching

1. In the early twenty-first century, churches engaged in ecumenical dialogue find themselves in a new and unfamiliar situation in regard to moral teaching. From the outset of the ecumenical movement, many assumed that common moral commitments bound churches together, while doctrine was a source of division. Through the remarkable twentieth century of ecumenical progress, however, fundamental agreements were reached on several previously disputed doctrinal matters. Today, it is apparent difference on a range of moral questions that seems to drive our churches further apart.
2. Should differences in moral theology divide the churches? It is often suggested that if we agree on the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as sufficient statements of Christian faith, and if we agree further on our understandings of the principal sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, then disagreements between Christians on such questions as immigration, contraception, abortion, or same-sex marriage—important as these matters are—ought not to keep us apart.
3. In order to answer these questions, an associated set of questions emerges. What is the nature of moral teaching? How is it taught? What is the place of moral principles and moral norms in articulating moral truths and informing conscience? Who should teach or speak for the Church? And what is the relationship between different authorities, and the authority of each in turn, for those attempting to receive the teaching? The question of authority to teach brings us to ecclesiology—the doctrine of the Church—and raises the main issue before us, namely, the relationship of ecclesiology to moral discernment.
4. Our principal conclusions are twofold. First, our churches draw from a common tradition that recognizes Christian discipleship as a call to holiness. Here we highlight four necessary characteristics of moral formation: Jesus Christ as the beginning and the end, the role of prayer and worship, the recognition of human limitation, and the place of the teaching charism of the Church. Second, it is critical to acknowledge how differently our two communions structure and exercise authority, not only with respect to moral teaching but all forms of teaching. Our teachings do differ in content, specificity, and detail. These differences ought not to be

understood as divergent conclusions drawn from common principles, however, as if we agreed on fundamentals but disagreed on application. Rather, we teach in different ways that flow from our different structures of authority and the way that authority is exercised.

5. We would stress that our conclusions regarding the relationship between ecclesiology and moral discernment are not meant to be exhaustive. It may very well be that differences in moral discernment reflect differences on other important questions, such as biblical hermeneutics or theological anthropology. Yet we believe the difference in the ways we teach is reflected in our moral discernment and is rooted in part in our ecclesiology.

6. We hope that our different ways of teaching and learning may prove to be complementary, so that Roman Catholics and Episcopalians can address moral questions together in a way that is useful and attractive, both to our fellow Catholics and Anglicans and also to other Christians, to whom we are bound by baptism. We seek in this agreed statement to deepen our communion with Christ and one another, in order that the Holy Spirit may lead us to the unity envisioned in Jesus' prayer, "that all may be one" (John 17:21).

Part One: Seeking the Good Together

7. Conversations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, extending over many years in both international and national dialogues, provide evidence of a steady "growing together," building on a fundamental unity that has persisted notwithstanding the divisions of the sixteenth century.¹ "Many bonds still unite us," wrote ARCIC in 1981: "we confess the same faith in the one true God; we have received the same Spirit; we have been baptized with the same baptism; and we preach the same Christ."² On this basis, Anglicans and Roman Catholics around the world are learning to "recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ and give expression to this through joint prayer, common actions, and joint witness."³ And we share a common "vision of full and visible unity," which has been described by IARCCUM as "a eucharistic communion of churches: confessing the one faith and demonstrating by their harmonious diversity the richness of faith."⁴ On all counts, we are thankful for the gift of certain though imperfect communion that we share, a communion that is true.⁵

¹ ARCIC, *Final Report*, 1981, Preface para. 1.

² ARCIC, *Final Report*, Introduction no. 1.

³ Common Declaration by Pope John Paul II and Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, December 5, 1996.

⁴ IARCCUM, *Communion in Mission* no. 13. See Lambeth 1998, Res. IV.1(a): "This conference reaffirms the Anglican commitment to the full, visible unity of the Church as the goal of the Ecumenical Movement." Cf. similarly Lambeth 2008, in an expansive elaboration: *Indaba Reflections* no. 71.

⁵ Cf. UR no. 3; UUS no. 84.

8. On the way toward restored fullness of communion, we are bound to ask about our own contributions to the wounds of the Church, through our sins as individuals and as persistently separated churches, and to seek forgiveness and amendment of life. A vast ecumenical literature has grown up in this field, and many Christian leaders have sought to make public amends for past wrongs. This was done in an exemplary way by Pope John Paul II.⁶ Here the eschatological nature of the Church comes into view: that, as St. Paul says, “in hope we were saved,” and “hope that is seen is not hope” (Rom. 8:24). Just as the communion of the Church remains imperfect, so too her holiness, as the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, observed; for “she dwells among the creatures which groan and till now are in the pains of childbirth,” awaiting “the revelation of the children of God” (LG no. 48; cf. Rom. 8:19).

9. Particularly challenging for Anglicans and Roman Catholics in recent years have been a number of oft-noted “new developments which, besides being divisive for Anglicans, present serious obstacles to our ecumenical progress,”⁷ such as the ordination of persons living in openly acknowledged same-sex relationships, as well as the blessing of such relationships, and other persisting problems of moral theology, including questions about abortion, divorce and remarriage, and contraception.⁸ These issues have also stirred controversy among Roman Catholics.

10. Both our churches seek continual reform in the service of faithfulness, not least with regard to moral and disciplinary matters tied to authority. This is a well-established commitment. Vatican II’s Decree on Ecumenism states that the “measures and activities” of the ecumenical movement should lead “all . . . to examine their own faithfulness to Christ’s will for the Church and accordingly to undertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform” (UR no. 4). John Paul II particularized this in his encyclical *Ut unum sint* when he invited Christian leaders and theologians “to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on [the ministry of the bishop of Rome], a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church” (UUS no. 96).

11. The Anglican commitment to reform is implicit in the 16th-century Articles of Religion. Article XIX affirms that churches can err in matters of faith, the only solution to which could be corrective repeal and replacement. More recently, Lambeth 1988 initiated a formal conversation about “how the Anglican Communion makes authoritative decisions,” and Lambeth 1998 resolved to strengthen the instruments of Anglican communion in various ways. In the new century Anglicans have engaged this trajectory of reform, especially through discussions around the Windsor Report (2004) and the proposed Anglican Covenant (2009), which may be read as

⁶ See International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past* (Rome: Vatican, 1999). Cf. Groupe des Dombes, *For the Conversion of the Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 1993); *In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

⁷ Common Declaration of Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, November 23, 2006. Cf. GTUM no. 6.

⁸ LC nos. 54–88; GTUM no. 86.

“reaching towards universal structures which promote *koinonia*,”⁹ even as the specific recommendations of these reports remain in an unresolved process of reception.

12. Anglicans and Roman Catholics remain committed to fostering, in the words of John Paul II, a “spirituality of communion.” “Such a spirituality centers on the ‘contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us . . . whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us.’ A spirituality of communion means thinking of our brothers and sisters in faith as ‘those who are a part of me,’ and enables us to ‘share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs,’ to ‘make room’ for each other, ‘bearing “each other’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2).”¹⁰

13. Finally, our shared commitment to the healing of fractured communion requires a continual resolve to learn from and teach one another in Christ by seeking his mind (Phil. 2:5). When faced with profound divisions in the Corinthian church, St. Paul reminded the faithful of their life in Christ Jesus, the crucified wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:2, 17ff.). This can sound like a hard word, “the word about the cross” (1:18). “Who can accept it?” (John 6:60). We see no faithful alternative, however, to perseverance together in truth. As former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams has said, “One of the hardest yet most important lessons the different Christian communities today have to learn is that they cannot live without each other and that no single one of them in isolation possesses the entirety of the Gospel. God has used the often tragic divisions of Christian history in such a way that each community has been permitted to discover new depths in this or that particular emphasis in doctrine or devotion.”¹¹ And because we accept that “a local church cannot be truly faithful to Christ if it does not desire to foster universal communion”—a fundamental ecclesiological principle—we urge our churches to renew their commitment to seek his mind together, notwithstanding the cost.¹²

Part Two: Necessary Characteristics of Our Common Moral Tradition

14. Anglicans and Roman Catholics share an understanding of Christian moral formation that includes four necessary characteristics. (1) The Christian moral vision of human flourishing begins and ends in the person of Jesus Christ. (2) Christian moral formation occurs in community where we read the Scriptures and celebrate the sacraments. (3) Christian moral formation occurs in the midst of suffering, under conditions of finitude and sin. (4) To aid in moral formation, each of our churches has specific moral teaching. In brief, these characteristics are Christ, community, suffering, and teaching.

⁹ ARCIC, *The Gift of Authority* (1993) no. 55.

¹⁰ IARCCUM, “Ecclesiological Reflections on the Current Situation in the Anglican Communion in the Light of ARCIC” (June 8, 2004) no. 19, quoting John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte* no. 43.

¹¹ Rowan Williams, “Monastic Virtues and Ecumenical Hope” para. 3 (March 11, 2012, at “Monasticism and Ecumenism” conference, San Gregorio Magno al Celio).

¹² IARRCUM, “Ecclesiological Reflections” no.27, quoting ARCIC, *Authority in the Church I* (1976) no. 13.

15. *First, the Christian moral vision of human flourishing begins and ends in the person of Jesus Christ.* Our moral theologies share a common understanding that Christian discipleship is a call to holiness, and our churches intend to guide persons toward this goal. The IARCCUM report marks this truth by subsuming ethics within its section entitled “Discipleship and Holiness” (GTUM nos. 77–87). ARCIC’s *Life in Christ* observes that the “fundamental moral question” is not in the first instance “What ought we to do?” but rather “What kind of persons are we called to become?” Thus, Christian disciples recognize their vocation to “a life of responsibility and freedom” and “the hope of happiness” (LC nos. 5–7, 9, 91, 93). “True personhood has its origins and roots in the life and love of God,” a Trinity of persons in “a unity of self-communicating and interdependent relationship.” Deeper imitation of Christ means that all that we are and do seeks to reflect the triune love of God. Accordingly, human persons “are created for communion, and communion involves responsibility in relation to society and nature as well as to God” (LC no. 7). Rooted in grace, we develop virtues, which enable us to see and understand the world, cultivate holistic attitudes and dispositions, and act in ways that realize our life in Christ.

16. *Second, formation in Christ occurs in community where we proclaim the Scriptures and celebrate the sacraments.* The sacraments effect our formation in Christ according to the Christian message received and witnessed by those who follow Christ. Thus morality and spirituality are intimately connected and inseparable. In baptism we are marked as Christ’s own forever. Rising from the waters of baptism, we enter ever more deeply into communion with God and one another as we share in the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Sent into the world to love and serve the Lord, we follow a way of life grounded in the love of God and neighbor (Deut. 6:5; Mark 12:30-31) and we share in the mission to preach the Gospel in word and deed (Matt. 28:19; Matt. 25:40). In sharing the good news of Christ, we embrace and care for those in need and engage in works of justice for the sake of the common good. Such works shape and deepen our identities as persons committed to imitating Christ’s own “humble obedience and self-emptying love (cf. Phil. 2:7-8)” (LC no. 22).

17. As Christian disciples, we are further formed individually and as a community of faith in all forms of worship, and by practices such as daily prayer and devotions, scriptural meditations, the classical spiritual disciplines, retreats, and spiritual direction. This formation includes attentiveness to the voices of those we serve, especially those who suffer. At the center of all such practices is our continual turning to Christ in the knowledge of God’s forgiveness and grace.

18. *Third, the quest for holiness is carried out in the midst of suffering, under conditions of finitude and sin.* Both our churches recognize that limiting conditions inevitably accompany Christian discipleship. We are, as human beings, limited in our bodies and minds at any time: we cannot do everything; we cannot know everything; we cannot avoid suffering. One reason for this is that we exist in a certain place at a certain time; we are creatures, often fragile and weak, imbedded in history. In each of our churches, moral theology recognizes human limitation and its attendant suffering, and we benefit from contextual theological responses to these conditions.

19. Yet the limitation of finitude is not the whole story. Even more poignantly, we bear the weight of sin, which clings so closely (Heb. 12:1). Both our churches teach that sin is at once

individual and corporate, with consequences that reverberate down through the generations. Acknowledging our sinfulness and, in turn, receiving and offering forgiveness of sin is central to our reconciliation with God and one another. Examination of conscience and confession of sins—effected, for example, in rites of reconciliation—is a spiritual discipline that forms Christians in the ways of humility, love, mercy, and forbearance. Indeed, every time we say the Lord’s Prayer we ask for forgiveness as we forgive those who sin against us.

20. Moral formation draws us into the world of suffering in countless ways, just as Christ himself embraced solidarity with all human beings. The gifts of the Holy Spirit illumine our minds and enflame our hearts so that we seek the good in light of the mystery of the Cross.

21. *Fourth, to aid Christians in their moral formation in the midst of conditions of finitude, each of our churches has specific moral teaching.* Neither of our churches thinks it sufficient to leave moral formation with the vision of Christ as the goal, nor do we see the practices of worship and discipleship as sufficient means of formation in Christ. Moral teaching is necessary to the formation of conscience, to the enabling of free and faithful decisions.

Part Three: The Teaching Charism of the Church

A Difference in Ecclesiology

22. Roman Catholics and Episcopalians are called by God to speak and teach in the name of Christ. By this call, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who guides our churches so that we may abide in the truth. Each of our churches responds to this gift of the Holy Spirit in distinctive ways. Nonetheless, we each share the responsibility to form the faithful so that they act in light of the truth, promoting the authentic good for themselves, their communities, and society.

23. The dispersed and non-centralized pattern of Anglican moral teaching, itself understood to be subject to possible error and correction, makes straightforward comparison between the teachings of the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church difficult. The Roman Catholic Church has a supreme and authoritative teaching magisterium exercised jointly by the bishops united with the bishop of Rome or occasionally by the bishop of Rome acting as head of the episcopal college. The particular churches of the Anglican Communion, by contrast, are episcopally ordered and self-governing, with shared bodies or “instruments” for consultation and the articulation of teaching across the Communion.

24. In the contemporary period, the Roman Catholic Church has continued the long traditions of critical engagement with moral, social, and cultural realities that affect and shape the faithful. Roman Catholic moral teaching today draws from a number of sources: Sacred Scripture, Catholic social thought, liturgical tradition, historical scholarship, and research in the social sciences. As new moral issues and questions emerge with changing cultural realities and advances in technology, the work of moral theologians contributes to the understanding and development of the church’s position. Magisterial teaching seeks to bring these sources of moral wisdom into dialogue with the concerns of individuals as well as the social lives of believers, to

provide clear guidance in forming conscience and ensuring the integrity of Christian witness to the world.

25. Anglican moral teaching develops in particular self-governing churches that possess common patterns and family resemblances. Each particular church has an authorized Book of Common Prayer and other governing documents that order its common life, all of which contain explicit moral teaching. Drawing upon the Scriptures and these sources, each church teaches through local synods, conventions, bishops, and parish catechesis. Articulations of common teaching among the churches of the Anglican Communion depend upon its reception within each particular church. At the same time, church teaching is always acknowledged to be subject to the judgment of Holy Scripture. Within each church, and throughout the Communion, a process of “mutual support, mutual checking, and redressing of errors and exaggerations”¹³ is understood to take place through this dispersed and varied pattern of teaching.

Ecclesiological Implications

26. The magisterium of the Catholic Church offers a faithful expression of the church’s moral vision and an invitation to consider how God’s Spirit might be speaking to and leading the church (VS no. 29). As part of its reading of the signs of the times, the magisterium promulgates statements and guides for the faithful that constitute a systematic articulation of faith and morals to instruct all Roman Catholics and to bear witness to Christian faith by addressing all persons of good will. In its teaching the Roman Catholic Church distinguishes authoritative but not infallible teachings of the magisterium and infallible teachings.

27. In general, Catholic moral teaching follows the Aristotelian-Thomistic principle that as one descends from universal principles to more concrete norms, one does so with less certainty. Thus in Catholic social teaching the commandment to love one’s neighbor, when translated as respect for human dignity, would generally be considered dogmatic and hence infallible; while specific moral norms (such as those that pertain to civic liberties and economic rights) hold in the majority of instances (*ut in pluribus*). Finally, the application of universal principles and more specific norms to concrete cases (such as the implementation of a particular human right) depends upon persons, times, places, and circumstances. In its moral teachings, the magisterium also claims that there are certain actions (for example, abortion) that are morally impermissible, independent of intention and circumstances. The Catholic Church maintains that the faithful have the obligation, in the formation of their faith and conscience, both to believe whatever the magisterium has taught infallibly and to be guided by the wisdom of its ordinary teaching.

28. The Roman Catholic Church facilitates the development of mature and responsible moral teachings, incorporating the experiences and insights of its members. As a matter of scholarly research and inquiry, Catholic moral theologians appropriately explore the teachings of the church, which bear fruit when they are received fully. Here lies the church’s gift and its challenge.

¹³ Lambeth Conference 1948, “The Anglican Communion.”

29. The absence of an authoritative universal magisterium among the churches of the Anglican Communion marks a signal difference in the structure of teaching authority. Without such a universal teaching authority it is difficult to state definitively the teaching Anglicans hold on many specific matters, beyond the governing documents and prayer book of each particular church. This fact marks a signal difference in the structure of teaching authority from the Roman Catholic Church and helps to explain a significant tension in the relationship between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

30. Contraception provides one example of this difference in teaching authority. The 1930 Lambeth Conference judged that if abstinence were not viable, the use of contraceptives could be acceptable for married couples who desired, for godly reasons and in particular circumstances, to limit the number of their children. On this account Anglicans might be thought to have dealt with this issue authoritatively and definitively. Such a conclusion would assume, however, that the Lambeth Conference amounts to a binding universal magisterium. But Lambeth, by its own account, does not legislate for the churches of the Anglican Communion; its statements or resolutions must be adopted or otherwise accepted and received by the various self-governing churches of the Communion. Moreover, even if the General Convention of the Episcopal Church were to endorse the judgment of the Lambeth Conference on contraception, it would remain the case that members of the Episcopal Church could hold and teach a contrary view as more consonant with Scripture and moral truth, if that were their judgment.

31. This is the case because the normative teachings of the Episcopal Church remain embedded in its Constitution, Canons, and Book of Common Prayer. These documents are, by nature, fairly restrained in their address of specific moral teachings, leaving many issues unaddressed. The prayer book teaches specifically and definitively that murder, theft, adultery, and false witness are wrong (317, 350); that marriage is a life-long union of a man and a woman (422); that ordained ministers are to organize their lives in a godly manner (517–18, 531–32, 543–44); and that all Christians are to pursue justice and peace in their various social contexts (303). But these documents do not offer definite, authoritative moral teaching about contraception or abortion, nor indeed do they teach prohibitively or affirmatively about same-sex relationships. Beyond these documents, conventions and councils of the Episcopal Church have at various times rejected or embraced conflicting judgments, which, in turn, have been themselves acceded to or contested by individuals, parishes, and dioceses of the church. Over time, a plurality of practices and teachings emerge. In these cases, specific teaching is limited and not normative or authoritative in that it does not demand assent.

32. The contrast between ways of moral teaching in our two churches should not be exaggerated. As we have shown, Roman Catholics distinguish types of magisterial teaching with varying degrees of authority, and the faithful have an acknowledged role in the reception of authoritative teaching (see nos. 26–28 above; cf. LG no. 25). Nonetheless, Anglicans are typically more reticent, and constitutionally more decentralized, than Roman Catholics in the articulation of moral truth.

33. If the foregoing account of the pattern of Anglican and Roman Catholic moral reasoning is correct, it should be possible to show how it operates in multiple instances. We will do this by taking two specific moral issues in turn, migration/immigration and same-sex relations, charting

the similarities and differences of Roman Catholic and Episcopal teaching in each case. In this way we hope to sow a seed of ecumenical promise regarding the reward of teaching together, that may be harvested preliminarily in the present paper, and more fully by sustained Episcopal and Roman Catholic cooperation, at every level of church life.

Part Four: Case Studies

Migration/Immigration

34. Lamenting the “globalization of indifference” at the plight of migrants seeking asylum, Pope Francis recently asked “Has anyone wept? Today has anyone wept in our world?”¹⁴ In urging us to “welcome the stranger” (Matt. 25:35), Pope Francis recalled the tradition of Roman Catholic social teaching on the virtues of justice, solidarity, and hospitality. Underlying the church’s teaching on justice is the recognition of the basic human rights and correlative duties deriving from persons’ intrinsic dignity. The common good, both national and global, is realized today when the dignity and rights of all are institutionally guaranteed (GS no. 26; PT no. 60). Solidarity in promoting the common good, moreover, enjoins a preferential option for the most vulnerable—those whose equal rights are systemically threatened, for instance, refugees, forced migrants, and victims of trafficking (GS no. 27; SRS no. 42).

35. Hospitality to the migrant or stranger is thus no mere supererogatory act, but a fundamental demand of justice. In his encyclical *Pacem in terris*, Pope John XXIII elaborates: “Every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own country; and, when there are just reasons for it, the right to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there” (PT no. 26). *Gaudium et spes* teaches further that people from other countries should not be discriminated against in wages or working conditions, nor treated as “mere instruments of production” (GS no. 66).

36. Inspired by the church’s universal teaching, the Catholic bishops of the U.S. and Mexico endorsed, in the 2002 General Meetings, a joint pastoral letter on migration, “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope.” In more than one hundred sections, this document draws on empirical data, scriptural teaching, and the history of Catholic social thought to identify five principles (34–38) which guide pastoral responses (40–55) and public policy advocacy (56–100), some of which are quite specific—for instance, children should not be endangered by being placed in dilapidated detention facilities (82). The principles importantly tend to be articulated as rights, addressing not only the rights of migrants, but the social reasons impelling them to migrate, for example, the failure of states to guarantee a living wage for workers and their families. Along with the right to migrate, the bishops thus affirm the right for persons to find opportunity in their homeland, the right of sovereign nations to control their borders in accordance with the common good, and the duty to respect the dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants. In support of such equitable and comprehensive immigration reform, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops favors a policy of earned legalization, family reunification, just wages, and restoration of due process rights for migrants. Drawing

¹⁴ “Visit to Lamedusa: Homily of Holy Father Francis,” July 8, 2013.

upon the participation of migrants themselves, national and diocesan agencies seek to implement church teaching through legal and political advocacy, accompaniment, and direct humanitarian assistance.

37. The Episcopal Church's General Convention has in the past adopted resolutions calling for changes in public policy that would treat undocumented workers more humanely and give them an easier path to citizenship. But this position has enjoyed much less consensus at the diocesan and local levels. Partly in response to a perceived need for teaching in this instance, the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops issued in September 2010 "The Nation and the Common Good: Reflections on Immigration Reform" as a "Theological Resource on Migration and Immigration."

38. The theological resource turns first to Scripture for guidance. But one does not find in Scripture anything that corresponds precisely to the contemporary U.S. immigration situation. For instance, the treatment of the alien in Israel (Lev. 19:33-34) had to do with the treatment of Gentiles, that is, resident aliens who were permanent outsiders. The biblical passage is not conclusive in regard to the present situation, yet it does point toward a consideration of what citizenship means, a theme that has been important to Anglicans. From Anglican theologian Richard Hooker in the sixteenth century, to the American bishop John Henry Hobart in the early nineteenth century, on to the present day, Anglicans have felt bound to care for their nation and tend to its spiritual heart, even when speaking to it critically.

39. This vision derives from an anthropology that would defend the government's proper restraining of sin and uphold a wider sociality for human flourishing. Hooker asserts that human beings are essentially sociable and crave interaction with one another. So a long-established Anglican view of the purpose of a nation holds that it exists not only for self-protection but also to maximize opportunities for communion and fellowship with one another. Indeed, from the time in which the Episcopal Church was organized, Bishop Hobart saw the life and discipline of the church as a model for national life.

40. Thus the implicit Anglican/Episcopal moral teaching on immigration runs something like this: as human beings, we should value those around us, our fellow citizens, while at the same time seeking communion and fellowship with all. Although its record is blemished, the U.S. has often welcomed immigrants, and in doing so has shown an important part of its spiritual core. The church should advocate for every undocumented worker and support humanitarian relief. But when considering policy changes that go beyond humanitarian relief, Anglicans need to show their respect for (if not agreement with) arguments to the contrary, out of solidarity with their fellow-citizens.

41. The form and content of this public statement on immigration reform is itself illustrative of an Anglican way of teaching and learning. It is couched as a theological resource of the House of Bishops, not as a pastoral letter or teaching, both forms that are commonly used in the Episcopal Church. "The Nation and the Common Good" recognizes a variety of reasonable positions legitimately held by American citizens on this issue. It articulates those points at which there is a moral imperative to act and those where there is no moral obligation to implement reform. Perhaps most importantly, it is shaped by implicit teachings about a special or unique

relationship to the nation—that Anglicans are neither a dissenting religious body nor an arm of the state, but rather Christians who bear a vision, and therefore a care, for the nation. These views are impossible to state definitively, and are borne along implicitly through countless means, including liturgical prayers (see, e.g., the prayer for our country, BCP 820).

42. In summary, both our churches teach by offering documents that are theologically grounded. They move from reflection on Scripture to broader moral principles to consideration of the particulars involved in public policy. Both churches identify a moral demand and identify factors necessary, as responsibilities of nation states, to respect the rights of all persons and to serve the common good. Both argue for concrete pastoral responses to migrants or immigrants in our midst, and both urge public policy changes to ensure humane treatment of undocumented persons in the U.S. Both also see the importance of borders. Both address members of the Church and the wider public. The Roman Catholic authoritative teaching, which may be further elaborated in local contexts (here, Mexico and the U.S.), tends to be clearer about moral norms, more specific in detail, and more self-consciously global. The Episcopal approach tends to be more inductive, moving analogically between Scripture and the specific American context.

Same-Sex Relations

43. We turn to same-sex relations, our second case study. Here, both of our churches are challenged by the rise of a culturally new understanding. In response, we are reflecting on its meaning for moral theology and the Church’s discipline and practice.

44. The Roman Catholic Church’s teaching on human sexuality recognizes that sexual identity as male and female persons is part of the original and divine plan of creation; God is the author of matrimony (Gen. 2). Grounded in its understanding of natural law, the Catholic Church, in teaching that marriage is a sacred union, seeks to cooperate with God’s design for creation. The Second Vatican Council noted that the benefits and purposes of marriage have “very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole” (GS no. 48).

45. The intrinsic goods of human sexuality, that is, the unitive and procreative meanings, are uniquely revealed and authentically pursued only in marriage: the permanent, faithful, and total union of husband and wife oriented toward the procreation and nurture of children. In addressing moral concerns about homosexuality and same-sex relations, the Roman Catholic Church embarks on a pastoral journey toward truth. In its documents, guidelines, and catechetical programs, the church seeks to guide the faithful to a deeper understanding of sexuality so that they might “make incarnate God’s own goodness, love, and vitality” as embodied and sexual persons.¹⁵

46. The Roman Catholic Church holds that genital sexual activity must always reference the intrinsic goods of marriage and sexuality. Sexual intercourse must be the total reciprocal gift of spouses—husband to wife and wife to husband—as well as the kind of act referencing a

¹⁵ USCCB, *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning* (1991) 8.

combined potential for new life, even if biologically this cannot or does not occur. This unique form of human love constitutes the heart of marriage. Homosexual sex neither references the one-flesh union of man and woman nor could it engender new life. The church teaches that all sexual acts must “speak” the value of the one-flesh union and the potential for procreation. This understanding informs the church’s position on all issues of human sexuality, on sexual behavior in general, and same-sex relations in particular.

47. The Catholic Church teaches that persons with same-sex attraction retain the God-given dignity of every human person (PCHP no. 10). As such he or she is called to seek the same holiness of life to which all are called and to contribute to the common good of all. Regarding the origin of same-sex attraction, the church reflects on viewpoints from psychology and the social sciences; these indicate that a true homosexual inclination is not a personal choice. The Catholic Church makes a critical distinction between homosexual acts freely chosen, which it deems immoral, and homosexual orientation, which is not sinful because it is not a result of a free choice. The distinction between person and act is a critical aspect of the church’s teaching on this issue. The distinction is based on an understanding of the human person that does not reduce the person to acts, inclinations, or desires, but which nevertheless recognizes the significance of actions. These actions shape the kind of persons we become, and the kind of society we build together.

48. The path to human flourishing, which involves the interrelationship of the good of the individual and the common good of all, passes through the steps of self-mastery over desires and inclinations antithetical to our true good. Human sexuality finds its fulfillment in its God-given purposes and goods. By respecting these intrinsic goods and purposes, we grow toward fulfillment of our nature as human persons. Growth in personal holiness, as well as the true flourishing of the human community, is not a matter merely of satisfying the desires found within us, whatever their origin, but of conforming our life to God’s will for us. Authentic freedom lies not in doing what we please but in doing what is good, as given by God in creation.

49. The Roman Catholic Church’s teaching in its fullness calls the faithful to respectful, compassionate, and sensitive acceptance of persons with same-sex attraction, and it condemns any form of unjust discrimination. In particular the church provides pastoral directives for how local church communities might better include persons with same-sex attraction, support their needs, and invite them to full participation in the life of the church.¹⁶

50. The Catholic Church recognizes the challenges believers face in following its teachings on human sexuality. While church leaders, both clergy and laity, strive to ensure clear catechesis so that the faithful may be invited to greater openness to the truth of these teachings, the church also commits itself to learn from the faithful and their needs. As the issue of same-sex relations is related to larger issues of the family and society, it is interesting to note that Pope Francis has called for an extraordinary synod on the family for 2014. In preparation for this synod he has called for broad consultations among the bishops and the faithful.

¹⁶ PCHP no. 15; see also USCCB, *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care* (2006), esp. 17–23.

51. The Episcopal Church's varied pattern of response to same-sex sexuality since the 1960s shows forth a diversity of moral teaching made possible by, and sometimes running up against, dispersed structures of authority. For present purposes, a movement from prohibition to affirmation of same-sex relations may be mapped in three stages, with the first and last stages mirroring a pattern of minority dissent. In the last fifteen years, as the debate reached a certain resolution at the Episcopal Church's triennial General Convention, long-simmering ecclesiological questions at home and abroad complicated and enriched the discussion.¹⁷

52. The first stage of Episcopal debate arose amid wider cultural questionings, when a presumptive "traditional" view remained in place among the leaders of the church. From 1964, the Joint Commission on Human Affairs began to study "the Christian understanding of sexual behavior."¹⁸ The commission's 1976 report affirmed the "full and equal claim" of homosexual persons "upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church," while marking as well "confusion and tension ... in the consciousness of the Church ... concerning the relationship between the traditional Christian ethic and current developments and concepts."¹⁹ At its 1977 meeting, the House of Bishops, confronting the ordination of a lesbian in the diocese of New York, accepted the conclusion of its theology committee and resolved that the "ordination of an advocating and/or practicing homosexual would require the Church's sanction of such a life style, not only as acceptable, but worthy of emulation. Our present understanding of biblical and theological truth would make this impossible."²⁰ When the question came before the 1979 General Convention, the bishops voted by a margin of three-to-one to re-affirm the "traditional teaching of the Church on marriage, marital fidelity and sexual chastity as the standard for Christian sexual morality."²¹ But the decision inspired a "statement of disassociation" by twenty-one bishops, who claimed that the resolution was "recommendatory and not prescriptive," and that they would not "abrogate [their] responsibilities of apostolic leadership and prophetic witness to the flock of Christ" committed to their charge.²²

53. The second stage of debate marked a time of shifting understanding amid continued and mounting dissent. The substantial 1979 report of the Commission on Human Affairs and Health mooted a moral style based on Christian personalism that attempted to integrate the goodness of

¹⁷ See, e.g., Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, "The Challenge and Hope of Being an Anglican Today: A Reflection for the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful of the Anglican Communion" (June 27, 2006).

¹⁸ *Journal of the General Convention 1964*.

¹⁹ Joint Commission on the Church in Human Affairs in *Journal of the General Convention 1976*, AA 153.

²⁰ House of Bishops' Theology Committee, "The Marriage and Ordination of Homosexuals," special meeting of the House of Bishops 1977, in *Journal of the General Convention 1979*, B 184–85. The resolution is at B 191.

²¹ *Journal of the General Convention 1979*, C 88–89.

²² *Journal of the General Convention 1979*, B 110–112. Twenty-nine additional bishops signed the statement at the 1988 convention (*Journal of the General Convention 1988*, 195–99).

sexual desire within a traditional understanding of the procreative and unitive ends of marriage.²³ Objectors found the report wanting in its non-address of the experience of ordained homosexual persons and called for further study and debate,²⁴ leading eventually to the book and guide, *Sexuality, a Divine Gift* (1987).²⁵ Based on experiential-inductive models and the “free and open inquiry” of small-groups, the text favored revisionist views, based less in “sinfulness and morality” than in God’s love.²⁶ It inspired considerable traditionalist objection and fed further debate, including a supplementary document, *Continuing the Dialogue: Sexuality, a Divine Gift* (1988).

54. The third stage of debate, from the 1990s through 2012, produced a settled majority opinion in support of same-sex relationships at the General Convention while carving out a space for minority witness, amid considerable ecclesiological ferment. The 2003 election of a gay man in a same-sex relationship as bishop of the diocese of New Hampshire, and his confirmation at the General Convention that same year, marked a watershed for the Episcopal Church. Similarly, the proliferation of ad hoc same-sex blessings in parishes and dioceses of the Episcopal Church occasioned renewed debate about the possibility of authorized public rites of blessing for same-sex unions. Both issues became wedges in the Episcopal Church, as seen in the 2008 departure of some conservatives to form the Anglican Church in North America, underlining a limit to comprehensiveness if not the failure of persuasive charity. And the debate spilled into the wider Communion, which since 1998 had affirmed a traditionalist view of marriage and homosexuality in a resolution supported by a broad majority of bishops at the Lambeth Conference, reaffirmed unanimously as “the standard of Anglican teaching” by the primates at their meeting in 2003.²⁷

55. Presuming a traditionalist “consensus” on sexuality, reinforced by proposed moratoria on same-sex blessings and same-sex partnered bishops, the Communion moved to a wide-ranging discussion about structures of accountability and proposed developments, urged on by the instruments of the Anglican Communion and led by the Archbishop of Canterbury.²⁸ On this basis, when the 2009 General Convention of the Episcopal Church took further steps toward developing rites for same-sex blessings, thirty-six bishops issued the minority “Anaheim Statement” to show solidarity with the Communion, and, as the bishops wrote, to “reaffirm our commitment to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this church has received them (BCP 526, 538).” In 2012, by a vote of some seventy percent of the bishops and more than seventy-five percent of all clergy and lay deputies, General Convention authorized “provisional” liturgical resources for same-sex blessings for use by congregations and dioceses “under the direction and subject to the permission of the bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority.” Fifteen

²³ *Journal of the General Convention 1979*, AA 143.

²⁴ *Journal of the General Convention 1979*, AA 142; cf. AA 120.

²⁵ See *Journal of the General Convention 1982*, C 152.

²⁶ *Sexuality: A Divine Gift*, 1.

²⁷ *The Windsor Report 2004* no. 25, citing the primates’ meeting of October 16, 2003.

²⁸ *The Windsor Report 2004* nos. 134, 144, 155.

bishops published a minority report, centered on the “clear teaching” of the Book of Common Prayer on Holy Matrimony, and expressing gratitude for the General Convention’s “provisions that protect diocesan bishops and parish priests who cannot for the sake of conscience authorize or use the liturgy.”²⁹

56. Set within this half-century, the teaching of the Episcopal Church on same-sex sexuality may be said to accept an unresolved tension between primary textual authorities on the one hand and local councils (both General Convention and diocesan conventions) on the other. To be sure, all claim that Scripture provides support for their understandings of marriage and same-sex relations. But the Book of Common Prayer describes Christian marriage as “a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God,” enshrining a traditional understanding that provides a rationale for self-described conservatives, while divergence from the prayer book is tolerated if not encouraged in many dioceses. General Convention has protected episcopal authority and sought to “honor the theological diversity of this church,” accepting a plurality of practice and teaching that leaves some frustrated, while many are grateful for pastoral provisions as well as breathing room.³⁰

57. The breadth of teaching on the ground reinforces such an understanding of accepted, if still contested, pluralism. Writings on sexuality strive to plumb the Christian moral tradition, incorporating Scripture, theology, historical study, and research from the sciences, with multiple conclusions. The 2010 papers from the House of Bishops’ Theology Committee, presenting views from both traditionalists and liberals, seem to mark a *terminus ad quem* in areas of both agreement and fundamental difference.³¹ Each side employs a common lexicon for human sexuality and agrees that marriage includes vows of monogamy, fidelity, and life commitment on the way to sanctification in Christ. They do not share a common understanding of the unitive and procreative ends of marriage, nor a common assessment of the morality of same-sex relations. The traditionalist view maintains that sexual intimacy falls exclusively within the province of marriage between a man and a woman, ordered toward children, while the liberal view upholds a broader understanding of sexuality as lifelong commitment to monogamy and fidelity between two persons.

58. In summary, both churches teach that Christian marriage is a sacred union between a man and a woman and seek through this institution to cooperate with God’s plan for creation, recognizing that human relationships are essential to fostering growth in holiness and promoting the good of society. The Roman Catholic magisterium has articulated a definitive and universal teaching about sexual relations according to which the proper context for genital sex is a marriage between a man and a woman whose union possesses the potential for creating and nurturing new life. The Catholic Church holds that same-sex unions, lacking this procreative and unitive potential, cannot be considered marriages. The Episcopal Church has authorized, for provisional use, liturgical resources for the blessing of same-sex relationships, and it offers a

²⁹ Indianapolis Statement, July 2012; no. 2 alights on BCP 423.

³⁰ 77th General Convention (2012), Resolution A049.

³¹ These papers are available online and in the *Anglican Theological Review* 93.1 (Winter 2011), in the latter instance followed by a range of “Anglican and ecumenical responses.”

theological reflection as rationale for the practice. It requires that these resources be used under the direction and with the permission of the diocesan bishop, provides safeguards for members of the church who decline to use them, and recognizes a diversity of teaching and practice within the Episcopal Church.

59. Though teachings and practices differ on same-sex unions, our churches share a commitment to show support by our actions for persons who experience same-sex attraction, a commitment rooted in the common ministry of all Christians. Together we bear witness to our common call to holiness in Christ.

Conclusion: On the Way to Unified Moral Witness

60. We are grateful to God for the grace we have been given to engage in this work. Ecumenical dialogue is spiritually demanding. It calls for theological clarity and discernment, wisdom, a plenitude of patience, and devotion to mutual understanding in love. It requires of the partners a commitment to humble self-scrutiny, a willingness to share perceptions of the other, and a readiness to learn.

61. Above all, it requires conversion in Christ. “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart” (UR no. 7). Christian unity calls for a “spirit of love and humility” and a willingness to forgo one’s own preferences in the interests of unity.³² Indeed, “commitment to ecumenism must be based upon the conversion of hearts and upon prayer,”³³ since it depends wholly upon God, and upon entry into the paschal mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ. He offered his prayer for the unity of his disciples in the shadow of the most profound conflict, weakness, abandonment, and judgment. In and through his sacrifice the glory of God shone forth most brightly, and upon it the whole of the Christian gospel depends.

62. We have shared something of this passion in our dialogue “for the sake of his body, that is, the Church” (Col. 1:24).³⁴ As his members, we have tried to place our disagreements and divisions—not only between Episcopalians and Roman Catholics but also among members of the same church—at the feet of charity, on the way to growth in understanding. Based upon our common faith and hope, we would seek to “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2) by entering into each other’s struggles, accepting them as our own, that we may bear witness to our unity in Christ.

63. We rejoice in the fact that our churches draw from a shared tradition of moral theology and practical formation. We agree that the beginning, end, and way of Christian life is union

³² The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886, 1888; the direct quotation is from the House of Bishops’ resolution of 1886.

³³ UUS no. 2; cf. 35, 82–84.

³⁴ See UR no. 4: “the Church must bear in her own body the humility and dying of Jesus (see 2 Cor. 4:10; Phil. 2:5-8), against the day when Christ will present her to Himself in all her glory without spot or wrinkle (see Eph. 5:27).”

with God in Christ. Both our churches teach the faith in the hope of greater understanding, in a process that must include reception of what is taught. The case studies on migration/immigration and same sex-relations point to some common features and similar concerns, while also illustrating important ecclesiological differences that effect varying moral conclusions.

64. The churches of the Anglican Communion rely upon dispersed authorities and a process of mutual support and correction in the ordering of each church's life and of the Communion as a whole. This may be seen in the provisional character of the Episcopal Church's resources for the blessing of same-sex relationships set alongside a principled diversity of views and practices, including the marriage rite in the Book of Common Prayer. By contrast, the authoritative magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, exercised by the universal episcopate in union with the pope, places a high value on statements and guides that clearly articulate normative teaching about many things, including marriage and same-sex relations. Where one church tends toward the particular and the national in its teaching, the other focuses first on the universal and the global, as in the instance of immigration/migration. In each case, the way in which we teach follows from our structures, which in turn shape the content of our teaching.

65. It is hard to see how our differences in moral theology and ecclesiology will be resolved, and it is not clear to many whether they should be. The ecumenical movement teaches that legitimate diversity has its place in the Church, and history demonstrates that this is true. Moreover, the absence or addition of something need not be understood as culpable or blameworthy, nor as endemic or otherwise necessary, nor therefore as permanent or settled. This point holds true especially for churches, like ours, that are committed to continual reform, mutual gift-giving, and inter- and intra-ecclesial reconciliation.

66. In all events, we must resist the temptation to see the Church as a merely human institution, capable of manipulation into an image of our making. We share in Christ with all Christians, and accept the limits that this entails. Only through the continual gift of formative exchange and correction with all our brothers and sisters will we come to "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). What could it mean to ascribe *greater* honor and respect to "those members of the body that we think less honorable . . . , giving the greater honor to the inferior member" (1 Cor. 12:23-24)? Since, as St. Paul says, this is the way that God has "arranged the body" (1 Cor. 12:24), it seems that such a sustained posture of service and solicitude will ensure the gathering of all "proper gifts" of the Church—all that is good and true and beautiful—into the fullness of unity, so that nothing may be lost.³⁵

67. Since 1967, ARC-USA has produced fifteen documents and released over forty news reports about our exchanges, which have covered various topics of ecclesiology, systematic and moral theology, and the sacraments. In support of these engagements Catholic and Episcopal congregations continue to come together for common prayer, fellowship, and much else during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Lent, and Advent, among other times. Catholics and Episcopalians also undertake formal and informal studies, retreats, and social justice advocacy

³⁵ See LG no. 8.

programs. These are only some of the ways we can continue to move toward deepening our communion, as Christians called to personal faithfulness and to witness in the world.

68. We urge our communities to persevere in the necessary work of dialogue, and to live more fully together into the Church's call to teach and serve, even and especially across difference. Here we commend the second part of IARCCUM's landmark text, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, for its rich collection of creative suggestions to foster habits of cooperation, interdependent life, and mutual responsibility, fed by the virtues (nos. 96–125). Short of such common engagement on the way to unified moral witness, our chances of adequately engaging contemporary needs will be much diminished, if not rendered impossible, since our sanctification in truth and unity conditions the belief of the world (see John 17:17-24). We pray for the grace and courage to face the many issues now perplexing the Church, and for the healing of our divisions, so that the world may know the love of the Father, and believe in him whom he has sent.

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