A CALL TO RECONCILIATION

A Joint Document from the Anglican-Roman Catholic USA Dialogue

2025

Preface from the Co-Chairs

Since 1965, the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church have engaged in a 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 over the years produced a number of agreed statements on theological subjects of concern to the two churches, most recently a statement on "Ecclesiology and Moral Discernment" (2014). Our dialogue has taken place within the larger context of the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), contributing to and responding to the broader work of reconciliation between our churches.

In 2015 the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Most Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, asked ARC-USA to address the topic, "Reconciliation in Holy Scripture and Christian Tradition." Our mandate included consideration of the theological, pastoral, and personal implications of reconciliation for our two churches. Scriptural, historical, and theological perspectives were also to be brought to bear on reconciliation, not only between the churches, but also within the churches, and in the world.

The work of this iteration of ARC-USA began in 2017, and the topic was eagerly embraced by the members of the dialogue. Participants were mindful that the theme of reconciliation was one that built upon emerging emphases of both the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Francis. As a broad theological theme, the topic was multi-faceted, involving not only the classic ecumenical concern for reconciliation between the churches, but also interreligious, racial, and ecological reconciliation.

This document includes an exploration of the theme of reconciliation in Holy Scripture and develops three interrelated aspects involved in reconciliation: recognition, repair, and restoration. These aspects are scripturally based but have a wider applicability within broader societal divisions. An attempt is made to speak forcefully into our present moment without losing the wider eschatological horizon of reconciliation. An addendum is also included, a liturgy of reconciliation for Episcopalians and Catholics that we hope will be useful in other contexts. We believe that our churches have learned from our ecumenical dialogue, in our search for full visible unity, and as humble learners ourselves offer these gifts for the wider work of reconciliation.

We are mindful that there are many related subjects within this broad topic that we were not able to take up. A good portion of our dialogue took place in the time of COVID-19, with its own stresses and strains that only underscored the need for reconciliation. The developing situation in Israel and Gaza in September 2023 emerged too late for us to incorporate in our work. We could not have imagined in 2015 the challenges that our world would face, or the even greater timeliness of this topic.

Furthermore, we cannot help but note that our topic's timeliness seems more than fortuitous. Indeed, the seemingly exponential, global growth of hatred, xenophobia, corruption,

and violence—a good bit of it religiously motivated—in the eight years since we began our work may be somewhat like the Elysian trumpet the document describes, in this case a clarion call from the Spirit to the Churches to engage in an ecumenism of repentance and reconciliation, of witness to the healing power of Christ and the call of Christians to be the ministers of this healing in a world awash in pain and violence. May our work provide at least a little inspiration and encouragement for Catholics and Episcopalians to assume this task together in new ways and with a renewed sense of responsibility to the world. We believe that the work of Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to God can only be completed by humans becoming reconciled to one another.

We are grateful to the members of the dialogue for their good work. This extraordinary group of scholars and pastors has grown together through this time. In many ways, the experience of the members of the dialogue has mirrored the topic we were discussing. As we grew in relationship, we discovered the grace of reconciliation present in our midst. We found ourselves inspired by the presence of Christ among us in the power of the Spirit. We pray that this agreed statement from members of our churches will inspire others, and bring closer that day when the world will be reconciled to God.

The Rt. Rev. John C. Bauerschmidt
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee

The Most Rev. John Michael Botean
Bishop of the Romanian Catholic Eparchy of St. George in Canton

A Call to Reconciliation is a dialogue statement between representatives of the Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church. While it is not a statement of the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and it has no authority beyond that of the dialogue commission itself, it has been received as a reference point for scholars and pastors in promoting unity and understanding. This document has been received by Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, chairman of the Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Rev. Michael J. K. Fuller
General Secretary
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

A. The trumpet call to reconciliation

1. On September 23, 2007, the clarion sound of "Amazing Grace" rang through Christ Church Cathedral in New Orleans, played poignantly by Irvin Mayfield Jr. on the newly blessed Elysian Trumpet. The trumpet honored victims of Katrina, the ferocious hurricane that had devastated the Gulf coast two years earlier. The concert initiated a pilgrimage, in which Mayfield, the trumpet, and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra shared the richness of jazz music and the memory of Katrina's victims with audiences around the world. In her sermon on that occasion, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori preached that, like the twelve apostles sent out in the Gospel reading for that evening's service (Luke 9:1-6), the orchestra members were sent forth to bring hope and healing. Jesus "charges them to drive out division and to heal. Proclaiming the kingdom of God is about reconciling the world…" They are to go forth and heal. To go forth and reconcile.

2. When the storm subsided in New Orleans, it was easy to see some of the wounds and divisions: the grief of those who had lost loved ones, the trauma of those who survived, shock at the destruction in the city, and anger at the inadequate government response. Katrina also exposed other wounds and divisions that are usually harder to see: inequalities of income, education, employment, and housing that are intertwined with racial identity in New Orleans. The lowest-lying neighborhoods in the city, which are the most vulnerable to flooding, are home to the poorest residents. These communities also have a greater percentage of minorities and immigrants than neighborhoods on higher ground. As Katrina approached, some people in these vulnerable areas were unable to evacuate because they did not own cars, were in poor health, or lacked the money to pay for a hotel. In news footage of the storm the people being rescued from roofs or waiting at the Superdome were almost all African American. Those images and the divisions they reveal were not surprising to people familiar with New Orleans. Katrina revealed and intensified layers of alienation that call out for reconciliation.

3. For the people of New Orleans, the post-Katrina journey of reconciliation has been difficult. We might think of reconciliation as something that happens between two people, but as Episcopalians and Catholics, we see the restoration of right relationships between individuals, groups, and even with creation as important tasks for our churches. We might usually think of human beings as masters of the natural world, but natural disasters show us how much we are still at the mercy of the elements. Katrina also demonstrated how divisions between people on the basis of race, wealth, and age contribute to vulnerability to those elements. Reconciliation means moving from a sense of independence to interdependence: we cannot say to one another, "I have no need of you" (1 Cor 12:21). South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu reminded us, in the African worldview, one's personhood comes from relationships with other persons, generations, and creation itself.

4. What would it mean to fulfill the promise of Christ in a reconciled world? To recognize the deep wounds of religious divisions, racial injustice, and ecological destruction that we have not truly seen before? To look with spiritually renewed eyes on past breaches of justice, memory,

and community and imagine walking together towards the cosmic reconciliation of all things in the triune God? Like those gathered at Christ Church Cathedral that day, we as Episcopalians and Catholics in the United States stand between the flood and the future, seeing our wounds and daring to sing of hope. What we wish to ask is this: among the many rich and varied ways of approaching reconciliation, what gifts does an ecumenical dialogue in particular bring to this area of human longing?

5. We speak as repentant Christians, as those who, having been given a gift of hope, are obligated to bear witness to a reconciled future against despair. Episcopalians and Catholics have been meeting for decades to seek a shared way of speaking about the past and the future; aware of the challenges it entails, we wish also to work together to reconcile some of our most difficult divisions and challenges: ecclesial, interreligious, racial, and environmental. Certainly, there are more divisions that also deserve our concern, but these are areas where Episcopal-Catholic cooperation has been focused. Coming to be closer partners (ecclesial reconciliation towards greater unity) has made us stronger agents for interreligious, racial, and environmental reconciliation, even as collaborating on these other kinds of divisions has brought us closer together.

6. Lamenting the divisions among the children of Adam and Eve and their alienation from God's good creation (Genesis 3-11), we listen for Christ's voice, "a great sound, as of a trumpet" (Rev 1:10), and prepare ourselves to receive a reconciliation that seems possible only in the light of Christ's Paschal Mystery, a life that springs forth from death.

B. What is reconciliation?[1]

7. The Book of Revelation promises a reconciled universe, in which "Death … mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away" (Rev 21:4).[2] The momentum of John's Apocalypse begins with the crucified and risen Christ, who calls the fragmented and distracted churches together to receive and take part in the new creation. We too will begin with Christ's work and the call to ecclesial unity (Rev 1:11), attending to further themes of interreligious (Rev 7:4), racial and civic (Rev 7:9, 18:10), and ecological (Rev 21:1) recognition, repair, and restoration.

8. The work of reconciliation encompasses the concept of *metanoia*–"repentance" or "change of mind" (or "heart"). Jesus Christ began his ministry with the invitation, "Repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15), a call which echoes in our Ash Wednesday practices of renewed conversion. *Metanoia* entails a process of moving from conditions of sin and woundedness to friendship and flourishing. Reconciliation as we learn it in ecumenical work has three interrelated aspects, which can also be witnessed in wider social contexts.

---

[1] "Reconciliation" appears in Scripture most explicitly in the letters of Paul (2 Cor 5, Col 1) and in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 5). These scriptural passages helpfully illuminate processes of reconciliation within local communities and between individuals. In light of the broader spheres of alienation which, as American Christians, press all too closely on us in the contemporary moment, we have chosen to use a scriptural framework that accounts for our common future that rests in God.

[2] All scriptural quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

(i) Recognition: understanding and agreeing upon the nature, scope, and gravity of the estrangement between parties. This includes unlearning distorted narratives that prioritize self-interest over truth or privilege one group's perspective over another. To seek visible reconciliation with fellow Christians, with all human beings, and with the whole of creation, we take as a model Jesus Christ's acceptance of the human condition and death, by whom the Father chose "to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20). Made like to him in baptism, our lives should now be marked by a similar humility and generosity towards even our enemies. In our liturgical practice, the proclamation of and reflection on Scripture allows us to see our world in a new light, to recognize the alienation born of sin-, both personal and social, and to attend to where God is at work in our world.

(ii) Repair: working on right relationships with God, others, and creation that is enacted publicly and socially. As we begin (in recognition) to understand the alienations of our world, we progressively work to repair the systemic injustices underlying the original cause for estrangement. This repair takes on two dimensions of redress: systemic redress concerned with structural issues (such as eliminating the systems of racism or polarizing social attitudes) and specific redress that deals with the harm a victim has suffered. Thus, systemic redress of victimization likewise demands specific redress of individual victims—in Camus's words, our "taking the victim's side."[3] In all cases, this implies lifting up the voices of those who have been silenced and seeking a future for all. In some cases, with clear distinctions between those who have been injured and those who have injured them, it also includes restoring both victim and offender to moral community. Reparation may be included here as one element in seeking such restorative justice, but so too are restitution, apology, and memorialization. We are not seeking narrative closure, but rather progressive systemic justice: this means our narratives may shift as new things are revealed. We learn to embody Isaiah's call to be "repairers of the breach, restorers of streets to live in" (Isa 58:12) by responding to Scripture and committing ourselves to mutual care and the care of our common home. In the eucharistic liturgy, the sermon, the creeds, the intercessory prayers, the Our Father, and the exchange of peace model this work.

(iii) Restoration: living into right relationship in a holistic sense, as well as a more eschatological sense of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1), captured in the notion of beloved community or kingdom of God, or the gathering of the "every nation … all the tribes and peoples and languages" (Rev 7:9). This stage is elusive in history, and tends to be experienced in glimmers and hints. We expect its fullest realization in eschatological hope. Still, there are penultimate expressions of it. Politically, it may take the form of shared governance between two former enemy parties, working together to promote societal well-being. It may take the form of restored biodiversity, a more sustainable human relationship to the land in a formerly polluted or depleted area. In ecumenical dialogue, the work of Pope Francis and

[3] On Camus and human rights, see William R. O'Neill, *Reimagining Human Rights: Religion and the Common Good* (Georgetown University Press, 2021), pg. 40.

Archbishop Justin Welby towards care for refugees, migrants, and our common home offers a glimpse of "a future with hope" (Jer 29:22). In the eucharistic liturgy, the great thanksgiving and holy communion provide a foretaste of God's restored creation that renews us.

9. These aspects of reconciliation are not necessarily sequential. Just as at the beginning of every eucharistic liturgy, we confess our sins and ask God's forgiveness and the assembly's prayers, so too we begin with an attempt at repair and restoration by hearing again the word of God (recognition). Engaging in restorative practices may deepen recognition, while repair may more fully reveal the complexity of harm done and suffered in a fallen world.

II. Ecumenism as a school for reconciliation

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. Revelation 1:20.

10. The Christian ecumenical movement is a movement towards unity in Christ between members of different denominations. In ecumenical dialogue, we have learned that reconciliation does not depend on eliminating differences. Rather, it is learning how to see one another as rooted in a shared past and bound to a shared future. Once we saw one another as enemies, threats to our well-being; now we commit to see one another as siblings and friends on a journey to one destination, even if our understanding of that destiny is still imperfect.[4] Our traditions come to understand reconciliation not only through attempts to reconcile with one another, but also by working together in broader movements for social, political, and other forms of reconciliation, and in the soaring visions of hope our traditions bring to this area of reflection and action. In many ways, polarization in the United States and in other parts of the world have made it hard to agree on the questions of who and what should be reconciled, and how that reconciliation should take place. Our experiences of confronting past histories of oppression and violence against one another have taught us how to begin such challenging work.

11. We have learned to describe the communion we share as real but imperfect. We emphasize what is shared and seek to repair what is imperfect in our communion.[5] Shared baptism and faith provide a common context and a common call, which provoke us to weigh those doctrines and disciplines that still divide us from one another and that threaten the unified witness of each of our communions. Taking up the need for multiple forms of reconciliation in our shared context, we affirm that we are members of Christ's body and have a common home within the one Church, even as our experience of communion remains incomplete. Unable to say, "I have no need of you" (1 Cor 12:21), we feel bound to walk together in shared pilgrimage, even when we find ourselves at different points along the road. Walking together along the way, we hope to find faithful ways of accommodating one another without losing sight of the end of full visible unity.[6]

12. The challenge of reconciliation can make progress seem impossible, so that it is tempting to give up. In the ecumenical context, we know that human beings do not work for reconciliation unaided. *God* initiates reconciliation and carries it through to completion: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us" (2 Cor 5:18–20). Our ministries of

---

[4] This is especially clear in the "on the way" style of documents, such as Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission III, "Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be the Church - Local, Regional, Universal" (Erfurt, Germany, 2018).

[5] See ARC-USA, *Ecclesiology and Moral Discernment* (1994), para. 7.

[6] See especially *Walking Together on the Way* (2018); IARCCUM, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on 40 Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue* (2007), esp. part two (para. 96ff.); and Episcopal Task Force on Communion across Difference, "'Put Out into the Deep Water': Communion across Difference as a Christian Call" (2021), https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/29959.

reconciliation seek to cooperate with God's work of reconciliation, which concerns not only human beings but the whole creation. The work of an ecumenical dialogue is a recognition of God's reconciling work and participation in that work. Hence, we can call upon our common past and point towards a hope for a shared future as twin engines that drive our vision of reconciliation.

13. In the Paschal Mystery, the crucified and risen Christ is the one reconciling us as well as the sign of our full reconciliation. The path of reconciliation entails taking up Christ's cross and following him (Matt 16:24). This imitation of Christ is an entry into a cruciform life for both individual followers of Jesus and for all Christian bodies that incorporate the Church Universal. Doing this work as churches that bear the wounds of our divisions, we pattern ourselves after Christ, who *still* bears the scars of his passion on the far side of death. The whole of Jesus' ministry demonstrates his commitment to healing, and the apostolic Church followed his lead in this regard (see Acts 3:1ff.; 5:12ff.; 20:7ff.).

14. Reconciliation between Christians, particularly between Episcopalians and Catholics, in imitation of the way of the cross, cannot be limited to recounting past grievances. Siobhán Garrigan, speaking of the context of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, says "the co-implication of peoples on the island goes back so long, and its history has so many–and conflicting–versions" that public apologies are of limited use. Instead, she recommends praying and acting together, coming to understand the other as enmeshed in the same history that entangles us too.[7] One instance of this comes in the clear statement in Vatican II documents that the members of communions separated from the Catholic Church are not held morally responsible for that separation. Rather, all Christians are entangled in the snare of Christian disunity, and all alike must seek to be reconciled.[8]

15. Ecumenical dialogue is always done in pursuit of visible Christian unity, but this does not mean absorbing one church into another or merging institutions as if they were business enterprises. We acknowledge that moving towards full visible unity between churches requires brave visioning of the radical possibilities of a common life. We hear the call of Paul, who encourages us to pursue unity in imitation of Christ: "make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind …. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God … humbled himself" (Phil 2:2, 5–8). Seeking a common mind and faith, divided Christians may learn to model a common discipleship in fulfillment of a singular mission for the sake of the world. By our practice of humility in our differences as fellow Christians, we learn to recognize and work for reconciliation in the world.

---

[7] Siobhán Garrigan, *The Real Peace Process: Worship, Politics and the End of Sectarianism* (London: Routledge, 2010), quotation on pg. 44; see all of chapter 2.

[8] "The children who are born into these [separated] Communities and who grow up believing in Christ cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation, and the Catholic Church embraces upon them as brothers, with respect and affection. For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect." Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio),* 1964, para. 3. Although individual persons may be in heresy, membership in a separated ecclesial community does not necessarily entail heresy.

16. Full communion is the gold standard for ecclesial reconciliation, which includes consensus on essential doctrinal questions and mutual recognition of sacramental ministry. Although much progress has been made on doctrinal questions, particularly on the eucharist and ecclesiology, there are still significant obstacles to full communion. These include disputes over ordination, authority and magisterium, anthropology, and moral theology. On the one hand, reflection on the longstanding, productive, and affectionate dialogue between our churches sheds light on other difficult domains where reconciliation is urgent. On the other hand, mutual reflection on the work we have done together in the world towards reconciliation helps us discern a viable path to a more perfectly realized expression of the unity of Christ's church.

17. Despite the need for structural change, reconciliation is also an irreducibly personal process. Sarah Coakley has suggested renewed practices of contemplation and the awakening of the spiritual senses for a better coherence of responsibility and hope. Individuals may not be culpable for a past or present systemic injustice, yet in contemplation may come to see how distortions in their own spiritual senses which go "all the way down" and "all the way back" may have inhibited their ability to identify or care about political injustices which are right before their eyes.[9] Such practices of contemplation may likewise, as Rowan Williams writes, help victims of historical political injustice to reflect on their own anger, and whether they have turned their victimhood into a justification for violence, unwittingly imitating the actions of their perpetrators.[10] This call to search the memory, via contemplation, made memorably in the Christian tradition by Augustine, remains a sure path toward healing and just reconciliation in any number of spheres.[11]

18. Ecumenical dialogue demands an openness to conversion that extends from the individual's walk of faith to the growing unity of communities and institutions that were once estranged.[12] Reconciliation requires individual actions of repentance, the turning back to God that *metanoia* entails. God finds us in the first place — "You did not choose me but I chose you," says Jesus (John 15:16) — and then draws us to himself, both as an interior act of the will and by exterior works that prioritize knowing and doing God's will over our own desires. This work of conversion lasts a lifetime. To pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done," day after day, is to seek to cooperate with God's own reconciling work and to solicit his help, "both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). Forbearance and love for both neighbor and stranger are necessary to individual conversation and to ecumenical commitment.

19. All Christian *communities* are similarly called to continual conversion in Christ. This movement is typified in the personal encounter between Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1967 that led to the establishment of official dialogue between our two communions. Our love for one another takes not only individual but corporate form, set within a web of care and support that encompasses and transcends our personal lives and relationships. To tend to this whole is to concern ourselves with the ways we have collectively fallen short of manifesting

---

[9] Sarah Coakley, "Spiritual Perception and the Racist Gaze: Can Contemplation Shift Racism?," in *Perceiving Things Divine: Towards a Constructive Account of Spiritual Perception*, ed. Frederick D. Aquino and Paul L. Gavrilyuk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), pgs. 153–76.

[10] Rowan Williams, *Resurrection: Interpreting the Easter Gospel* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1994).

[11] Augustine, *Confessions,* trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Book X.

[12] Groupe des Dombes, *For the Conversion of the Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993).

Christ's impartial love.[13] When we fail to love one another as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us (Eph 5:2), we wound the unity of the universal Church, those who make up the mystical Body of Christ.[14] To repent of such divisions requires incorporating practices of repair and restoration. When divided Christians lament and repair their divisions from one another, they bear witness that Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to reconcile the created order to God (John 17:21, 23; cf. 13:35; Col 1:20). By attending to the harm we have caused to one another, we are enabled to account for other ways in which we have caused harm.

20. Pursuing the work of reconciliation, Christian persons and communities are called to *cruciform humility* in imitation of Jesus, who serves as our model in all things. Our work of reconciliation imitates Christ insofar as it engages in the work of dying to our collective selves for the sake of the reconciled Body of Christ that manifests love, truth, and justice. The reconciling processes of repentance, repair, and restoration heal and reinvigorate our bonds of affection and provide glimpses of restored wholeness. This point is fundamental to the gift and call of Christ-formed reconciliation.

21. The spirit of this document is very much in keeping with the call to "purification of memory" made by Pope St. John Paul II. He introduced this concept in his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennnio Adveniente* and further clarified it in his Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, *Incarnationis Mysterium.* He indicated in the Bull that "purification of memory calls everyone to make an act of courage and humility in recognizing the wrongs done by those who have borne or bear the name of Christian" (11). He further urged: "As the Successor of Peter, I ask that in this year of mercy the Church, strong in the holiness which she receives from her Lord, should kneel before God and implore forgiveness for the past and present sins of her sons and daughters." We wish to take this picture of the humbled, penitent Church — aware of our weakness, reliant on God, and confident in the witness of Christ's passion — as our frame for the Christian work of reconciliation in the United States today.

[13] See John Paul II, On Commitment to Ecumenism (*Ut Unum Sint*), 1995, paras. 15 and 16, on "communal conversion" as a call from which no "Christian community can exempt itself."

[14] On the *woundedness* of Christ's body, see Chicago Quadrilateral (1886), adopted by the American Episcopal House of Bishops (1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 877); *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), para. 817. Cf. ARC-USA, *Ecclesiology and Moral Discernment: Seeking a Unified Moral Witness* (2014), para. 8.

III. Interreligious Reconciliation

There was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9.

A. Introduction

22. One painful way Catholics and Episcopalians have learned humility and responsibility for our failings is through our reflection on the Shoah, or Holocaust, and other atrocities of World War II. Seeing division and mistrust lead to violence and even to genocide, Christians were not only motivated for reconciliation among themselves, but especially became concerned for a just reconciliation with the Jewish people. By extension we have also recognized the need for repair in relations between Christians and Muslims and, in our North American context, the harm caused by Christian encounters with Indigenous communities. Here we offer reflections on how the gift of reconciliation is becoming manifest through the threefold pattern of recognition, repair, and restoration.

23. God maintains relationships with all peoples of the earth. After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah and his sons Ham, Shem, and Japheth, indicating that all nations of the earth have some sort of covenantal life with God (Gen 9:1-17). God chose and called Abraham and his children so that through them "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:4). Though the prophets of Israel proclaimed divine judgment against other nations, they also declared a vision of other nations making a final pilgrimage and worshiping in Zion (Mic 4:2).

24. Christianity has inherited from the Old Testament two modes of reflection on other religions. On the one hand, it maintains a kind of particularism, retaining the Israelite prophets' critique of idolatry (Rom 1:23; 1 Cor 8:4) and adding the claim that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14). On the other hand, Christianity remembers God's concern and care for all of humanity as echoed in the covenants with Noah and Abraham. The universal scope of the Gospel suggests that God's grace and love are at work outside the bounds of the visible church, and that "other sheep not of this fold" (John 10:16) may already be worshiping the one God as "unknown" (Acts 17).[15] Jesus speaks of "many rooms" in his Father's house (John 14), gesturing towards an abundance in God's mercy. Moreover, the encounters of Jesus in his ministry with non-Jews, such as the Canaanite woman (Matt 15) and the centurion (Luke 7), indicates expansion of divine love beyond traditional ethno-religious boundaries of the ancient world.

B. Reconciliation with Judaism

25. God longs for all creatures to live in relationships of harmony with one another. God manifested this desire by calling Abraham and his offspring, Israel, to be a people dedicated to him. This special relationship had the purpose of establishing a holy nation that would serve as

[15] Catechism of the Catholic Church (2016), para. 846-848; see especially Second Vatican Council, The Constitution on the Nature of the Church in the World (*Lumen Gentium*), 1964, para. 16.

the means by which all nations of the earth would come to worship God (Isa 2:2–4). For Christians, it is understood that this desire is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, whose saving activity opened the promise of salvation to all people. Although Jews constituted the core of the first generations of leadership in the Church, the claims about the person and status of Jesus Christ were not broadly accepted among other Jews. The promise of a reconciliation of division between Jews and Gentiles in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:11–22) stands as a deep mystery concerning God's will, with which the Church continues to wrestle (Rom 11:25–33).

26. As divisions hardened, many in the increasingly Gentile church turned away from affirming God's covenant with the Jewish people. This led to the development of Christian theological rationales for marginalizing Jews, which in turn fueled over a millennium of Christian hostility, slander, violence, and murder visited upon many Jewish communities. With few exceptions, reconciliation was set aside in favor of recrimination and retribution. This history created the framework of antisemitism that made the Holocaust possible. The heroic example of a minority of Christian rescuers and advocates during the Holocaust was unable to avert the consequences of deep patterns of Christian anti-Judaism.

27. Recognizing the historic significance of the Shoah motivated Christians to begin a process of reconciliation with the Jewish people. Contemporary dialogues with Judaism demonstrate patterns of recognition, repair, and restoration.

Recognition

28. Even before the events of the Holocaust under the Nazi regime, Christians and Jews had begun to collectively respond to the dangers of racial antisemitism that had become pronounced in the early twentieth century. In the United States, the National Conference of Christians and Jews was established in 1928 and featured pulpit exchanges between Christian and Jewish clergy. In England, the Anglican priest James Parkes wrote on the history of Christian anti-Judaism and was a driving force in the establishment of the Council of Christians and Jews in 1942.[16]

29. The horror of the Holocaust awakened Christian churches to the legacy of Christian anti-Judaism and moved them to take the initial steps towards repentance and reconciliation with the Jewish people. The first major response to this event was the Seelisberg Conference of 1947, at which Christian and Jewish leaders gathered to come to terms with the contribution that antisemitism among Christians had made towards enabling the Holocaust. The resulting "Ten Points of Seelisberg" laid the theological foundations for the work of reconciliation between Christianity and Judaism.[17] Informed by this work, in 1948 the founding assembly of the World Council of Churches described antisemitism as a sin against God and humanity.[18]

30. An impetus for Catholic engagement with reconciliation with Judaism was the personal encounter in 1960 between the newly elected Pope John XXIII and Jules Isaac, a French Jewish

[16] Alice L. Eckhardt, "Founding Father of Jewish-Christian Relations: The Rev. James Parkes (1896-1981)," *Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations* 3.1 (2008): pgs. 1-9.

[17] Christian Rutishauser, "The 1947 Seelisberg Conference: The Foundation of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue" *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 2.2 (2007).

[18] First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1948), "The Christian Approach to the Jews."

historian and Holocaust survivor. In their private meeting Isaac asked the Pope to have his Council address the often-tragic relation between the Church and the Jewish people, and the Pope readily agreed.[19] The outcome of that historic meeting is what was promulgated in 1965, "The Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions" (known as *Nostra Aetate*).[20]

31. Setting a new tone for interreligious relations, *Nostra Aetate* declares, "The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions" (no. 2). Moving from describing religions generally, it considers Hinduism and Buddhism and then Islam before offering an extended reflection on how the Roman Catholic Church ought to understand Judaism. "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the World" (*Lumen Gentium*), the council's teaching on the nature of the Church, also asserted that God's plan of salvation embraces others beyond Christians: first the Jewish people, with whom the covenants were made; then Muslims, who also acknowledge the Creator; and also those who have not come to an explicit knowledge of God.[21]

Repair

32. *Nostra Aetate* served as a turning point in articulating Roman Catholic magisterial teaching about Judaism. It rejected supersessionism, the replacement theology which argued that because the Jewish people did not accept Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah they were justly punished and lost all the promises of the covenant God made with them. It affirmed that God's plan of salvation began with the biblical Israel and its offspring, affirming that the Jewish people remain dear to God and that "God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choices he made." (*Nostra Aetate* 4; Rom 11:29). Elsewhere at the council, it was affirmed that the Jewish people ought to be considered among the people of God because of the covenant with Abraham (*LG* 16). Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council taught in *Nostra Aetate* that all people ought to reject the accusation of deicide, that false charge that the Jewish people were uniquely responsible for the death of Jesus Christ and that this guilt remained upon them. All forms of persecution against the Jewish people were also rejected.

33. As a result of the theological repair in *Nostra Aetate,* a remarkable transformation in Roman Catholic-Jewish relations has occurred over the past half century. The Roman Catholic Church and its regional bodies such as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have issued teaching documents that have expanded upon and implemented the instructions of *Nostra Aetate*. Both deicide and supersessionism were often connected with the reading of the passion narratives on Palm Sunday and Good Friday and the intercessory prayers on those days. Much greater care is now taken to prevent these liturgies from being an occasion for anti-Jewish sentiment. Catechetical materials emphasize a common fellowship between the Church and the Synagogue. Pontiffs have journeyed to Israel and sought to further the work of reconciliation through their personal ministries. Many prominent Roman Catholic universities have centers for Jewish-Catholic relations. Official dialogues through the Vatican, the USCCB and at the local

[19] Norman C. Tobias, *Jewish Conscience of the Church: Jules Isaac and the Second Vatican Council* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
[20] Second Vatican Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*), 1965.
[21] *Lumen Gentium*, para. 16.

level in the United States exist and give ample witness to the ongoing work of reconciliation in local communities.

34. Similar work of repair has also played out within the Episcopal Church, which like the rest of the Anglican Communion, has invested considerably in reconciliation with the Jewish people. This work developed out of internal reflection by the Episcopal Church as well as ecumenical attention to Roman Catholic developments. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution in 1979 to initiate a study on Episcopal-Jewish relations.[22] In that resolution, the General Convention called upon Episcopalians, clergy and lay, "to deepen their commitment to Episcopal – Jewish dialogue and to interfaith cooperation in local communities; and, wherever appropriate, to seek exposure to ancient and contemporary Jewish scholarship so as to better comprehend the Scriptures on which, and the religious environment in which, our Lord Jesus Christ was nourished; and to appreciate more fully the religious worship and experience of our neighbors in the Jewish community."[23]

35. In 1988, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church published "Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations" for use by parishes and church leaders in order to encourage local dialogue. This document acknowledged that Christian-Jewish dialogue bore a special burden because of the shared origins of the two traditions. Moreover, the history of Christian hostility towards Jews meant there was a "special urgency for Christians to listen, through study and dialogue" to learn from Jews about how they understood their own tradition. The document observed that "a mutual witnessing to the way which each is perceived by the other can be a step toward understanding the hurts, overcoming the fears, and correcting the misunderstandings that have separated us through the centuries."[24] From this the document goes on to offer teachings about Christian belief and the Jewish people with the aim of encouraging mutual harmony and understanding. It concludes with practical recommendations for local collaborations between dioceses and parishes and local Jewish organizations. Especially in areas with significant Jewish presence, it encouraged ongoing dialogue with the aim of facilitating "service and the common good."[25]

36. In 2024 the General Convention of The Episcopal Church adopts a new and updated set of guidelines for Episcopal-Jewish relations. That document says, "It is an understatement to note that the Christian tradition … has not always respected the Jewish people as fellow children of God." The 2024 guidelines acknowledge "Because persistent unjust stereotyping of Jews by Christians continues to harm Jewish people in the present day (as it has for centuries), it is imperative to acknowledge that anti-Judaism is expressed in a wide array of present practices of The Episcopal Church: liturgical texts, interpretation of scriptures, preaching, devotional practices, poetry, iconography, hymnody, academic writing, pastoral advice, and educational

[22] General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of …the Episcopal Church*, Denver, 1979 (New York: General Convention, 1980), C-48.

[23] General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention* (1980), C-48.

[24] General Convention, "Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations," 1988, I.6.

[25] General Convention, "Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations" (1988), V.4, 6.

resources."[26] These guidelines reflect an ongoing sensitivity concerning how to properly speak of Jews and Judaism, especially in preaching and in the liturgies of Palm Sunday and Good Friday. The 2024 guidelines focus on contemporary issues in Christian Jewish dialogue, including ongoing issues with Holy Week liturgies and tensions that arise in discussions about the conflict in Israel and Palestine. The document offers some best practices for engaging in Christian-Jewish relationships.

Restoration

37. Restoration of relationship between Jews and Christians is an ongoing process. One sign of restoration is the acknowledgment by various Jewish entities that Christians have engaged in significant work of repentance and they have laid the foundation for a new type of relationship between these two estranged communities.

38. Such an acknowledgement has been hard won. While some Jewish intellectuals, like Jules Isaac and Abraham Joshua Heschel, were open to rapprochement between Jews and Christians, others were less sanguine.[27] Famously, the leader of the Modern Orthodoxy movement, Joseph Soloveitchik, cautioned his community to not rush too quickly towards religious dialogue with Christians, given their long history of antisemitism.[28]

39. Gradually, Jews have come to recognize the work of reconciliation undertaken by various Christian churches to be authentic. Given the dispersed nature of religious authority in Judaism, such recognition comes from affiliations of like-minded entities. The first such formal recognition came from a group of Jewish scholars in the document *Dabru Emet* in 2000.[29] Recently, two different Orthodox Jewish statements have also been issued, reflecting a new willingness to engage with Christians.[30] Such recognition indicates that the long work of repair can indeed bear fruit and witness to the possibility of restoration.

C. Reconciliation with Islam

40. Among the "many nations" (Gen 12) to be blessed through Abraham, those which adhere to the Muslim faith—understood scripturally as the offspring of Ishmael, Abraham's oldest son by Hagar, Sarah's handmaid (Gen 16)—retain a pride of place. Although promised a son from Sarah (Isaac), Abraham nevertheless prays for the life of Ishmael (Gen 17) and acquires for his displaced firstborn an enduring blessing. Perhaps because of its near kinship and proximity to both Judaism and Christianity, Islam and its followers have often found themselves in

[26] "Christian-Jewish Relations: Practical and Theological Guidelines," 1. Authorized on November 14, 2023 by The Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations for submission to General Convention 2024 for churchwide approval.

[27] Abraham Joshua Heschel, "No Religion Is an Island," *Union Theological Seminary Quarterly* 22.2 (1966): pgs. 117-134.

[28] Joseph Soloveitchik, "Confrontation," *Tradition* 6.2 (1964): pgs. 5-29.

[29] *Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*, September 10, 2000.

[30] International Group of Orthodox Rabbis, "To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven," December 3, 2015 and The Conference of European Rabbis, the Rabbinical Council of America, and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, "Between Jerusalem and Rome: Reflections on 50 Years of Nostra Aetate," August 31, 2017.

competition and conflict with adherents of its Abrahamic cousins, even as Christians and Muslims have often dwelled in close proximity and harmony in places like Jordan and Egypt for centuries as well. Rich dialogues have occurred in the form of exchanges over shared scriptural traditions and common moral concerns in various configurations between Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

Recognition

41. Efforts at reconciliation with Islam have become an important feature of Christian witness. In *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council recognized the Muslims who "profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."[31] *Nostra Aetate* recognized the high esteem with which Muslims hold Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, the Council acknowledged the long history of hostility between Christians and Muslims and urged a movement away from the past towards reconciliation: "The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values" (*Nostra Aetate* 3). While the process of reconciliation often does require remembering past harms, genuine reconciliation also requires transcending the harms we remember by means of present relationships of peace and mutual care. Such official documents statements reflect experiences of reconciliation, such as the witness of 19th century Maronite Catholic monk Charbel Makhlouf, who worked for the reconciliation of Christians and Muslims even during the 1860 Christian-Druze war. His shrine in Annaya, Lebanon is now frequented by Christians and Muslims alike.

42. Anglicans too have a legacy of dialogue with Muslims. This began with British trade which in turn inspired missionary activity in both the Middle East and South Asia. At times, these missionary endeavors were bound up with imperial ambitions, complicating engagements with local Islamic communities. The work of Bishop Kenneth Cragg is indicative of the stance Anglicanism took towards Islam in the twentieth century. Living in the Middle East, he rejected the impulse towards conversion of Muslims, instead becoming a scholar of Islam and a leading advocate for reconciliation between Christians and Muslims.[32]

43. In 1988 the Anglican Communion produced the first communion-wide document on dialogue, which cautions, "Further, in judging, we must always be careful to compare like with like. We must compare the highest and most humane ideals of Islam with the highest and most humane ideals of Christianity and the misuse of power at the hands of Muslims with the misuse of power at the hands of those who call themselves Christians….it is important to remember also the damage that has been done to *Christian-Muslim* relations by a distorted view of Islam and by outright animosity."[33] This document emphasizes "a common witness to God and the dignity of human beings in a world always in danger of becoming godless and dehumanized."[34]

---

[31] *Lumen Gentium*, para. 16.

[32] Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956).

[33] Lambeth Conference, *Jews Christians, and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue*, pg. 301.

[34] Lambeth Conference, *Jews, Christians, and Muslims,* pg. 301.

Repair

44. Succeeding popes and Vatican offices have encouraged dialogue and engagement with Islam since the Second Vatican Council. The focus of these dialogues is epitomized by Pope John Paul II's World Day of Peace Message from 2002: "As members of the one human family and as believers, we have obligations to the common good, to justice and to solidarity. Interreligious dialogue will lead to many forms of cooperation, especially in responding to the duty to care for the poor and weak. These are the signs that our worship of God is genuine."[35] Over the decades, dialogues between Roman Catholics and Muslims have thrived globally and in the United States. Catholic-Muslim dialogue in the United States in particular, inspired by the witness of John Paul II, has cultivated a focus on the themes of peace, justice, and forgiveness. In the United States, the USCCB has convened regional dialogue groups that have born significant fruit in encouraging mutuality, respect and trust.[36] Pope Francis has become friends with Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar in Egypt, referring at least five times to their joint document on human fraternity in his encyclical *Fratelli tutti.*[37]

45. The Episcopal Church has called for "substantive dialogue between Christian and Muslim communities, dialogue that maintains the theological integrity of both faith communities and commitment to genuine human rights and religious freedom."[38] The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion worldwide have continued to engage in Christian-Muslim dialogue as an important piece of our work of reconciling with Islam and building fruitful relationships for future cooperation. The 2024 General Convention issues a set of guidelines for Episcopal-Muslim dialogue offering both theological and practical guidelines for Episcopalians who are engaging in dialogue and other encounters with Muslims.[39] The guidelines admit that Muslims and Christians have very different understandings of salvation history, but affirms our commitment to engage with Muslims in three traditional ways: "mitigating human need, challenging structural injustice, and caring for creation."[40]

Restoration

46. The call to love God and love neighbor impels Christians to seek reconciliation with Muslims. One notable response to Christian gestures towards reconciliation is when in 2007, 138 Muslim scholars from around the world, representing all the different theological branches of Islam, issued a letter entitled "A Common Word Between Us and You" which they sent to the leaders of Christian denominations all over the world. In that letter they lift up the ways in which Christianity and Islam share beliefs and values, most particularly a commitment to love God and

---

[35] John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message 2002, published in Origins 31/28 (December 20, 2001): pg. 466.

[36] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Dialogue with Muslims," 2014.

[37] Imam Ahmed el-Tayeb and Pope Francis, "Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together," February 4, 2019; see Francis, "Fratelli Tutti: Encyclical on Fraternity and Social Friendship," October 3, 2020.

[38] General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of …the Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), pg. 769.

[39] "Christian-Muslim Relations: Theological and Practical Guidelines." Authorized on November 14, 2023 by The Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations for submission to General Convention 2024 for churchwide approval.

[40] "Christian-Muslim Relations," pg. 6.

love neighbor. In the United States, local Muslim communities have been eager partners in dialogue, especially when it focuses on collaboration for the common good in local contexts.[41]

D. Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

47. The Christian ministry of interreligious reconciliation extends not merely to its Abrahamic cousins, but to all the nations of the earth (Gen 10). As the prophet Isaiah writes: "God says: 'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth' (Isa 49:6). This includes reconciliation with Indigenous communities that have come into contact with the churches.

48. Despite the stated intentions of Christian missionaries to "bear witness to what they have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20) of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the intercultural aspects of missionary encounters are seldom simple, and have historically wrought negative consequences for both Indigenous communities and the Gospel. In the lands that would become the United States, the coming of European Christians brought death and displacement for Indigenous communities. Christian settlers occupied Indigenous land; they also attempted to eradicate Indigenous practices and traditions. Children were taken from their tribes and sent off to Christian boarding schools where they were forcibly converted to Christianity, and in some cases, abused and mistreated along the way. With respect to Indigenous peoples, Christianity has much to repent of and the need for genuine reconciliation is great. Christians suppressed Indigenous culture and spirituality. That some Indigenous people still heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and formed faithful communities despite this history is a witness to the power of grace over the forces of sin and death.

<u>Recognition</u>

49. Reconciliation with Indigenous communities involves recognizing both religious and racial distinctions. These communities, even when now practicing Christians, inherit practices from their ancestors mediating close relationships with the created order. Some of the harm done to Indigenous communities stems from the presumption that these practices automatically indicated a lack of Christian faith or even worship of evil spirits. Over the 20th century, both Anglicans and Roman Catholics have come to understand the positive gifts of Indigenous cultures all over the world. With wise discernment, such gifts can be received into Christianity and even into Episcopalian or Roman Catholic liturgy, sometimes called inculturation. At the same time, Christians and non-Christians together inhabit Indigenous communities and preserve ancestral wisdom as partners. Our own Indigenous members, then, contribute to and need our churches' willing and respectful interreligious dialogue with Indigenous traditions for their full flourishing.

50. The Roman Catholic Church has sought to address the need for reconciliation with Indigenous people since the 1970s. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council and the emergence in the United States of renewed cultural and political activism by Indigenous

[41] Jane I. Smith, *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): pgs. 63–82.

communities, the USCCB issued in 1977 a statement on reconciliation with Indigenous communities: "We offer this reflection on our attitudes and actions in the spirit of reconciliation and with a stronger commitment to be more sensitive and just in our relationships with American Indians."[42] This document speaks of the need for respect of Indigenous cultures and practices, although it is focused primarily on Indigenous Catholics and says little of past harms and of their legacy.

51. The Episcopal Church has likewise been working to reconcile with Indigenous peoples in the United States for over 20 years. In 1997 General Convention committed to a process of remembrance, recognition and reconciliation in which the church "will take steps as necessary to fully recognize and welcome Indigenous peoples into congregational life, which will include a special effort toward developing an outreach partnership among urban Native Peoples."[43] The Episcopal Church has dioceses that include Indigenous reservations and there has been considerable evangelization over the years by the Episcopal Church with Indigenous peoples. This 1997 resolution was a start to acknowledging the difficult history between our church and Native peoples and demonstrated a willingness to begin a process of reconciliation, even though it is aimed primarily at Indigenous peoples who have converted to Christianity, and not the entire Indigenous community in all its diversity.

Repair

52. In preparation for marking the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus arriving in the Americas, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on Native Americans issued "1992: A Time for Remembering, Reconciling, and Recommitting Ourselves as a People." In the spirit of reconciliation, this document acknowledges the harm perpetuated against Native Americans by Christians. Apologizing for these past actions, the document names the concrete actions the USCCB has committed itself to: an effort to protect Indigenous rights, respect freedom of religious belief and practice, and preservation of cultural heritage. Alongside this, an ongoing effort to tell the truth about the tragic history of European-Indigenous relations ought to take place within Roman Catholic educational institutions. This document states that reconciliation should be embodied by Roman Catholic advocacy on behalf of Native Americans with state and federal governments, insistence on the respect of treaty rights, and financial and charitable support of Indigenous communities. Above all, what is needed is "continuing conversion and reflection on the demands of the Gospel now as we seek to bring greater respect and justice to our ministry among Native Americans."[44] In a 2018 pastoral letter on racism, the USCCB has also recognized the significant harm caused by racism and colonialism among Native Americans. They have called on Roman Catholics to continue to advocate for justice for these communities.[45]

---

[42] United States Catholic Conference, "Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on American Indians" (1977), para. 1.

[43] General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of …The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997,* (New York: General Convention), pg. 87.

[44] National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "1992: A Time for Remembering, Reconciling, and Recommitting Ourselves as a People" (1991), pg. 6,

[45] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love, A Pastoral Letter Against Racism" (2018), pgs. 10-13.

53. European legal theories developed the "Doctrine of Discovery" to justify the occupation of Indigenous lands. Though this theory was supported in the 19th century by reference to three 15th century papal bulls, it had been rejected in papal documents already in 1537: "the said Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the Christian faith; and that they may and should, freely and legitimately, enjoy their liberty and possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved."[46] Because this rejection is not widely known, it was reiterated and reinforced in a Vatican document in 2023.[47] In 2009 the General Convention of the Episcopal Church repudiated and renounced the Doctrine of Discovery. This resolution declared this concept to be opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. and a Christian ethical understanding that individuals and peoples have inherent rights, including the right to their lands.[48] Following from this, the Episcopal Church committed itself to engage in a process of self-study to eliminate vestiges of the Doctrine of Discovery from its teachings, policies, and practices. As such, dioceses were encouraged to study how that doctrine had impacted Indigenous peoples within the borders of their respective dioceses.[49] Educational materials have been disseminated by the Episcopal Church to assist congregations and dioceses in teaching about the Doctrine of Discovery and about the church's repudiation of it and process of repentance for it.[50]

54. This work includes researching the role of the Episcopal Church in the running of Indigenous boarding schools, including the roles of both denominational and diocesan institutions. This work is also to include a process of listening to the stories of people within the church who were affected by those boarding schools or who have family members who were sent to those schools.[51] The Roman Catholic Church has also begun the process of repair for Catholics' role in harm done at Indigenous schools. Pope Francis's visit to Canada in 2021 was well publicized, but the long term work done by Indigenous Catholics in partnership with others has been even more important.[52] The commitment to this work is an example of the willingness of churches to engage in deep processes of accountability with the goal of finding means to redress harms done to individuals and communities, with the goal of facilitating some sort of return to wholeness.

Restoration

55. The work of restoration between the churches and Indigenous communities can be manifested in small gestures indicating the need for deeper wholeness. We can see this in the

---

[46] Pope Paul III, *Sublimis Deus* (1537); quoted and reiterated in the Joint Statement of the Dicasteries for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development on the "Doctrine of Discovery" (2023),

[47] Joint Statement of the Dicasteries for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development on the "Doctrine of Discovery."

[48] General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of…The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pgs. 371-372.

[49] General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of…The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012,* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pgs. 183-184.

[50] Office of Indigenous Ministries, The Episcopal Church, Online Resource Library.

[51] Office of Indigenous Ministries, The Episcopal Church, Online Resource Library.

[52] Sandrine Rastello, "A Year after Pope Francis' Canada Trip, Sisters Walk Long Road to Reconciliation amid Boarding Schools' Bitter Legacy," *National Catholic Reporter*,July 24, 2023.

recognition of the deep contribution to the church made by Indigenous Roman Catholics. One example is Kateri Tekakwitha, a Mohawk woman canonized in 2012; another is Nicholas Black Elk of the Lakota Sioux, whose cause for beatification was opened in 2016, and who has now been designated "Servant of God." To have Native American Christians raised up as exemplary models and means of reflection on the fusion of Indigenous and Christian pathways emphasizes the inherent dignity of Indigenous people. It also offers a foretaste of the final restoration between all peoples that only the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God can realize in its fullness. Ongoing advocacy and material acts of repentance and reparation by the Roman Catholic Church in the United States also gesture towards the possibility of restoration.

56. In the Episcopal Church, concrete acts towards restoration have recently involved the church committing to investigating its role in the supervision and direction of Indian Boarding Schools in various parts of the United States.[53] Substantial funds have been earmarked to fund this investigative work.[54] The recent return of Indigenous lands advances the cause of reconciliation by gestures aimed at restoring Indigenous communities back to the wholeness they knew before the arrival of European settlers and their Christian beliefs.[55]

57. Despite these glimmers, the history of oppression and genocide against Indigenous communities in North America was so thoroughgoing that the journey to true restoration is hard to imagine. To acknowledge how far we are from wholeness is to name the need for God's eschatological restoration towards which we hope.

E. Conclusion

58. These examples of Roman Catholic and Episcopalian engagement with other traditions shows how reconciliation operates along different trajectories. A movement towards reconciliation requires a fullness of remembering and truth-telling accompanied by practices of lament and repentance, sometimes in liturgical contexts. Theological accountings for differing modes of articulation of divine truth and spiritual teachings done in a spirit of reconciliation requires patient listening, common discernment, a spirit of charity, and hope in the God who desires to draw all people into the divine life. Reconciliation also has a social and ethical dimension: communities that had experienced division learn to find common cause in addressing social ills and working towards the common good. Indeed, such activities are tangible fruits of the historical and theological dimensions of reconciliation that can draw diverse communities together in praise of God.

59. Thus, such collaborations continue to exist on multiple levels and with differing expressions. That the concrete fruits of reconciliation are borne out in work for justice and the common good is in itself revelatory and gestures towards God's own desire for an end to divisions between Christians and those of other traditions and communities.

---

[53] Office of Public Affairs, "Statement on Indigenous boarding schools by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and President of the House of Deputies Gay Clark Jennings," July 12, 2021.

[54] David Paulsen, "2027 General Convention to meet in Phoenix; $2 million approved for Indigenous boarding school Research," *Episcopal News Service*, June 15, 2023.

[55] Jim Kent, "Treaty Land Returned to Rosebud Sioux Tribe," *Lakota Times* June 1, 2017.

IV. Racial Reconciliation within a Divided Society

And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. Revelation 15:3.

A. Facing the Need for Racial Reconciliation

60. In the contemporary United States in which we conduct our ecumenical work, it is painfully apparent that racial reconciliation is one of the greatest needs that face the churches. Such work towards reconciliation must begin with an honest accounting that resists denying or papering over real brokenness. Christians are called to a countercultural hope in the company of the crucified Jesus Christ who gives us the language to speak honestly and directly about the violence of the past and present, to hear the call of justice, and to model solidarity with God and one another towards the goal of racial reconciliation.

61. As an Anglican-Catholic dialogue, we are particularly moved by the many examples of Anglican and Catholic partnership in struggles for national reconciliation across the world. Together Anglicans and Catholics signed the *Kairos Document* demanding reconciliation with justice in South Africa;[56] united they trekked into the bush of Northern Uganda to appeal to the Lord's Resistance Army to lay down their weapons;[57] and together they took to the streets of the United States in 2020 and 2021 to protest for racial justice.[58]

62. As an ecumenical dialogue in the United States, we are particularly mindful of the ways that the language of national reconciliation has functioned to suppress, rather than confront, the deepest sources of our divisions. We think especially of the period following the Civil War, when the practical urgency of restoring the territorial integrity of the nation came to dominate how many Americans conceived reconciliation. Political reconciliation meant sectional reconciliation, the readmission of formerly seceded states into the union, a necessary part of any reconciliation process, to be sure, but our political reconciliation did not encompass racial reconciliation. On the contrary, America's sectional reunion was achieved at the expense of it.[59] In many ways, we still live in the shadow of this misapprehension that political reconciliation had healed the nation—a point confirmed every time we hear of healing and justice presented as competing options that we must choose between.

---

[56] See The Kairos Document, re-printed in Radical Christian Writings, eds. Andrew Bradstock and Christopher Rowland (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pgs. 286-304.

[57] The Catholic Archbishop John Baptist Odama and Anglican bishop Baker Ochola were instrumental in the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, which spearheaded peacebuilding efforts during the conflict between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda. See David A. Hoekema, *We Are the Voice of the Grass: Interfaith Peace Activism in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[58] "Minnesota Faith Leaders Pray for Peace, Justice during Trial of Police Officer," *National Catholic Reporter*, March 8, 2021; David Paulsen and Egan Millard, "Episcopalians in Minnesota, churchwide call for justice in killing of black man in police custody," *Episcopal News Service*, May 29, 2020.

[59] See David W. Blight's discussion in *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002).

63. At its best, Anglican and Catholic ecumenical commitment to reconciliation witnesses to the truth that binaries between healing and justice are falsely posed. Each of these terms represents a part of the whole; each suggests a stage or aspect of the path to "full visible unity" in the political and ecclesiological spheres. We take inspiration from the Roman Catholics and Anglicans who, along with their co-signatories, declared in the *Kairos Document* from South Africa:

> There can be no doubt that our Christian faith commits us to work for *true* reconciliation and *genuine* peace. But as so many people, including Christians, have pointed out, there can be no true reconciliation and no genuine peace *without justice* … In our situation in South Africa today it would be totally un-Christian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustices have been removed … It would be quite wrong to try to preserve 'peace' and 'unity' at all costs, even at the cost of truth and justice and, worse still, at the cost of thousands of young lives … Unity and reconciliation within the Church itself is only possible around God and Jesus Christ who are to be found on the side of the poor and the oppressed."[60]

64. The most significant and influential public *story* about the recognition of the need for racial reconciliation in the last century of American history centers on Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream Speech," delivered on the National Mall during the March on Washington, August 28th, 1963. King's soaring vision of reconciliation as Beloved Community proved captivating, as he called us to imagine an America in which "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers." Tens of millions of Americans shared his indignation that "America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds,'" and likewise shared his refusal "to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt." So far from simply invoking peace and harmony in the hope that it were true, King's speech offered a powerful summons to a persevering "faith" and "hope," as he said, that *will* enable us "to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day."[61]

65. In King's prophetic imagery, future reconciliation is a *verifiable, visible* state of affairs that "we," as he said, all together, will be able to see with our eyes, look at, and touch with our hands, agreeing it is so (see 1 John 1:1). As is clear from the end of his speech, King meant to give voice to a collective hope and faith that this work could be both propelled by the work of the churches and be the occasion for deep national reconciliation.

66. When we work together for the reconciliation of our broader political communities, such as the American work of racial reconciliation, we cannot help but find ourselves forging deeper bonds of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in other communions or of other confessions. This is the grace of such political engagement: it gives us a tangible foretaste of that unity when "every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" shall stand "before the throne and

---

[60] The Kairos Document, re-printed in *Radical Christian Writings*, eds. Andrew Bradstock and Christopher Rowland (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pgs. 292; 302.

[61] Martin Luther King Jr., "Read Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' Speech in Its Entirety," *National Public Radio*, January 16, 2023.

before the Lamb" (Rev 7:9), when "those who have conquered" like King and others, shall sing afresh the song of Moses: "Just and true are your ways, King of the nations" (Rev 15:2–3); and it stirs us to seek a fuller realization of this unity in the present, even as we leave our gifts at the altar in expectation of that future reunion (Matt 5:24).

67. In U.S. history, the idea of "national reconciliation" or national unity has sometimes been used to shortcut the time required for true recognition, repair, and restoration. As in ecumenical and interreligious reconciliation, racial reconciliation in the United States must be an ongoing process at multiple levels, involving ordinary people as well as leaders, and entailing the transformation of structures, systems, and persons, and not just a shift in political style or a momentary apology. Caution must thus be exercised against running too swiftly to reconciliation as a complete or finished process, or against imagining that "reconciliation" without "justification" (Rom 1:17)—and indeed "justice"—would suffice *on its own* for a scriptural soteriology or politics of reunion.

B. Towards A Just Racial Reconciliation

68. As Episcopalians and Catholics in the United States, we want a new American political reconciliation attending to race that comes with justice. Such reconciliation manifests and participates in the dawning justice and justification of God. "If you want peace, work for justice," Pope Paul VI famously declared, just as Isaiah said, "The work of justice will be peace" (Isa 32:17).

69. Catholic social teaching, with its emphasis upon the dignity of all persons, the common good, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor, provides a framework for holding justice and peace together, such that political reconciliation can be properly framed in its biblical character as the repair of breaches (Isa 58:12). Such is the perspective of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, expressed in "Open Wide Our Hearts": "Racism shares in the same evil that moved Cain to kill his brother. It arises from suppressing the truth that his brother Abel was also created in the image of God, a human equal to himself. Every racist act—every such comment, every joke, every disparaging look as a reaction to the color of skin, ethnicity, or place of origin—is a failure to acknowledge another person as a brother or sister, created in the image of God."[62]

70. Recent Anglican thought and practice has followed a similar path. Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who chaired the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, consistently refused the choice between justice and reconciliation, introducing the indigenous African concept of *ubuntu* (often translated as "I am because you are"), which holds that each person can flourish only when all people flourish. "We contend that there is another kind of justice, restorative justice, which was characteristic of traditional African jurisprudence. Here the central concern is not retribution or punishment. In the spirit of *ubuntu*, the central concern is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offense …. Thus we would claim that

[62] United States Council of Catholic Bishops, "Open Wide Our Hearts," 2018.

justice, restorative justice, is being served when efforts are being made to work for healing, for forgiving, and for reconciliation."[63]

71. As with the other forms of reconciliation we have discussed, the pattern of recognition, repair, and restoration can inform efforts to promote racial reconciliation as well.

Recognition:

72. The first, critical task of racial reconciliation is unmasking how racial discrimination leads to the systematic erosion of the rights and flourishing of people of color. Such reconciliation strives to *recognize* the history of systemic racial exclusion (e.g. slavery, Jim Crow laws, voter suppression, etc.). Recognition demands recognizing that American history has included Black lives and Black contributions since the very beginning.[64]

73. Truth must be sought, and sought again, as an ongoing practice, part of the self-examination that constitutes democratic life. Establishing core facts about a nation's injustices is foundational to building a more equitable future. Though truth commissions have addressed specific historical events (the 1979 Greensboro massacre of five anti-Klan activists) and system-wide abuses (the Maine-Wabanaki State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which addressed harms suffered by Indigenous children in the Maine child welfare system), the United States never had the benefit of a truth commission in the aftermath of its Civil War.[65] There are growing calls for a South African-style truth commission applied to the legacy of America's racial injustices today. These models attest to the importance of truth-telling at multiple levels: local, regional, and national. No one level exhausts the truth. "Telling the story," e.g., of slavery, segregation, or mass incarceration, is critical if we are to tell a "greater story that unites." Indeed, as in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, telling the story is part of the story of constructing, in Alexander's words, "a thriving, multiracial, multiethnic democracy free from racial hierarchy."[66]

74. There are many ways that deeper recognition and story-telling can be advanced. Contemplative practice is an important contribution that ecumenical dialogue offers for understanding issues of societal justice.[67] As a dialogue, we commend such collaborative efforts to renew the spiritual *vision* of our churches, alongside working toward agreed-upon restorative actions and policies, as a way to personalize and humanize the process of repair. The *eyes* of the heart (contemplation), as well as the *ears* of the mind, need to be activated—along with the other spiritual senses—to make a holistic and personal approach to specific repair. For Howard

---

[63] Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), pgs. 54–55. Tutu defines *ubuntu* as follows, "It is to say, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'A person is a person through other persons.' It is not, "I think therefore I am." It says rather: 'I am human because I belong. I participate, I share'" (pg. 31).

[64] See Ralph Ellison, "What America Would Be like without Blacks," in Ellison, *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison*, pg. 583.

[65] A point Blight emphasizes in *Race and Reunion*, pg. 3.

[66] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow,* pg. 259.

[67] Sarah Coakley, "Spiritual Perception and the Racist Gaze: Can Contemplation Shift Racism?"; see also Coakley, "Jail Break: Meditation as a Subversive Activity," *The Christian Century*, June 29, 2004.

Thurman, contemplation serves as the foundation for action towards racial justice. The life of the Spirit has tangible effects socially.[68]

Repair:

75. A justice that heals breaches (Isa 58:12), of course, goes beyond recognition to include wider social transformation that addresses the root causes of injustice, including reparative work meant to dismantle institutional racism and redress generational inequity. And as testimony is woven into collective memory, we may discern the lines of general, systemic redress and political repair.

76. General redress is often parsed in terms of duties, the first being forbearance, the choice not to do further harm. As examples, restorative programs do not usually make space for capital punishment, long-term or indefinite solitary confinement, felony disenfranchisement, or life-sentences for juveniles. The equitable application of rights to historically marginalized people is one form of reparation, which is an aspect of general redress. We must be concerned not only with historic responsibility, such as that borne by slave-holders, but its ongoing legacies of perduring inequalities of wealth, status, well-being, and opportunity.[69]

77. Recognition of systemic racism demands systemic redress for those whose equal status, dignity, and (in a certain form) rights are unequally threatened or denied. In the transformative conception of restorative justice, the question of systemic redress of social inequity looms large. What must be restored is a rights-based common good of mutual respect and recognition. For "the failure to acknowledge the humanity and dignity of all persons has lurked at the root of every racial caste system."[70] Our rights talk must be rich enough to name both victim and offender, while essentializing neither. Although all people deserve unconditional respect, justice must first consider those whose basic rights are most imperiled, since it is difficult if not impossible for them to advocate for themselves. We must act like the Good Samaritan, who crosses to "the victim's side."[71]

78. Redress of such systemic inequity would include eliminating discriminatory policing practices, biased prosecutorial discretion, and overly harsh sentencing policies. Black children in schools are more likely than their white peers to be arrested instead of counseled or excused when engaging in the same activities (the "school-to-prison-pipeline"). In our criminal justice system, systemic racial bias is masked and thereby perpetuated, criminalizing black and brown bodies in the name of legal/juridical impartiality. We might begin with the breaches and broken

---

[68] Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949).

[69] Adam Rothman and Elsa Barraza Mendoza, eds. *Facing Georgetown's History: A Reader on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2021); Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012)

[70] Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 259. See James Bohman and William Rehg, eds., *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

[71] See William R. O'Neill, "No Amnesty for Sorrow: The Privilege of the Poor in Christian Social Ethics," *Theological Studies* 55, no. 4 (December 1994): pgs. 638–56; the quote is from Albert Camus, *The Plague* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), pg. 230. "Victim" is not about feelings or membership in a specific class, but refers to individuals whose rights are endangered or ignored.

relationships typified in mass incarceration, which not only change access to civil rights, but also endanger the family structures and social networks of Black Americans.

79. Such systemic redress of racialized criminal justice is, of course, only a beginning. Racial justice will require far more, such as restorative measures of reparation for the intergenerational consequences of racism. Where retributive measures of interpersonal reparation seek to apportion blame and indemnification across generations, restorative measures address the systemic inequities perpetuated by the heritage of slavery, Jim Crow, and mass incarceration—reparation as an act of solidarity. Leading a national conversation, Catholic and Episcopal institutions of higher education are developing reparations programs that address their history of slavery and other forms of racial injustice.[72] These measures can in turn inspire analogous forms of reparation at other levels.

Restoration:

80. Tutu linked the final success of his Truth and Reconciliation Commission's narrative project to the fitting redress of the vast economic "disparities between the rich, mainly the whites, and the poor, mainly the blacks."[73] As in South Africa, in the United States today, economic gaps both reinforce the legacy of racist policies and also contribute to ongoing distrust between members of different races. The goal, as King reminds us, must be beloved community. It must be the actual living into right relationship, the restoration of capacities, the full flourishing of everyone: the enjoyment of life together. As a result, addressing racial disparity today also means thinking about poverty and wealth gaps, regardless of race.

81. "Righting the past," the Episcopal theologian Kelly Brown Douglas writes, "is about more than facile apologies or even guilty verdicts for killers of innocent black children. Rather, to right the past is to acknowledge the ways in which our systems, structures, and ways of being in society are a continuation of the myths, the narratives, the ideologies of the past and then to transform these present realities."[74] This justice requires "a radical restructuring of a political, social, and economic order."[75]

82. If a fullness of reconciliation is not now possible, we can, at the very least, as companions on the way of Jesus, commit ourselves to seeing what is wrong in our life together:

---

[72] See "Georgetown Offering Aid to Families of 272 Slaves," *The New York Times* (October 31, 2019), A21. See also "[Virginia Theological] Seminary Creates $1.7 Million Fund to Pay Slavery Reparations," *The New York Times* (September 13, 2019), A16. The USCCB has not yet chosen to take a stance on national reparations, that is, requiring the US government to use tax dollars to financially compensate the descendants of enslaved people. Nonetheless Catholic institutions are implementing other types of reparative approaches founded in the principles of restorative justice.

[73] Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, pg. 221. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela writes in a similar vein: "True social transformation—and healing of victims—will come about only if the issues of economic justice and the myriad problems that post-apartheid South Africa faces are addressed" Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died That Night*, pg. 126.

[74] Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), pg. 220.

[75] Douglas, *Stand Your Ground*, pg. 198.

what is broken, what is missing, what is wounded and in need of healing. As we contemplate what a restored world would look like, we undertake repair and restoration together.

V: Ecological Reconciliation

On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:2.

83. The Book of Revelation witnesses to both the apocalyptic fears of the destruction of creation and the eschatological hope of its restoration to flourishing and sustenance of all life. In the great judgment of sin, the wrath of God witnesses to the estrangement between humanity and the creation it was intended to steward: "A third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up . . . A third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. . . A third of the waters became wormwood, and many died from the water, because it was made bitter" (Rev 8:7, 9, 11). And yet in Christ's conquest over the powers of sin and death, humanity is reconciled with a renewed creation: "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life* with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more" (Rev 22:1-3a). These verses speak to the anxiety we face in the ecological crises upon us and our resolute hope that we can return to the harmony God intended between humans and creation. These anxieties and hopes can be addressed across religious traditions as the process of reconciliation develops and matures.

84. The destruction Katrina caused in New Orleans reveals more than just the formidable power of nature. It also shows how the city shaped, and was shaped by, its natural environment. As a port city on the delta of the Mississippi river, New Orleans draws its vibrancy and its fragility from the water. Over the years human intervention shaped the land to meet the needs of the developing city. Levees were built, and swamps were drained. Eventually a significant portion of the city lay below sea level, with levees holding back water from multiple directions. This precarious arrangement has been complicated by erosion of the delta and pollution. The impact of the hurricane on the city and on the land itself was worse because of the changes humans have introduced. New Orleans is not the only place where humanity now lives in a precarious relationship with nature. The global commons is threatened, yet not all have fared equally. Those living with wealth in the developed world will have greater odds of dealing with the climate. Meanwhile, the poor and those in the developing world will bear a greater burden.

85. The cry of the poor is now the cry of the earth; and throughout the world, religious communities have responded from the wealth, material and intellectual, of their traditions. Like Matthew's steward, our own Anglican and Roman ecumenical efforts have drawn from what is old and new in reading these "signs of the times" (Matt 13:52, 16:3). As global communions, we can look to our own churches to discern, for we mirror the crisis, counting among our members both the wealthiest and most vulnerable global citizens.

86. Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on the human relationship with creation, *Laudato Si',* and the recent apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum,* developed earlier Roman Catholic magisterial social teaching on environmental justice. Francis also calls for ongoing ecumenical

and interfaith dialogue, citing national, regional, and local initiatives. And *Laudato Si'* itself inspired further efforts: for example, Muslim thinkers have engaged with Pope Francis' call for a heightened environmental awareness among religious traditions. The work of interreligious reconciliation can lead towards ecological reconciliation and vice versa.[76]

87. Many people tend to assume that creation is valuable only when it serves humanity's needs. Pope Francis critiques the view that the world is there to be exploited as a "technocratic paradigm."[77] Pope Francis and former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams praise the great achievements of modern technology, but insist that our attitude towards nature must be reconciled. Nature is first *creation* and bears the mark of the Creator, and we ourselves are creatures that bear that mark; we are kin to all creation. Like other creatures, we exist in a web of interdependence; our flourishing is part of ecology. For Francis and Williams, the divine act of creation is itself the source of human dignity, a dignity that in turn, is realized in our own creative care for all of creation. "[I]n a world where exploitative and aggressive behaviour is commonplace, one of the 'providential' tasks of human beings," says Williams, "must be to limit damage and to secure space for the natural order to exist unharmed."[78] Our share in God's care for creation, moreover, demands that we "use the natural order for the sake of human nourishment and security without pillaging its resources and so damaging its inner mechanisms for self-healing or self-correction."[79]

88. For Christians, Christ, the eternal Word fleshed in creation, is the epitome of such care. Christ's incarnation is "the most radical imaginable embodiment" of "the solidarity of Creator and creation."[80] For in Christ, all creation is recapitulated: "In him," says Colossians, "were created all things in heaven and on earth," and "in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:16-17). After the Ascension, Christ's loving presence to creation completes this mission: "risen and glorious, present throughout creation by his universal Lordship: 'For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross' (Col 1:19-20). This leads us to direct our gaze to the end of time, when the Son will deliver all things to the Father, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).[81]

<u>Recognition</u>

89. The first task of recognition, then, comes from learning to see non-human creation as a reality with its own dignity, beloved by God, and to see the dignity of human creatures as interwoven into it. Indeed, writes Williams, the "material world" itself "tells us that to be human is to be in dialogue with what is other: what is physically other, what is humanly other in the

[76] A. Rahied Omar, "A Muslim Response to Pope Francis's Environmental Encyclical: Laudato Si'," *Contending Modernities*, December 17, 2015.

[77] Pope Francis, On Care for Our Common Home (*Laudato Si'*), 2015, para. 122.

[78] Williams, "Renewing the Face of the Earth: Human Responsibility and the Environment," II.

[79] Williams, "Renewing the Face of the Earth: Human Responsibility and the Environment," II.

[80] Williams, *Christ the Heart of Creation* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018), pg. 203.

[81] See Francis, *Laudato Si',* para. 100.

solid three-dimensionality of other persons, ultimately what is divinely other."[82] We bear a sacred care for all creation, so that we and it together may give God glory.

90. Our scriptures, especially the Psalms, reveal to us a creation that is alive with a distinctive praise for God: "Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy, at the presence of the Lord" (Psalm 98:7–8). Our common doctrines of creation and redemption supplies grounds for caring for our common home which in turn inspires personal and collective engagement. Together, Scripture and tradition summon us to an ecological conversion. As Williams reminds us, "intelligence *is* given to us; we are capable of changing our situation… If we can change things so appallingly for the worse, it is possible to change them for the better also. But, in Christian terms, this needs a radical change of heart, a conversion."[83]

91. A full recognition of creation also demands recognizing the fate of the poor who are most vulnerable to ecological exploitation and natural disaster. Ecological justice means recognizing differential responsibilities, in which the most prosperous bear the greater "ecological debt."[84] In William's words, "climate change has been characterised as a matter of justice … to those who now have no part in decision-making at the global level yet bear the heaviest burdens as a consequence of the irresponsibility of wealthier nations." And such responsibilities, argues Williams extend "to those who will succeed us on this planet – justice to our children and grandchildren."[85]

Repair

92. Francis and Williams offer a radical assessment that explores causes, rather than focusing exclusively on short-term solutions so often proposed by the dominant economic powers. In Francis's words, "environmental protection cannot be assured solely on the basis of financial calculations of costs and benefits. The environment is one of those goods that cannot adequately be safeguarded or promoted by market forces."[86] Effective remedies must be "glocal", respecting the global scope of the crisis but, as Francis and Williams remind us, always attentive to local culture and circumstance. Repair must include the direct care for non-human creation as well as care for people who have been harmed by environmental degradation.

93. Anglican churches have supported Pope Francis's call for an ecological conversion that seeks, in Archbishop Rowan Williams' words, a restored relationship with creation.[87] The most recent Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion strongly reaffirmed its support for global "commitments to tackle urgently the triple environmental crises of climate change,

---

[82] Williams, "Embracing Our Limits: The Lessons of Laudato Si'". See Williams, *Christ the Heart of Creation,* pgs. 199-217.

[83] Williams, "Renewing the Face of the Earth: Human Responsibility and the Environment," II.

[84] Francis, *Laudato Si',* paras. 49–52.

[85] Williams, "Renewing the Face of the Earth: Human Responsibility and the Environment," II.

[86] Francis, *Laudato Si',* para. 19.

[87] See also Pope Francis, Archbishop Justin Welby, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, "A Joint Message for the Protection of Creation" (2021), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2021/documents/20210901-messaggio-protezionedelcreato.html.

biodiversity loss and pollution."[88] The Episcopal Church in the US sent delegates to the United Nations (COP27) to affirm the Church's commitment "to growing loving, liberating and life-giving relationships across the human family and with all of God's creation."[89] The Holy See was also officially represented at COP27 and has now become a formal party to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Vatican delegation, joined by regional episcopal conferences and organizations such as Caritas Internationalis, supported the "loss and damage" provisions of COP27 promoting equitable responsibility.

94. Both the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Dicastery of Communication are also partners of the ecumenical liturgical movement, Season of Creation.[90] The Episcopal Church distributes a robust set of liturgical prayers and resources for celebrating this season (Sept 1–Oct 4), which culminates on the shared Feast of St Francis of Assisi. Catholics and Episcopalians could certainly use these resources to work together towards recognition and repair.

95. As natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina remind us, the burdens of ecological degradation are borne disproportionately by those already burdened by the historic inequities of racism. While caring for our global commons looks toward the future, we must also redress the ecological harms done to the vulnerable. As scientists, theologians, artists, and many others continue to work on recognizing the inherent dignity of creation, new modes of repair will become manifest. We will continue to work together as Episcopalians and Catholics in the United States, as Anglicans and Catholics do globally, to advance towards reconciliation with creation.

Restoration

96. In reconciliation with creation we depend on the Holy Spirit, received in baptism, to complete the work that God has begun in Jesus Christ and that we labor to participate in. We know that creation itself waits to be redeemed: creation, says Paul, set free from slavery to corruption" to "share in the glorious freedom of the children of God." Indeed, "all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:22-23).

97. If humanity betrayed the Biblical charge of "tilling and tending" the garden of our world (Gen. 2:15), we now look toward the city that is a garden, the leaves of whose trees are for the healing of nations, in Revelation 22.

Conclusion

98. We are all disciples and citizens of a common home, and all are summoned to ecological conversion. The changes we need to make involve our personal choices as consumers and citizens and systemic reform to address the structural degradation of our global commons. At the

[88] Lambeth Conference, "Lambeth Calls: Environment and Sustainability," 2022.

[89] The Episcopal Church, "Policy Priorities for the 27th Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change," November 2022.

[90] See the Season of Creation website: https://seasonofcreation.org/about/.

heart of our traditions is the sacramentality of creation itself: the Spirit of God hovers over creation, and we are called to recognize that holy presence. “The 'face' of the earth,” says Williams, “becomes an aspect of the face of God.” Finally, “our care for the world we inhabit is not simply a duty laid upon us but a dimension of life made whole: a redeeming activity grounded in the character of our own redemption, a revelation of the true 'face' of creation.”[91] Both the revelatory character of creation and our call to partner with God in its care are the work of the Holy Spirit: “You send forth your Spirit and they are created; and so you renew the face of the earth.”[92]

[91] Williams, “Renewing the Face of the Earth: Human Responsibility and the Environment,” IV.

[92] Psalm 104:31, 1979 BCP Psalter translation.

VI. Praying Reconciliation Together: A Liturgical Invitation

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever. Revelation 22:3-5.

99. In 2006, on the first anniversary of Katrina, a liturgy of remembrance and renewal was held at Christ Church Cathedral in New Orleans. It was a single liturgy, a small step on the road to recovery and reconciliation. However, it is also a seed of hope because it contained elements of the vision of reconciliation we have offered here. It was an interfaith service: Jews, Christians and Muslims prayed together using prayers and sacred texts from all three traditions. Offerings were accepted for the Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative, which focuses on reducing housing inequality. The liturgy also included the blessing of two palm trees, which represented the housing initiative and renewal of the broader community, as well as reconciliation with creation and the triumph of life over death.[93]

100. Doing reconciliation together does not mean fabricating, all at once, a more just society into which we can step unchanged. Rather, it means hearing the Lord's call to do justice (Mic 6:8), learning together what justice means, and then progressively and incrementally putting it into practice. We will make mistakes. We will fall short and repent. Yet we will keep striving, together, to give an account of our hope (1 Pet 3:15).

101. The work of reconciliation is ultimately directed towards the final consummation of the cosmos, in which human beings, united with one another and with the whole creation, will offer God true praise. Here on earth, on the other hand, especially now, reconciliation seems to be difficult and desperate work. We rely on the hope measured out by brief glimpses of the reconciled world God has promised us, not only in our liturgies but also in our common work for the common good, for peace and justice, and for unity. As in all aspects of the Christian life, in our work for reconciliation we strive unceasingly, we know our striving cannot accomplish all our hopes, and we trust in the Holy Spirit to bring to completion the good work begun in Christ Jesus, to which we have contributed as we can (Phil 1:6).

In our worship and by our work, we join with the nations, the saints, the angels, the earth and the heavens, to cry out,

> Holy, holy, holy,
> the Lord God the Almighty,
> who was and is and is to come ….
> You are worthy, our Lord and God,
> to receive glory and honor and power,
> for you created all things,

[93] Ann Ball, "Remembering Katrina: New Orleans cathedral service unites faiths in worship," *Episcopal News Service*, August 30, 2006.

and by your will they existed and were created (Revelation 4:8, 11).

A Liturgy of Reconciliation for Episcopalians and Catholics in the United States

Here we provide a suggested structure for a liturgy to pray for reconciliation of one or several of the specific estrangements discussed in our document. Although designed for an assembly mostly composed of Episcopalians and Catholics, it is intended to be adapted to specific occasions and other assemblies; many parts might be left out or replaced with another prayer or ritual action.

In place of the scriptures suggested here, other scriptures that are quoted in the document might be used, especially if the Reconciliation liturgy is especially intended to address only one of the estrangements mentioned in the document. Liturgies for interreligious reconciliation would require greater adaptation of the texts and actions and a planning group with representatives for each of the traditions to be included. In particular, liturgies with significant interreligious dimensions should not include the Great Litany, the Lord's Prayer, any reading from the New Testament, or a sprinkling rite. Much of the Repair and Restoration sections will need further thought with members of the particular traditions represented.

The scriptures and the assembly's responses, especially in the Psalms, are intended to promote recognition of aspects of the world that demand reconciliation. Moments of silence move the community from complacency to recognition to repair to restoration. More than one presider, drawn from Catholics and Episcopalians, will better manifest repair. One presider may be designated for each of the four sections, or two presiders may take two sections each.

Liturgical leadership by, or the use of texts and music by, members of historically marginalized groups is also an especially potent symbol of repair. Such leaders should ideally be part of the liturgical planning process, rather than simply asked to step in during the liturgical service itself.

Music, art, incense, and architectural elements such as the font or water source are powerful images of restoration. Notable elements in the setting used for prayer should be used whenever possible. Processions might include the assembly members itself, song, incense, candles, blessed water to fill the font or basin for the renewal of baptismal vows.

GATHERING RITE

The liturgy might begin with a hymn (see Appendix), a procession, or lighting the first of four candles. Or the gathering rite might be held in relative darkness, and three candles lit for "Recognition," "Repair," and "Restoration."

Greeting and collect

Presider or host (in these words or in those adapted to the theme): Friends, we are gathered here to ask God for the grace of reconciliation in a divided world. Let us pray.

Silence.

O Lord,
mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you,
and grant that they may know and understand
what things they ought to do,
and also may have grace and power
faithfully to accomplish them;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.[94]

OR

God of peace,
let us your people know,
that at the heart of turbulence
there is an inner calm that comes
from faith in you.
Keep us from being content with things as they are,
that from this central peace
there may come a creative compassion,
a thirst for justice,
and a willingness to give of ourselves
in the spirit of Christ.[95]

People: **Amen.**

Presider: Please be seated to hear God's word.

[94] BCP, Proper 10.

[95] Collect from *A New Zealand Prayer Book*, pgs. 464-5.

RECOGNITION

At this point, a candle may be lit. In larger gatherings, the reader may process with a Bible to the ambo or pulpit.

First reading[96]

Reader:
A reading from the Book of Genesis.

The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The LORD God said to the serpent,
'Because you have done this,
  cursed are you among all animals
  and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
  and dust you shall eat
  all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
  and between your offspring and hers;

[96] The first reading asks the assembly to recognize the woundedness of the world. Other options include Cain and Abel (Genesis 4), Babel (Genesis 11), Joseph sold into slavery (Genesis 37), Joseph's brothers repent (Genesis 42), or prophetic laments from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Hosea, or Amos, for example.

he will strike your head,
  and you will strike his heel.'
To the woman he said,
'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
  in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
  and he shall rule over you.'
And to the man he said,
'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
  and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
  "You shall not eat of it",
cursed is the ground because of you;
  in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
  and you shall eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your face
  you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
  for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
  and to dust you shall return.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

A substantial silence of one or two minutes at this point is recommended.

Psalm 74[97]

The psalm may be read by two sides alternating, in unison, or by solo speakers. One possible arrangement is shown.

[solo[98]] Why, O God, have you cast us off forever?
Why does your anger blaze at the sheep of your pasture?
[side 1] Remember your flock which you claimed long ago,
the tribe you redeemed to be your own possession,
this mountain of Zion where you made your dwelling.

[side 2] Turn your steps to these places that are utterly ruined!
The enemy has laid waste the whole of the holy place.
Your foes have made uproar in the midst of your assembly;

[97] Text from Conception Abbey, *The Ecumenical Grail Psalter* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2015). Other lament psalms may be used, including the communal laments Psalm 10, 14, 79, 80, 85, 88, 90; or the individual laments Psalm 6, 31, 51, 69, 102, 130.
[98] Or side 1, for alternating sides.

they have set up their emblems as tokens there.
They have wielded their axes on high,
as at the entrance to a grove of trees.

[side 1] They have broken down all the carvings;
they have struck together with hatchet and pickaxe.
They have set your holy place on fire;
they have razed and profaned the abode of your name.

[side 2] They said in their hearts, “We will utterly crush them;
we will burn every shrine of God in the land.”
We do not see our emblems, nor is there a prophet;
we have no one to tell us how long it will last.

[solo[99]] How long, O God, is the enemy to scoff?
Is the foe to insult your name forever?
Why do you hold back your hand?
Why do you keep your right hand hidden in
your cloak?

[side 1] Yet it is God who reigns from of old,
who bestows salvation through all the land.
It was you who divided the sea by your might,
who shattered the heads of the monsters in the sea.

[side 2] It was you who crushed Leviathan's heads,
and gave it as food to the beasts of the desert.
It was you who opened up springs and torrents;
it was you who dried up ever-flowing rivers.

[side 1] Yours is the day and yours is the night;
it was you who established the light and the sun.
It was you who fixed the bounds of the earth,
you who made both summer and winter.

[side 2] Remember this, O LORD: the enemy scoffed!
A senseless people insulted your name!
Do not give the soul of your dove to the beasts,
nor forget the life of your poor ones forever.

[side 1] Look to the covenant; for caves in the land
are places where violence makes its home.
Do not let the oppressed be put to shame;
let the poor and the needy bless your name.

[99] Or side 1.

[side 2] Arise, O God, and defend your cause!
Remember how the senseless revile you all the day.
Do not forget the clamor of your foes,
the unceasing uproar of those who defy you.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

There may be silence, a homily, a lament hymn, or instrumental music as a response.

REPAIR

At this point, a candle may be lit.

The Great Litany[100]

Presider: Let us beg the Lord for mercy and healing.

Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth,
Have mercy on us.
Holy and Mighty, Redeemer of the world,
Have mercy on us.
Holy Immortal One, Sanctifier of the faithful,
Have mercy on us.
Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, One God,
Have mercy on us.

From all evil and mischief; from pride, vanity and hypocrisy;
from envy, hatred and malice; and from all evil intent,
Savior deliver us.
From sloth, worldliness and love of money; from hardness of
heart and contempt for your word and your laws,
Savior deliver us.
From sins of body and mind; from deceits of the world, flesh and
the devil,
Savior deliver us.
From famine and disaster; from violence, murder, and dying
unprepared,
Savior deliver us.
In all times of sorrow; in all times of joy; in the hour of our death
and at the day of judgment,

[100] Episcopal Church, *Enriching Our Worship 1: Morning and Evening Prayer, The Great Litany, and The Holy Eucharist* (Church Publishing, Inc., 1998), pgs. 46–49.

Savior deliver us.
By the mystery of your holy incarnation; by your birth, childhood and obedience; by your baptism, fasting and temptation,
Savior deliver us.
By your ministry in word and work; by your mighty acts of power; by the preaching of your reign,
Savior deliver us.
By your agony and trial; by your cross and passion; by your precious death and burial,
Savior deliver us.
By your mighty resurrection; by your glorious ascension; and by your sending of the Holy Spirit,
Savior deliver us.

Hear our prayers, O Christ our God.
Hear us, O Christ.
Govern and direct your holy Church; fill it with love and truth; and grant it that unity which is your will.
Hear us, O Christ.
Give your people grace to witness to your word and bring forth the fruit of your Spirit.
Hear us, O Christ.
Guide the leaders of the nations into the ways of peace and justice.
Hear us, O Christ.
Give us the will to use the resources of the earth to your glory and for the good of all.
Hear us, O Christ.
Bless and keep all your people,
Hear us, O Christ.
Comfort and liberate the lonely, the bereaved and the oppressed.
Hear us, O Christ.
Shower your compassion on prisoners, hostages and refugees, and all who are in trouble.
Hear us, O Christ.
Forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and turn their hearts.
Hear us, O Christ.
Hear us as we remember those who have died and grant us with them a share in your eternal glory.
Hear us, O Christ.

Give us true repentance; forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance and our deliberate sins; and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to your word.
Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy on us.

Prayers of the People

A litany of petitions written by the community or the committee preparing the liturgy may be added to or replace the Great Litany. These should specifically address local as well as global issues.

Lord's Prayer

Presider: Let us pray in the words Christ has taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Passing of the peace

Jesus Christ came to bring us the peace that the world cannot give. Let us offer a sign of his peace to one another.

The assembly may pass the peace in whatever way is customary. After this, gifts for the poor or the oppressed may be brought forward to the front of the assembly to be distributed after the service.

RESTORATION

At this point, the last candle may be lit. If a procession is desirable and the location permits, blessed water may be brought and poured into a basin or the water in the font may be blessed. A child or family might be asked to pour the water. If no procession is to be held, the water may be poured immediately before the Sprinkling Rite.

Second reading[101]

Reader: A reading from the Book of Revelation (22:1-5, 16-17)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

'It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.'
The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'
And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.'
And let everyone who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 133[102]

This psalm might be sung or read in unison.

How good and how pleasant it is,
when a family lives in unity!

It is like precious oil upon the head
running down upon the beard,
running down upon Aaron's beard,
upon the collar of his robes;

---

[101] Other options may be chosen from the chapter epigraphs in the document, from elsewhere in Revelation, from the Old Testament and New Testament canticles used in the Liturgy of the Hours, or (especially for Jewish-Christian gatherings) Deuteronomy 6:1-15; 11:1-12; 2 Samuel 22:1-23:7; Isaiah 40, 54, 55, 60, 62; Jeremiah 31; Ezekiel 37 or especially 47.

[102] From Conception Abbey, *The Ecumenical Grail Psalter.* Other options include Psalm 104, 136, 148, 149, 150, or one or more of the Hallel Psalms (113-118).

Like the dew of Hermon, which runs down
on the mountains of Zion.
For there the LORD bestows a blessing:
life forever.

Sprinkling Rite[103]

Presider: Let us receive the water of life that God pours out as a free gift for his beloved creatures.

The presider or another minister sprinkles the assembly with the blessed water. A festive song may be sung.

Presider: Let us pray.

Silence

O God of unchanging power and eternal light,
look with favor on the wondrous mystery of the whole Church
and serenely accomplish the work of human salvation,
which you planned from all eternity;
may the whole world know and see
that what was cast down is raised up,
what had become old is made new,
and all things are restored to integrity through Christ,
just as by him they came into being.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.[104]

Presider:
May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil
and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

[103] If Jewish participants are expected, or if for some other reason sprinkling is not desirable, the assembly may process forward to touch the water and make the sign of the cross.
[104] *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil, Psalm prayer after reading 7.

Appendix: Suggested Hymns

These hymns have been arranged thematically for convenience, but could be used anywhere in the service.

Gathering
The Church's One Foundation
All Are Welcome
In Christ There is No East or West
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
Ubi Caritas
Love Divine, All Love Excelling

Recognition
The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor
By the rivers of Babylon Where we sat down
Jesus, Remember Me
Nada te Turbe
Hosea
O Lord, Hear my Prayer
There is a Wideness in God's Mercy

Repair
Lord, You have Come to the Seashore/Pescador de Hombres
Lift Every Voice and Sing
Amazing Grace
Make Me a Channel of Your Peace
This Little Light of Mine
Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on Me
The King of Love my Shepherd Is
The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace

Restoration
All Creatures of Our God and King
For the Healing of the Nations
Wade in the Water
Now Thank We All Our God
Father, We Thank Thee, Who Hast Planted
We Are Marching in the Light of God
How Great Thou Art
Holy God We Praise Your Name
Be Thou My Vision
Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
How Can I Keep from Singing?

Participants

Anglican Members
The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt
The Rev. Dr. Michael Cover
Dr. John Kiess
The Rev. Dr. Amy E. Richter
The Rev. Dr. Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski
The Rev. Dr. Denise Yarbrough
Dr. Christopher Wells
The Rev. Margaret Rose

Roman Catholic Members
The Most Rev. John Michael Botean
The Rev. William O'Neill, SJ
The Rev. Walter Kedjierski
Prof. Joanne Pierce
The Rev. Thomas Rausch, SJ
Prof. Samuel Thomas
The Rev. Ronald Roberson
Dr. Kimberly Belcher
Dr. Barbara Sain