
POST-VATICAN II DEVELOPMENTS

Ecumenism & Interreligious Dialogue

UT UNUM SINT (1995)

- Central emphases that arose at the Second Vatican Council (5-20)
 - Division as a theological problem
 - §6: How is it possible to remain divided, if we have been buried through Baptism in the Lord's death, in the very act by which God, through the death of his Son, has broken down the walls of division?
 - Unity of Christians as a duty of Christian conscience: the fullness of the Church includes a concern for unity.
 - §8: The Catholic Church embraces with hope the commitment to ecumenism as a duty of the Christian conscience enlightened by faith and guided by love.
 - Recognition that for the Church to participate in the love of the Trinity, it must be united
 - §8: This is the hope of Christian unity, which has its divine source in the Trinitarian unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - §9: To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan from all eternity.
 - The reason for ecumenical outreach (11)
 - The Church has always been preserved in unity.
 - Elements of the Church exist "outside" the Church and sanctify those communities in which they occur.
 - These elements are the basis of the presently existing communion of these communities with the Catholic Church: "Indeed, the elements of sanctification and truth present in the other Christian Communities, in a degree which varies from one to the other, constitute the objective basis of the communion, albeit imperfect, which exists between them and the Catholic Church. To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian Communities, the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them."
 - Baptism in these other communities does not remain ineffective because these communities exist in the faith of Christ (13)
 - Truth
 - §19: Even so, doctrine needs to be presented in a way that makes it understandable to those for whom God himself intends it. In my Encyclical Epistle *Slavorum Apostoli*, I recalled that this was the very reason why Saints Cyril and Methodius laboured to translate the ideas of the Bible and the concepts of Greek theology in the context of very different historical experiences and ways of thinking. They wanted the one word of God to be "made accessible in each civilization's own forms of expression". They recognized that they could not therefore "impose on the peoples assigned to their preaching either the undeniable superiority of the Greek language and Byzantine culture, or the customs and way of life of the more advanced society in which they had grown up". Thus they put into practice that "perfect communion in love which preserves the Church from all forms of particularism, ethnic exclusivism or racial prejudice, and from any nationalistic arrogance". In the same spirit, I did not hesitate to say to the Aboriginal Peoples of Australia: "You do not have to be divided into two parts ... Jesus calls you to accept his words and his values into your own culture". Because by its nature the content of faith is meant for all humanity, it must be translated into all cultures. Indeed, the element which determines communion in truth is the meaning of truth. The expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning.
 - Ecumenism is an organic part of the Church's life and work (20)
- The importance of prayer (20-27)
 - Prayer together fosters unity, even when it is not prayer for unity itself
- The proper stance toward other communities: dialogue (28-40)
 - Dialogue is the proper way to reach truth.
 - "Through such dialogue everyone gains a truer knowledge and *more just appreciation* of the teaching and religious life of both Communions. In addition, these Communions *cooperate more closely* in whatever projects a Christian conscience demands for the common good. They also come together for common prayer, where that is permitted. Finally, all are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the Church and, wherever necessary, undertake with vigour the tasks of renewal and reform." (§32, UR §4)
 - Dialogue and prayer are interrelated
 - Dialogue can uncover common truth in differing statements, looking beyond the formulations to the truth contained within them: "Intolerant polemics and controversies have made incompatible assertions out of what was really the result of two different ways of looking at the same reality. Nowadays we need to find the formula which, by capturing the reality in its entirety, will enable us to move beyond partial readings and eliminate false

interpretations.”

- The fruits of dialogue (41-76)
 - Christians now treat one another with charity and compassion
 - Christians join together in concern for humanity
 - There is a burning desire for union at the Table of the Eucharist
 - A growing awareness of elements of the faith that Christians have in common
 - The progress of dialogue begins by establishing the points of commonality and moves to discussing specific areas of disagreement.
- The road ahead (77-103)
 - §78: Ecumenism implies that the Christian communities should help one another so that there may be truly present in them the full content and all the requirements of “the heritage handed down by the Apostles”. Without this, full communion will never be possible. This mutual help in the search for truth is a sublime form of evangelical charity.
 - §79: It is already possible to identify the areas in need of fuller study before a true consensus of faith can be achieved: 1) the relationship between Sacred Scripture, as the highest authority in matters of faith, and Sacred Tradition, as indispensable to the interpretation of the Word of God; 2) the Eucharist, as the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, an offering of praise to the Father, the sacrificial memorial and Real Presence of Christ and the sanctifying outpouring of the Holy Spirit; 3) Ordination, as a Sacrament, to the threefold ministry of the episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate; 4) the Magisterium of the Church, entrusted to the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him, understood as a responsibility and an authority exercised in the name of Christ for teaching and safeguarding the faith; 5) the Virgin Mary, as Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual Mother who intercedes for Christ’s disciples and for all humanity.
 - §89: It is nonetheless significant and encouraging that the question of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome has now become a subject of study which is already under way or will be in the near future. It is likewise significant and encouraging that this question appears as an essential theme not only in the theological dialogues in which the Catholic Church is engaging with other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, but also more generally in the ecumenical movement as a whole. Recently the delegates to the Fifth World Assembly of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, held in Santiago de Compostela, recommended that the Commission “begin a new study of the question of a universal ministry of Christian unity”. After centuries of bitter controversies, the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities are more and more taking a fresh look at this ministry of unity.
 - §96: This is an immense task, which we cannot refuse and which I cannot carry out by myself. Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade Church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church and allowing ourselves to be deeply moved by his plea “that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (Jn 17:21)?

DOMINUS IESUS (2000)

- The Church is a salvific mystery (16)
 - “Therefore, in connection with the unicity and universality of the salvific mediation of Jesus Christ, the unicity of the Church founded by him must be firmly believed as a truth of Catholic faith.”
 - “On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, are not Churches in the proper sense; however, those who are baptized in these communities are, by Baptism, incorporated in Christ and thus are in a certain communion, albeit imperfect, with the Church.”(17)
- There is an intimate connection between Christ, kingdom, and Church (18)
 - “To state the inseparable relationship between Christ and the kingdom is not to overlook the fact that the kingdom of God — even if considered in its historical phase — is not identified with the Church in her visible and social reality.” (19)
 - “If it is true that the followers of other religions can receive divine grace, it is also certain that objectively speaking they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation.” (22)

Deus Caritas Est (2005)

The recent Magisterium of Benedict XVI

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ECUMENISM

Definitions

- Catholicity and Communion
- Proselytism vs. Dialogue
- Evangelization vs. Common Search for Truth
- Polemicism vs. Irenicism
- Catholic uniqueness and treating the others in humility and love

Ecumenical models

- WCC
- Anglican
- Congregationalist
- Roman Catholic

Unitatis Redintegratio's articulated principles for the practice of ecumenism

- Renewal of the Church (6)
- Interior conversion (7)
- Prayer for unity (8)
- Familiarity with the outlook of the other Christians (9)
- Theology learned with regard for an ecumenical openness (10)
- Expression of Catholic belief should not hinder dialogue (11)
- Importance of clarity in Catholic teaching, bearing in mind the hierarchy of truths (11)
- Cooperation in social causes (12)
- In regard to the Eastern Churches
 - Diversity is to be preserved (16, 17)
 - No burden is to be imposed beyond what is necessary (18)

Ut Unum Sint

- Recognize commonality
- Doctrinal difference
- Papacy
- Where are we headed?