

ANGLICANS AND THE UNA SANCTA

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The Church of England, which in origin is two separated provinces of the Western Latin Church, became formative of the Anglican Communion worldwide. However, it has never in those years of separation considered itself wholly separated in the sense that it has always asserted its connectedness and incompleteness as '*part* of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church', independent in polity, interdependent with other Anglicans and other churches, especially those ordered in the historic episcopate. More recently, asserting its legitimate patrimony, it has sought ecclesial unity without simply being absorbed into the polity of those with a more exclusive claim to identity with the Una Sancta, causing Anglicans to wrestle with the legitimate terms of communion in the Una Sancta. This journey has been at its most complex and rewarding with the Roman Catholic Church, especially in relation to the terms of communion focused on the papal office.

'Those who do not smart from the wounds of Christ's body
are not nourished by the Spirit of Christ'

*Non vegetate Spiritu Christi
qui non sentit vulnerabilis corporis Christi*

Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny

A part not the whole

'The Church of England *is part* of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' Thus begins the preface to the Declaration of Assent, approved through a process involving the Lambeth Conference of 1968, which all deacons, priests, and bishops in the Church of England have for nearly fifty years had to affirm publicly at their oath-taking either when they are ordained and on every new appointment. It is increasingly used in ecumenical discussion as the definition of the Church of England's position. For example, in the English bishops' response to the papal encyclical *Ut unum sint*, it was quoted in relation to the use of the verb 'subsistere in' at the Second Vatican Council: not only in *Lumen gentium* (to affirm that *all* the elements of sanctification and truth can be found in the *Catholic* Church), but also in *Unitatis redintegratio* to say

that among the separated communions ‘in which catholic traditions and institutions continue *to subsist* the Anglican Communion has a special place’.¹ This openness of the episcopate in the Roman Catholic Church to the presence of elements of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church *outside* the bounds of their own communion is, say the English bishops, an ‘ecumenical tool of great usefulness’, and if ‘this implies a refusal by the Council simply to identify the one, holy catholic and apostolic Church of the Creed with the Roman Catholic communion then the possibility is opened up for substantial agreement about the nature of the Church. We too accept that the Church subsists in the Roman Catholic Church, but also believe that its subsisting is not exclusively confined to those under the Roman obedience. ... If an exclusive interpretation of the phrase ‘*subsistit in*’ is in fact the intention of the Council then a major ecumenical obstacle remains’.² All Anglicans agree that no *part* of the Church is exclusively identifiable as the whole. The sense is brilliantly captured in a passage near the end of Michael Ramsey’s seminal 1936 book *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*: ‘while the Anglican church is vindicated by its place in history, with a strikingly balanced witness to Gospel and Church and sound learning, its *greater* vindication lies in its pointing through its own history to something of which it is a fragment. Its credentials are its incompleteness, with the tension and the travail in its soul. ... It is sent not to commend itself as “the best type of Christianity”, but by its very brokenness *to point* to the universal Church.’³

I hope that this is an illuminating place to begin because even at its most robust and insular (say, at the restoration of the monarchy and episcopate between 1660 and 1662) Anglicans never regarded their Church as the only true Church; and since the disruptions of the sixteenth century they have searched for ways of articulating its theological consensus with other communions, first through the Reformed ‘conciliarity’ of international discussion among Protestant experts, and, in other and

¹ Similar formulae are found in some other Anglican churches. Its phraseology can be related to that found in Pius XII’s 1943 *Mystici Corporis Christi*: ‘out of which the One Catholic Church exists *and is composed*’ (emphasis mine), and causes Anglicans to have a particular interest in the debate sparked by the publication (in 1992) of a letter to Catholic bishops by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, ‘On some aspects of the Church understood as Communion’. The following passage (§9) is of particular interest: ‘From the Church, which in its origins and its first manifestation is universal, have arisen the different local Churches, as particular expressions of the one unique Church of Jesus Christ. Arising *within* and *out of* the universal Church, they have their ecclesiality in it and from it. Hence the formula of the Second Vatican Council: *The Church in and formed out of the churches (ecclesia in et ex ecclesiis)* (44), is inseparable from this other formula: *The churches in and formed out of the Church (ecclesia in et ex ecclesiis)* (45). Clearly the relationship between the universal Church and the particular churches is a mystery, and cannot be compared to that which exists between the whole and the parts in a purely human group or society.’ For convenience, the footnotes quoted in that passage are: 44: ‘Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 23/a: “it is in these and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists”. This doctrine develops in the same line of continuity what had been stated previously, for example by Pius X, Enc. *Mystici Corporis*, as quoted, p. 211: “out of which the one Catholic Church exists and is composed”; and 45: ‘Cf. John Paul II, *Address to the Roman Curia*, 20-XII-1990, n.9: as quoted, p.5’

² May they all be one: a Response of the Church of England House of Bishops to *Ut unum sint* (London, 1998), para 58, p. 21.

³ Michael Ramsey: *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (London: Longmans, 1936), 220

less systematically Calvinist circles, through the increasingly sophisticated accumulation of ‘primitive’ (early Christian) consent. Independence did not mean for the Church of England a *lack* of accountability to certain established canons of recognizable Christian orthodoxy. But the significance of the Declaration’s assertion that the Church of England is part of, or ‘belongs to’, the *Una Sancta* is that it sets aside the famous ‘branch theory’ to which many Anglicans had been given since its emergence in the early 19th century—the idea that Catholics, Orthodox and Anglicans have some invisible bond (which only the Anglicans were aware of) as branches of true catholicity. ‘The only principle really involved in it’, wrote Edward Pusey to John Henry Newman in 1870, long after the latter had become a Roman Catholic, ‘was that there could be suspension of intercommunion without such schism as should *separate either side from the Church of Christ*.’ In other words, what makes a church truly catholic is not automatically and totally lost when, however deplorable it is, churches separate from each other.

In 1888 in an attempt to set out a statement of its principles for ‘reunion’, the Lambeth Conference approved the famous so-called Quadrilateral: the Holy Scriptures, the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed, the two Sacraments ordained by Christ himself, the Historic Episcopate.⁴ After sixty years’ experience of its use, a 1947 report by a glittering group of Anglican theologians for the Archbishop of Canterbury called simply *Catholicity*, very helpfully clarified,

It is upon the Quadrilateral that the Communion insists, as the condition of Anglican fellowship and as the basis of the re-union of Christendom. But there are *two ways* in which the Quadrilateral can be used. It can be used as a set of separate items, necessary for re-union partly for reasons of principle and partly for reasons of expediency. It can also be used as a symbol of the undivided wholeness of the primitive Tradition that lies behind. And it is *only in the latter sense that it points the way* towards unity in the truth.⁵

As an approach to the essential questions at the heart of our topic I want to offer three vignettes of Anglican experience and theology.⁶

⁴ Archbishop Michael Ramey, at the end of his *Gospel and the Catholic Church* (223), compellingly describes a time when ‘every section of Christendom’ will be preserved as parts, but only as parts, of the whole. When the essential elements of communion were identified—and for Ramsey that included ‘the firmest insistence on episcopacy so long as the insistence is made in terms of the universal Church’—each particular tradition would remain as legitimate patrimony within a reunited wholeness of the Church.

⁵ Gregory Dix *et al*: *Catholicity: a Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West* [a seminal report presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury by a group of eminent Anglican scholars] (London, 1947), 55 <http://anglicanhistory.org/amramsey/catholicity1947.html>

⁶ Anglican experience has obliged it to think more deeply, and at times to struggle, about what belongs at the heart of unity. It has done this in dialogue within its own fellowship and increasingly with ecumenical partners. From that experience we have learned and are continuing to learn, at times with pains, that the visible life of Christ’s Church must express and realise *continuity* with the apostolic testimony, with the witness to the cross and resurrection. This has been underlined in recent years by the former Archbishop of

Independent but interdependent

The Church of England is still deeply marked by the sixteenth-century Reformation. The story is quite hard to tell comprehensively since, in England in particular, it emerged as a narrowly juridical and theologically indeterminate issue. Only later did it burgeon as a political matter, before becoming a fully-fledged multi-thematic theological one. In the course of the story the Church of England's final court of appeal was defined in the law of the land, but that never resolved the theological tensions. Where should the newly-independent Reformed Church of England appeal for its authenticity as a Church? The later-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century debates between Calvinists on the one hand, and those on the other who, if they were not Catholics in the sense of ecclesial communion, had a historical and theological conscience about Christendom as a whole, clearly illustrate the point. Both argued for processes of theological investigation that required forms of outside consultation and discernment. The turning point was reached by the Calvinist Synod of Dort in 1618 to which a learned English delegation was sent, after which non-Calvinists in the Church of England started more thoroughly articulating their position, asserting *episcopacy de jure divino*, and apostolic succession as a justification. Thus, Anglican theology increasingly laid claim to one of the essential instruments of ecclesial communion, conceding that the Church of England was endowed with it from the communion from which it had broken away. From the 1520s to the 1660s there had been no unambiguous high point of Anglican orthodoxy. It was a history that gave rise to several myths.⁷

Canterbury, Rowan Williams in a paper, 'The biblical foundations of a theology of Christian unity: implications and challenges' given to in Rome for the fiftieth anniversary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: 'If we want to know that it is *Christ* we are talking about, in his death and resurrection, the question of *unity with the apostolic witness* is not a matter of indifference'. <http://aoc2013.brix.fatbeehive.com/articles.php/803/archbishops-address-at-50th-anniversary-of-pcpcu>.

This I believe (with a great many Anglicans behind me) is the only route to a single visible ecclesial proclamation of Christ crucified and risen, and not ultimately different and optional versions of that proclamation. If we are serious about *baptism*, if we are serious about *koinonia*, we must pursue with greater energy—despite all difficulties—the issues of *apostolicity*. Otherwise the churches may find themselves standing, to use the phrasing of our former archbishop, in the 'very strange and rather anomalous position [of] standing in Christ in *different places*, and trying to serve one another's sanctification *without* the visible bond of communion'. *Ibid*.

⁷ See Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The Myth of the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies*, 30.1 (1991): 1–19. On the one hand, MacCulloch was right to identify as a persistent myth the continuities of catholic faith and practice from *ecclesia Anglicana* to the Reformed Church of England: i.e., the myth that the Reformation didn't happen or sought a *via media* between Catholicism and the magisterial Reformers. Laudians in the seventeenth century and Tractarians in the nineteenth had been very clear that this was the proper way of reading history. But MacCulloch proved that in its late-sixteenth century form the emerging English reformed tradition was discontinuous with its past, and deeply marked by Calvinism. But he was right only to a limited degree. First because, from the outset, major conservative catholic figures like Bishop Stephen Gardiner remained deeply influential and resilient; but, more importantly, because the episcopal and synodical structure of the Church of England was maintained throughout the most Reformist decades. The dioceses were reorganized and new ones created with cathedrals made of some of the most major dissolved monasteries. From the early seventeenth century the historic succession and the episcopal office itself (which was conclusively restored alongside the monarchy following the mid-century

The central point in all this is that, having begun its independent life in the context of a failed *appeal* to the papal magistracy, it decided to reject that magistracy but did not settle—in matters of theology—for any purely local authority either of state, or church, or a single Reformed magisterial teacher. In time, international connections with the Continental Protestant world waned, and polarization in England itself deepened between those who still regarded the Reformation as incomplete and those who increasingly insisted upon the maintenance of signs of universal consensus through the historic ministry.⁸

Aidan Nichols has argued that the full history of the Church of England is really a history of ‘three churches rolled into one. It is one and the same time a church of a classically Protestant stripe, a Church of a recognizably Catholic stripe, and a Church of a Latitudinarian—or what would later be called “Liberal”—stripe.’⁹

United not absorbed, or Legitimate patrimony?

It will be clear from the forgoing comments that Anglicans have an aversion to drawing boundaries so clearly and tightly that it is impossible for the different legitimate theological commitments it embraced to find their life together. The corollary is that Anglicans have seen the Roman Catholic Church (at least historically if not in terms of present theology and practice) too ready to draw *premature* boundaries as to the content of faith, or where the Church of Jesus Christ can be seen and encountered. This contrast can be briefly illustrated from the increasingly purposeful considerations by the early Lambeth Conferences of issues of episcopacy and succession as crucial for ecumenical advance.

The Lambeth Conference of Bishops, convened and presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury—which (for better or worse) was from its origins a *consultative* expression of the episcopal college rather than a mutually binding juridical synod—began in 1867, and met on average every ten years thereafter. Not least because its early meetings were marked by a determined and dynamic vision of the *wholeness* of the Church, its decisions soon accrued serious moral weight. In 1908, four decades into the Conference’s existence, and building on the 1888 Lambeth Quadrilateral I quoted earlier, they were so bold as to declare,

Presbyterian Commonwealth) increasingly generated renewal in Catholic theological commitments, and a concern to restore the unity of the Church. Thus not one but *several different myths* of the Reformation became established in Anglican history—persistent and mutually exclusive narratives about the trajectory of the Anglican Church, unresolved even today.

⁸ The history of Church of England and wider Anglican theology for the next 400 years amply shows how deeply the concern went for ‘diachronic’ Christian consensus, for that central sense of a core element to doctrine, order, and practice defined by the accord of the patristic and post-patristic periods, even if it is a sense that has diminished in recent decades.

⁹ Aidan Nichols, ‘Anglican Uniatism: a personal view’, in Stephen Cavanaugh, ed., *Anglicans and the Roman Catholic Church: Reflections on Recent Developments* (San Francisco CA: Ignatius Press, 2011).

This Conference reaffirms the Resolution (34) of the 1897 Conference that ‘every opportunity should be taken to emphasise the *divine purpose* of visible unity amongst Christians as a *fact of revelation*.’ It desires further to affirm that in all *partial projects* of reunion and intercommunion the *final attainment* of the divine purpose should be kept in view as our object; and that care should be taken to do what will advance the reunion of the whole of Christendom, and to abstain from doing anything that will retard or prevent it. (Resolution 58)¹⁰

This clearly shows that the Communion had already come to *understand* its experience of what Michael Ramsey would come to call ‘its incompleteness’, that ‘very brokenness [which points] to the universal Church’; and in the process of addressing the integrity of its own global mission had embraced a vocation to exemplify a wider Christian unity. Initiatives were taken in many directions: relations with the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, the Old Catholic churches originating both in the eighteenth century and in the wake of Vatican I, Moravians, the Church of Sweden. The story is intensive. Suffice to say for our purposes that repeated resolutions of the Conference expressed concern (in 1888 and 1897) for Reformers in France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal who were ‘struggling to free themselves from the burden of unlawful terms of communion’;¹¹ and it refused to concede ‘the lawfulness of the imposition of new terms of communion’ on Old Catholic community in Germany after Vatican I.¹² Conversely in 1897 the Conference upheld its own interests in connection with the setting up of a new body in a place where ‘a church with apostolic ministry and Catholic doctrine [already] offers religious privileges *without* the imposition of *uncatholic* terms of communion’,¹³ and in 1908 it asserted that the ‘use or disuse of [the Quicunque vult] cannot be made one of the terms of communion’

¹⁰ Furthermore, it went on, ‘the Conference recognises with thankfulness the manifold signs of the increase of the desire for unity among all Christian bodies; and, with a deep sense of the call to follow the manifest guiding of the Holy Spirit, solemnly urges the duty of special intercession for the unity of the Church, in accordance with our Lord’s own prayer’. (Resolution 59) The Anglican ecumenist Bishop Oliver Tomkins also notes that the 1897 Lambeth Conference understood ‘the Anglican Church’ as having ‘a vocation to exemplify Christian unity’. See Oliver Tomkins, ‘The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral and the Ecumenical Movement’, in Jonathan Draper, ed., *Communion and Episcopacy* (Oxford: Ripon College Cuddesdon, 1988), 6ff.

¹¹ Resolution 15d in Randall Davidson, ed.: *The Lambeth Conferences of 1867, 1878, and 1888: with the official reports and resolutions together with the sermons preached at the conferences* (London, 1889), 123

¹² See the Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider the Relation of the Anglican Communion (a) to the Scandinavian and other Reformed Churches, (b) to the Old Catholics and other Reforming Bodies: ‘As regards the form of doctrine actually professed by this body, we believe that its return to the standards of the undivided Church is a distinct advance towards the reunion of Christendom. We learn that it formulates the fuller expression of its belief in catechisms and manuals of instruction, rather than in articles or confessions, because it desires to avoid any methods which might create or perpetuate divisions.—We cannot consider that it is in schism as regards the Roman Church, because to do so would be to concede the lawfulness of the imposition of new terms of communion, and of the extravagant assertions by the Papacy of ordinary and immediate jurisdiction in every Diocese’.

¹³ Resolution 69 in Davidson: *Lambeth Conferences* (1889), 334.

among its own fellowship. Always the concern was to define where unity in faith and practice *admitted of no difference*, and recognizing *legitimate liberties of tradition*. Questions concerning the limits of legitimate diversity between churches *within* the Anglican Communion, and of the *recognition* of legitimate patrimony (Anglican or otherwise) by separated churches in dialogue, were to emerge in dramatic new colours a century later in the events following the ordination of women as priests and bishops and the election of bishops in same-sex unions.

The rock from which we were hewn

Despite the profound connections that had developed from at least the sixth century between the Apostolic See and the English Church, historic sensitivities and hostilities about the Petrine ministry, and the theological expression of its authority, have been part of the self-identity of Anglicans since the Reformation. It is all the more remarkable then that in the course of 500 years of separation, there have been repeated attempts to bridge and heal the division; in fifty years of formal dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics since 1968 no other church-dividing issue has been more extensively explored.

The local Anglican churches have generally and authoritatively expressed their openness to re-receive the papacy as an instrument of unity. No other world communion has, I believe, gone so far in envisaging the possibility of it. In responding to the *Final Report* of ARCIC I, the 1988 Lambeth Conference welcomed two reports on *Authority in the Church*, together with an *Elucidation*, as a firm basis for continuing dialogue on authority and encouraged ARCIC II:

- ‘to continue to explore the bases in Scripture and tradition of the concept of the universal primacy, in conjunction with collegiality, as an instrument of unity, and the character of such a primacy in practice, and
- to draw upon the experience of other Christian Churches in exercising primacy, collegiality and conciliarity’.¹⁴

There has since been a third agreed statement, *The Gift of Authority* (1999); and the subject also featured in the first document of ARCIC’s present phase, *Walking Together on the Way* (2017). Progress has been described officially in the following terms:

While some Anglicans are coming to value the ministry of the Bishop of Rome as a sign and focus of unity, there continue to be questions about whether the Petrine ministry as exercised by the Bishop of Rome exists within the Church

¹⁴ Resolution 8.3 in *The Truth shall make you Free: the Lambeth Conference 1988* (London: Church House Publishing, 1988), 211 [also [https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1988/resolution-8-anglican-roman-catholic-international-commission-\(arcic\).aspx](https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1988/resolution-8-anglican-roman-catholic-international-commission-(arcic).aspx)].

by divine right; about the nature of papal infallibility; and about the jurisdiction ascribed to the Bishop of Rome as universal primate.¹⁵

The general conclusion to be drawn is that despite some dissenting voices, Anglicans are keen to discuss what kind of renewed papacy could serve the whole church, and to offer some of their own experiences of primacy as a contribution to this renewal. There is convergence in Anglican dialogue with both Orthodox and Roman Catholics about all these themes. And we are encouraged that for the first time a major Faith and Order text, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, has included reflections (§56f) on universal primacy.

Perhaps now is the time for a properly *trilateral* conversation (between Anglicans, Orthodox, and Roman Catholics) on the issues raised by this Conference? The need is to clarify what service can and should the ministry of witness to the apostolic heritage be giving to an apostolic Church, given Peter's role in the New Testament as the 'guarantor of the authentic tradition of Jesus's teaching ... a pointer to the true and only foundation of the messianic community, Jesus the Christ'?¹⁶ In other words, what kind of papacy is *essential* for the Church to *be* the Church? For their part Anglicans look for a papal institution with the capacity for self-criticism and repentance because it serves a cause—namely of the visible unity of the Church—that is bigger than itself. Pope Francis's urgent reiteration in *Evangelii gaudium* (32) helpfully extends Pope St John Paul's seminal initiative to a new generation. 'I too must think about a conversion of the papacy. ... We have made little progress in this regard. The papacy *and the central structures* of the universal Church need to hear the call to pastoral conversion'.

'Whose communion?'

The key question of our conference is surely, 'What is to be the test, the standard, of ecclesial authenticity?' Is it coordination with the *Roman see*, or is it the *universal*

¹⁵ *Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on 40 years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue* (London: SPCK, 2007), 75, p.38; cf *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III* (London: Catholic Truth Society and Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1998), 56–57, pp.33–4. See John Hind, 'Primacy and Unity—Some Anglican Reflections', *One in Christ* 37.1 (2002): 31–35: 'Nonetheless, serious questions have also been asked about the actual exercise of papal authority. The Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, in its *Virginia Report*, one of the preparatory documents for the 1998 Lambeth conference, asked whether a universal primacy may not be necessary for the universal church. 'Is not universal authority a necessary corollary of universal communion?' It is apparent therefore that 'Anglicans are ... by no means opposed to the principle and practice of a ministry at the world level in the service of unity'. These questions were repeated in *May they all be one*, the response of the English bishops to *Ut unum sint* (see footnote 2). The general conclusion to be drawn is that despite some dissenting voices, Anglicans are keen to discuss what kind of renewed papacy could serve the whole church, and to offer some of their own experiences of primacy as a contribution to this renewal.

¹⁶ Loveday Alexander, 'The Church in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts', in Paul Avis, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 78.

fellowship? I know that Roman Catholics would say the former is the only way of making the latter practically functional and meaningful, but many Anglicans remain sceptical. The very fact that the method of our dialogue with Rome seeks unity in truth on the basis of the 'Gospel and the ancient common traditions' (including presumably the Roman primacy) acts as a version of the famous Ratzinger proviso in relation to Orthodox, and suggests to Anglicans their instinct is not wrong. From the viewpoint of a strict Vatican I Roman Catholic what I called the 'test' is communion with the apostolic see in the terms of the juridical doctrine of the Dogmatic Constitution, *Pastor aeternus*, even if it is balanced by the *cum et sub Petro* of Vatican II and the growing recognition of the *sensus fidelium* in the period since the council. If it is not to be that, then the test of ecclesial authenticity is surely more elusive, and it makes more sense to speak of 'one church in a state of schism' (even if, as Edward Pusey suggested, that is 'not such a schism as wholly *separates*' from Una Sancta itself). Put another way, the latter position implies that unity is both given, and, simultaneously, an *eschatological hope*, since the reality of the integral human communion which is God's purpose cannot be expressed *unambiguously* by any existing structure.

However, to say 'eschatological' here is *not* to defer to an indefinite future; it is rather to say 'sacramental', a sign and foretaste of the future kingdom. In other words, the unity that is *prayed for*, that continually needs to be given and made manifest, truly becomes a visible *reality* when the Church gathers to do nothing but be the Church, to do nothing other than to be the guests of the Incarnate Word, taking his life into theirs, in the holy things. In order to manifest this unity as its gospel the Church *requires agreement* in all that doctrinally and spiritually belongs to the Catholic Eucharist.

The consideration of what such a eucharistic ecclesiology might mean in ecumenical practice is undoubtedly difficult, but needs (I think) to be distinguished from issues that seem to concern canonical 'rights' to share communion in certain practical and personal circumstances. As Sergii Bulgakov used to argue,¹⁷ sharing communion under certain theologically shaped conditions can in itself be part of the *eschatological* force of the sacrament.¹⁸ Such a possibility must not be allowed to pre-empt or obviate the difficulties of negotiating the full mutual recognition of

¹⁷ See Brandon Gallaher's account of the proposal which Bulgakov advanced for limited intercommunion between members of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius: 'Bulgakov and Intercommunion', *Sobornost* 24.2 (2002): 9–28. The theology underlying his approach can be exemplified in this extract from his magnum opus, *The Bride of the Lamb*: 'The mystery of the Church, the *Una Sancta*, is the prophetic force that even now bears witness to the unity of Christ's humankind and draws the churches to return to the Church, to become reintegrated in the ecclesial unity of the Incarnation and the Pentecost, to overcome in the confessions the spirit of confessionalism which supplants the universal unity with ecclesiastical provincialism'. Sergii Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (*Grand Rapids, MI*: Eerdmans, 2001), 292f

¹⁸ One might apply the same argument, *mutatis mutandis*, to the current Roman Catholic debate about the admission of divorced and remarried faithful to the Sacrament.

churches, and the reconciliation and integration of ministries; but it might go some way to recognizing, in each ecclesial body that might be involved, an *intention*, in its incompleteness, to *receive* the fullness of unity.

The question then becomes how we hold together such an eschatological (sacramental) perspective on unity with serious shared scrutiny of current practices in worship and witness. Many Protestants would simply say that the givenness of common baptism and the ministry of word and sacrament in every local community is all we could ever look for in terms of visible unity. But while that may be attractive in some ways (attractive not least to many Anglicans of a Protestant stripe!) the Anglican Catholic has to warn that it will remain a very inadequate account of the catholic qualities of the Eucharistic event as something addressing the particular and local on behalf of the whole identity of Christ's Body. (This is being exemplified time and again in the travails of contemporary Anglicanism).

Which brings me to a final point—the question of balancing two equally significant doctrines: on the one hand, that the fullness of Catholic identity *must be present* in any and every eucharistic community, and, on the other, that no eucharistic community *can* express the fullness of Catholic identity in a state of separation from or (especially in the world as we now experience it) ignorance of the others.

This is where the significance of the bishop enters in, as the person who stands at the convergence of these two doctrinal currents. The purely Vatican I position disrupts this by seeing episcopal authority in terms of delegation from a *single centre*, rather than arising in the celebration of the Catholic Eucharist. To my mind, the most important move, enabling a move from the Roman Catholic side towards such a balancing would be an acknowledgement that the Petrine ministry is not to be the universal bishop from whom, as it were, all episcopacy in heaven and earth is named, but (like the bishop in his own diocese) the animator and preserver of active communion between the distinct eucharistic communities of the Catholic fellowship because he is the guarantor of Jesus's teaching.¹⁹ Much of papal *practice* actually looks like that; but how much such practice has mitigated the theological formulations of *Pastor aeternus* is far less apparent.

The great vision of *Ut unum sint* (of a papacy that serves the witness and unity of different ecclesial traditions) could be fulfilled in a way barely imagined by earlier ecumenists. That is to say, not in the drawing closer together of Orthodox, Anglican or even the Protestant churches with the Roman Catholic Church; but for the papacy to become the focus and the protector of all those who in the varying traditions wish to maintain and to receive the fullness of the apostolic and catholic faith which they confess already in the creeds and the Eucharist.

¹⁹ See the final section of Rowan Williams, 'Authority and the Bishop in the Church', in Mark Santer, ed., *Their Lord and Ours: Approaches to Authority, Community, and the Unity of the Church* (London: SPCK, 1982), 90–112.

I want to end by quoting from the 1947 *Catholicity* report I mentioned at the outset, a report to the Archbishop of Canterbury from a group of eminent Anglican scholars (the emphasis here is mine):

There is one Spirit; and it is possible for there to be in diverse Churches and cultures the same wholeness or integrity of the Christian Tradition as is exemplified in the apostolic age. It is *this wholeness that has become damaged* in our divisions, and re-union means the recovery of it. The movement for the restoration of visible unity is at present endangered by the advocacy of patchwork remedies, on the part of those who have hardly seen what the problem really is. The immediate duty of Christians, therefore, is to become aware of *the loss of 'wholeness'* which characterises the present state of Christendom.²⁰

²⁰ Dix, *Catholicity* (1947), 17