

**Protestants and Catholics: Will There Be A Time That
They Reunite In The Catholic Church?**

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Ernest Justice

Introduction

Since the beginning of time people worshiped, or at least believed in gods. Whether they were monotheistic or polytheistic, they always looked to some sort of higher being to answer questions that arose in their time. The way that the people viewed their gods varied based on the time period or society that they lived in. Throughout all this time people gave different names to the different religions based on their common beliefs. If one religion disagreed with another religion, or even if people from one religion disagreed with those beliefs they stemmed away and created a brand new religion, disassociating themselves with their predecessors. This has happened many times since the beginning of time. Sometimes wars have been fought over religious beliefs, even today there are wars still happening. One commonality between all these distinctions is that all the discrepancies are between different religions. One religion this does not hold true for is Christianity. There has always been animosity between the different Christian denominations, whether they be Catholic or Protestant. A couple centuries ago the main hostility was between the Catholics and Protestants. However, now there is more unrest within Protestant denominations themselves. With Protestant denominations splitting for various theological (and non-theological) reasons, the door has been opened for some

Protestant Churches to start working their way back toward Catholicism. Is there reason to believe that Protestant Churches will come back to Catholicism, and if so, will it be any time soon?

Similarities between Catholics and Anglicans

Looking at Protestants as a whole could be a very difficult undertaking. With so many differing views from one denomination to another, it will prove almost impossible to find one universal similarity between Catholics and Protestants. Therefore, this paper will focus on the Catholic and the Anglican Church because the two Churches have been in continuous communication over various theological issues. First we will focus on the commonalities between the two and then we will look deeper into what the differences are. The biggest way that Catholics and Anglicans are connected is through the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds¹. In the Nicene Creed they both believe to be part of "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." Each of these four words distinguishes a part of Christianity. The fact that it is 'one' church promotes unity. This unity is not only for just Catholics or just Anglicans. This unity is in the Church which God has built through Christ and His followers. The fact that they both believe in a holy church is something that is overlooked sometimes and taken for granted. The definition of the word 'holy' points to the

sacredness and heavenly aspect of the church. This shows that the church is not just for the people of the earth, and when you die you are disassociated with it. It's the exact opposite. It shows that the church is something that you are a part of even after you die when you return to God in Heaven.

The next two terms are the most controversial. The word Catholic means universal or of interest to all. The exact definition that Catholics and Anglicans give to this word will be discussed later when the differences are looked at, but they both believe in the universality of the church. Finally there is the word apostolic. Both Catholics and Anglicans believe in the origin of the Church from the Apostles and their teachings. They also believe in the succession of Bishops that have succeeded from the Apostles. However, nowadays, since the Anglicans have broken away from the Catholic Church the discrepancies are where the hierarchy exists and who holds the positions of power.

The next way that Catholics and Anglicans agree on Christianity is that they both believe in the priority and authority of the Scriptures as the source of our knowledge of God². That is to say, how do we know God? With the exception of Jesus Christ there is nobody that has ever walked on Earth that could even give the image of what it's like to know and understand God. Therefore we all must look back to the sacred

texts that have been written. They are known to be the word of God, and they are our only historical reference to the ways that God has directly shown his presence here on earth.

After knowing what we can about God we also have to know that through God is the only way to be saved³. That is another point of agreement with Catholics and Anglicans. Both agree that, at the end of the day, salvation is a gift of God by His grace alone. Yes, we are all told to do good things and then we will be rewarded. Doing good things in itself though will not get us to heaven. There is nothing that we can do that will guarantee our spot in heaven. The book of Romans has many passages that support this notion. "For we have all sinned, and come short of the Glory of God"⁴. This lays the background for why we need to be saved. Every man and woman on this earth, with the exception of Jesus Christ, has sinned. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"⁵. Since we have all sinned we are all sentenced to die. However, the third word in the second half of the sentence shows that eternal life is a gift that is given to us, not something that we have earned. These two sentences provide a simple groundwork for what could be a more in depth look at how one becomes saved.

The way that Anglicans and Catholics use liturgy is another point in which they come together⁶. Both follow the traditional

ceremonial form for their services. Both the Anglican and Catholic churches incorporate scripture, prayers, affirmations, and the Eucharist into their services. This structured ceremony has been the same type of ceremony that has been practiced over the centuries. Along with what Catholics and Anglicans did in Church, they are also similar in how they practiced in Church.

One of the main ways that one worships in the liturgy is through active participation⁷. This does not mean that you are constantly doing something during the service. This means that you will sing, pray, and receive the Eucharist at the appropriate times. Everyone has a specific role, or part, in the mass and the active participation aspect means that one fulfills that role the best they can. The role of the congregation, priest, altar server, etc. are all different, and when you put them all together in the service you get the fullest worship oriented act towards God.

The next way that Catholics and Anglicans use liturgy to worship is with the importance of the sign of the cross⁸. Such a simple gesture has very sacred and important meaning. First it is the public affirmation that you believe that Jesus was crucified on the cross and suffered for us. The sign of the cross is also a confession of faith and a confession of hope. Like previously stated, it shows that you believe in the crucifixion but also that through Jesus, and through God, that

only He can save us and take us to heaven.

The final part of liturgy that will be discussed briefly that is common for Catholics and Anglicans is their posture during the service. There are three different ways that we present ourselves. We can sit, we can stand, and we can kneel. There are no concrete reasons as to why we sit during the service⁹ but there are as to why we stand and kneel. The main reason that we stand in Church is because it is the classic posture of prayer¹⁰. When you stand to pray you are looking towards God as if you were physically approaching him with your concerns and praises¹¹. Kneeling is the most controversial posture that is practiced. Some argue that since Jesus died on the cross and saved us that we must no longer kneel before Him¹². That argument is completely the reason that we should be kneeling. Kneeling is a sign of humbling yourself before someone, in this case God¹³. In the Bible when people praised God, thanked God, or even if they felt they were in the presence of God they would fall to their knees out of respect. This is the same reason that we must kneel during the service. It shows a reverence to God, the one that we are looking up to from our knees¹⁴.

Those are the main parts of the liturgy that will be touched on, but there are more parts that are held in common. The fifth part of Catholicism and Anglicanism that is similar is

that the order of Bishops is a sign of unity of the one Church of God¹⁵. This was touched briefly on earlier but there is more to it. The main thing about the order of Bishops that is important is that it is justified that this succession occurs. Although there is not one section in the Bible that says flat out that there should be a successor, it can be shown that it just seemed to happen in the Bible. In the Bible we have Peter who was more or less in charge of the Church. However, he was not in charge forever and James took over the role when Peter was no longer there, not because he had to, but because it was felt that the Church needed to have someone in charge¹⁶. Not to rule everyone, but to keep order, and to keep everyone focused on God and not on their earthy ideals.

There are a number of other similarities between the Catholic and Anglican Churches, but they do not require as much explanation of the previous ones did. Therefore they will be touched on briefly in the following categories; the use of liturgy in Church, the Church as a whole, and the review of the Church. First, connecting with the use of liturgy in the Church, there are three focal points. One is the use of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion the way that Christ instructed in Church on a regular basis. Another is that there is a unity between the word and the sacrament during the service of Holy Communion. Lastly there is the necessity for everyone to receive regular

preaching and teaching from the scriptures¹⁷. The second category deals with the Church as a whole. In this category we have that both Catholics and Anglicans recognize that the visible unity of the Church on earth is God's will. Secondly, the priesthood of the whole Church is viewed as a worshipping and praying society¹⁸. Finally, we have the last category which is the necessity of review of the Church. In this they have those that regularly review canon law and moral theology.

With all of these similarities one will wonder what is holding Anglicans and Catholics apart. They seem to have the same structure, believe in the same ideals, believe in the same God, and practice in the same ways. That is where the main purpose of this writing comes into play. What reason do two very similar Christian religions have for not coming together? Unfortunately there are just as many, if not more, differences.

Roman Catholic view of Women and the Priesthood

The first major difference that is an issue in the Catholic/Anglican split is the role that women can take in the Church. In Catholicism only men can become priests. Women can become a sister or a nun, but never a priest. There are many reasons that the Roman Catholic Church will not budge on the issue of having women priests. One reason is that the Roman Catholic Church will only ordain men is because the primary function of the priest is a sacramental symbol, not as a

minister¹⁹. In the Roman Catholic Church the sacrament comes before the ministry. Therefore it puts the action being completed at a higher priority than who is completing the action. This goes for all aspects of priesthood and the sacraments. In confession, baptism, confirmation, last rites, etc. The priest or Bishop that is performing the sacrament is merely a medium which God is using to carry out the heavenly action.

Since the priest or Bishop is used as a medium for God to do His works here on earth one could argue that God could use a female to fill that role. Simply put, that is false. For one reason Jesus is male. Not only was Jesus male, all of his apostles were male as well. This was not a coincidence, it was intentionally done. In that same sense, the reason for an all-male priesthood is that Jesus only gave the 'power' to his apostles to administer holy communion and to baptize people in His name²⁰. The whole concept of Jesus being male during that time did not make everything easier, and it did not cause Him to be more accepted by his contemporaries. It is very evident that Jesus was not accepted by the Jews throughout the Bible. Everywhere He went they tried to trick Him into breaking one of the Jewish laws so they could punish Him.

There are arguments about this dilemma that state that the Church is denying equality in human dignity among men and women.

However, how can the Church be denying equality in human dignity when it was founded for assisting people to enter into eternal union with God²¹. The Church accepts and wants to help everyone in this fulfillment. Whether or not you are male or female you are not given more privileges on the path to the ultimate goal of life with God. Just because a woman cannot become a priest doesn't mean that she is any less in the eyes of God. Holy Orders is not the only path that one can take to get to God. Also, the sacrament of Holy Orders is not a prize or an accomplishment that gives people power over others. Like stated before it is a major responsibility that assists in helping others come into union with God.

Pope John Paul II wrote a wonderful Letter to Women in 1995 explaining how important they are to the Church and that even though they cannot be ordained as priests they have many roles that only they can fulfill:

"If Christ - by his free and sovereign choice, clearly attested to by the Gospel and by the Church's constant Tradition - entrusted only to men the task of being an 'icon' of his countenance as 'shepherd' and 'bridegroom' of the Church through the exercise of the ministerial priesthood, this in no way detracts from the role of women, or for that matter from the role of the other members of the Church who are not ordained to the sacred ministry, since all share equally in the dignity proper to the 'common priesthood' based on Baptism."²²

In saying this Pope John Paul II answers the criticisms about the dignity of women that was pointed out before. He also takes it one step further and extended it to everyone else in the Church that has not been ordained. In doing this he took

the 'argument' away from the people fighting for women priests because he put them in a category that contained men, children, and others that for one reason or another cannot be ordained.

Pope John Paul II continues by explaining the role of consecrated women:

"In fact, there is present in the 'womanhood' of a woman who believes, and especially in a woman who is 'consecrated,' a kind of inherent 'prophecy,' a powerfully evocative symbolism, a highly significant 'iconic character,' which finds its full realization in Mary and which also aptly expresses the very essence of the Church as a community consecrated with the integrity of a 'virgin' heart to become the 'bride' of Christ and 'mother' of believers."²³

In this passage Pope John Paul II is announcing that one path that women can take is the 'path' that Mary was given. Women have the choice to enter into the consecrated life if they so choose. In doing so, they become a mother figure to the church. Like Mary, they hold the highest virtues and attempt to lead the purest life they can while giving to the Church and her people with an open loving heart. Lastly, Pope John Paul II explains the role of all the women in the Church, not just the consecrated women:

"Necessary emphasis should be placed on the 'genius of women,' not only by considering great and famous women of the past or present, but also those ordinary women who reveal the gift of their womanhood by placing themselves at the service of others in their everyday lives. For in giving themselves to others each day women fulfill their deepest vocation. Perhaps more than men, women acknowledge the person, because they see persons with their hearts"²⁴

This short passage has two great points. First, it states that women have an inherent vocation. Second, it states that women are better suited for 'their vocation' than a man would

be. The question then becomes what is their vocation. However, that would take us too far from the original focus of this thesis so that question will be left there to ponder.

Roman Catholic view on Marriage and Divorce

The next difference that will be explored is the sacrament of marriage and the view on divorce. First the notion that marriage is a sacrament must be addressed. If marriage was not a sacrament in the Roman Catholic Church then, like many protestant churches, the issue of divorce would not have as much importance. Before we even acknowledge that marriage is a sacrament, we must determine what a sacrament is and why it is important.

"Most Catholics see the sacraments as rituals which must be performed..."²⁵. If you view a sacrament as just a ritual then it can be something as meaningless as putting your pants on before you go to work. That is a 'ritual' that you must do every day. That is why a sacrament is more than a ritual, it is a visible sign of God's saving action and covenant of love, fidelity, and commitment²⁶. Since we now know what a sacrament is we can determine why marriage is a sacrament.

Since marriage is a sacrament that means that it is not a ritual. Nowadays many people see marriage as being something that you do, something that is just a motion that validates living together and starting a family. People get married for

many reasons. Some do it because it will please their parents. Others get married to keep the family tradition of getting married. Even others get married because they want to see themselves in a majestic church wedding²⁷. These reasons do not pertain to only the non-religious. These same reasons are why some Protestants and even some Catholics get married. While these may be the reasons, they are not the reasons that the Roman Catholic Church says to be married.

For Catholics marriage is more than a contract between two people. It is a covenant between a man and a woman that is described in the scriptures²⁸. In the Old Testament Hosea says this about the marriage covenant: "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness and you will acknowledge the Lord"²⁹. This is one of the first passages that talks about the covenant made between the man and the woman. The first part of verse 19 states flat out that marriage is forever. Only after it was stated that marriage was forever did the other virtues get mentioned.

In the New Testament Jesus also affirms the permanency of marriage³⁰. "[Jesus says], therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate"³¹. This passage has two important qualities. First that it is God who brings two people together in marriage. Like I mentioned before, the priest that

performs the marriage ceremony is only a medium that God uses to bless and sanctify the marriage. That leads us to the second part. The verse ends with, "let man not separate." This means that in this instance if a priest were to issue a divorce that God would not be the one performing the action, therefore the action of divorce would not be blessed by God.

More recently the Second Vatican Council shifted the Catholic understanding of marriage in four ways. First, marriage is not a contract but a community of life and love. Second, the procreation of children is not always more important than the mutual love of husband and wife. Third, marriage is a lifelong journey of conversion and mutual growth. Fourth, marriage is a sacrament, and this implies faith, a sign of the church's unity and witness to the presence of Christ³².

One last opinion on the topic of marriage is what Pope John Paul II says about it, in particular, regarding the indissolubility of the marriage. "The good of indissolubility is the good of marriage; and the lack of understanding of its indissoluble character constitutes the lack of understanding of the essence of marriage"³³. This here could be a good reason as to why people file for divorce. From the beginning they did not understand what they were committing to and because of that they don't understand the sacredness of it. However, the late Pope goes on to say that any couple that actually takes to heart what

the priests tell them about marriage will grasp the meaning of the indissoluble marriage. Now that there is a background on the Catholic view on marriage we can take a look at what the Roman Catholic Church has to say about divorce.

We will start this by looking at what the Bible has to say about divorce. It was already shown what Jesus had to say about the permanence of marriage in Mark. If you move ahead a few verses it is shown what Jesus has to say about divorce. "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery"³⁴. This verse demonstrates the significance of marriage and not getting a divorce. Nowhere in the Bible did it say that a divorce was *impossible*. This is a mistake that many make when looking at the scriptures. Instead they say how it is not what is intended, and that the text on divorce is a moral teaching, not a juridical status³⁵. However, in getting a divorce you are not only breaking a lifelong promise through a sacrament, you are also breaking one of the Ten Commandments that God gave Moses (the commandment not to commit adultery).

In today's society the breaking of a commandment does not deter someone as much as it would have two thousand years ago. What then does the Church do that demonstrates the severity of someone getting a divorce? The main punishment that the Church

delivers to someone who divorces and *remarries* is that they are not welcome to receive Holy Communion any more³⁶. This sounds very harsh, but at the same time the person, by breaking their covenant with their husband or wife also broke their covenant with God. This does not mean that they are to be exiled from the Church, but they feel neither accepted or rejected³⁷. The Church should, and does still reach out to those that have been divorced. The Church understands that even though one cannot still receive the Eucharist, they can still come and be part of the word, be in the presence of God, and learn more about Him³⁸.

The Roman Catholic Church talks a lot about marriage and how it is sacred and meant for two believers. However they do not talk a lot about divorce because they have one unbending stance. They do not permit remarriage in the Church after divorce. This strict position towards divorce is what will be disagreed with by the Anglican Church a little later.

Roman Catholic view of the Sacraments

The third topic of discrepancy between the Catholic and Anglican Churches is what constitutes a sacrament and exactly how many sacraments there are. This question could not be definitively answered by any Catholic until the Council of Trent. Until that time there were questions as to how many sacraments there actually were. However, after the Council of Trent the Roman Catholic Church adopted the seven sacraments

that it holds to till this day³⁹. What a sacrament is has already been defined so we will start by defining what the sacraments are.

The first three sacraments that we will look at all have their roots in the Bible. The sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion, and confession are all found in the Bible. The act of baptism is found many times in the Gospels⁴⁰. In these accounts John was baptizing in the Jordan River and Jesus came to be baptized by him. It is in these passages that John said "I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"⁴¹. The second sacrament that has biblical roots is found in the Gospels again⁴². In these three accounts Jesus is having the Passover feast with his disciples and this is the meal which he broke the bread and gave the wine. The third and final sacrament that can be found in the Bible is confession. In the book of John, Jesus breathes on his disciples and gives them the ability to forgive sins⁴³. These are the only three sacraments that are found in the Bible. One note however, none of these were actually called sacraments in the Bible at any time.

The first two sacraments mentioned, baptism and Holy Communion, are the only two that most Christian religions believe are necessary for salvation. The next five some believe in, others do not, but as for Catholics, they believe in the next five as signs of God's grace as well. The rest of the

Roman Catholic sacraments are marriage, confession, confirmation, holy orders, and last rites. Let's take a look as to why the Roman Catholic Church views all seven of these as sacraments.

The sacrament of marriage will not be addressed in this section because it was addressed earlier in this paper. First we have the sacrament of baptism. "Through this sacrament one is born into the divine life; through the ministry of the church, whose motherhood is symbolized by the regenerating water"⁴⁴. At birth you are unable to fully understand what this sacrament means. However, it covers you with God's grace and is the first outward sign of your life beginning in Christ.

The next sacrament, confirmation, completes baptism. Like baptism it draws the recipient closer to God, but this time it is a personal decision to come closer to God. Through confirmation the Holy Spirit once again comes down and it strengthens the recipient's faith and his power to bear witness to Christ⁴⁵.

After being confirmed into the Roman Catholic Church you are ready to accept Christ through the sacrament of the Eucharist. Through this sacrament you are incorporating Christ into your life, spiritually, and physically. The Eucharist is also something that everyone shares together which is a way of showing unity in the Church⁴⁶.

The next sacrament is confession. It is fulfilled in two ways; publicly during each mass and also privately with a priest. Confession allows someone to come before Christ, admit that he has sinned, and ask for forgiveness.

The fifth sacrament is holy orders. Through this sacrament a man is ordained to the priesthood to carry out the commands of Christ. This sacrament gives a man the insight into what that soul of a priest should be. The man then becomes a servant to the people in his obedience to Jesus Christ. He also must give up everything that is not related to his service to God and man⁴⁷. Women can also receive Holy Orders when they make a commitment to the celibate life and become a sister.

The final sacrament is last rites. This is the same as the anointing of the sick. This sacrament is meant to heal and strengthen the one being anointed. It consecrates them and delivers the sick person's soul from sin. It is a final cleansing so that one may go onto fellowship with the angels and the saints⁴⁸.

Those are the seven sacraments that are honored in the Roman Catholic Church. These seven sacraments are the outward signs that Catholics believe are ways that God reveals Himself in our lives. Another one of these sacraments leads us to our next topic of discussion. The sacrament of holy orders resurfaces, but this time it does not have to deal with women

wanting to be ordained.

Catholic View of Homosexuality and the Priesthood

The men that are ordained to become priests or even Bishops are holy men in the church that are meant to resemble Jesus. Jesus was never married; therefore a priest cannot be married. Jesus was a teacher; therefore a priest is a teacher. Jesus was not a homosexual; therefore a priest cannot be a homosexual. Before we look at the stance of the Roman Catholic Church in regards to ordaining a homosexual man to the priesthood or even to become a Bishop, let us discover their stance on homosexuals in general.

The book of Leviticus has two passages that oppose homosexual activity. The first passage is chapter 18 verse 22; "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable." The second verse is in chapter 20 verse 13; "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them has done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood on their own heads." Two times in the same book were homosexual acts condemned. The second verse even stated that homosexual activity should be punished by the ultimate punishment.

Moving away from the biblical standpoint on the issue of homosexuality we then look into what the view on homosexuality is today. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has this to say about homosexuality. "Tradition has always declared that

'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.' They are contrary to the natural law... Under no circumstances can they be approved"⁴⁹. While the Catechism is the Catholic manual of laws, rules, or moral clarifications, some people try and invalidate what it is trying to teach us. Since the Catechism says that homosexuals suffer a disorder, homosexuals claim that it stigmatizes them and denies them their legitimate rights. However, the Catechism is not there to stigmatize. In using the word disordered it only renders a man unfit for ordination. Therefore, homosexuals should not be ordained or admitted to seminaries for priestly training⁵⁰.

Outside of the Bible and the Catechism there are many varying views on homosexuality in the Church today. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger wrote a letter to Catholic Bishops in 1986 on this issue. In this letter he stated that "homosexual activity prevents one's own fulfillment and happiness by acting contrary to the creative wisdom of God"⁵¹. When God made the Earth He made it with certain moral laws which acts of homosexuality violates. In the letter Cardinal Ratzinger also mentions homosexuals and marriage. "The Church... celebrates the divine plan of the loving and life-giving union of men and women in the sacrament of marriage. It is only in the marital relationship that the use of sexual faculty can be morally good"⁵². This statement touches on two aspects of the Church. First, that

sexual relations are only moral inside marriage and second that marriage is meant for man and woman, not man and man, or woman and woman. Therefore, homosexuality is always an immoral practice because two homosexuals cannot be married in the Church since that would be against God's will.

Another voice against the ordination of homosexual priests is Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua. In April 2002 he said, "We feel a person who is homosexual-oriented is not a suitable candidate for the priesthood, even if he had never committed any homosexual act"⁵³. This is in response to the frequently made link between homosexuality and pedophilia. Cardinal Bevilacqua's statement came out at the time of the sexual-abuse crisis but was not directed just at the priests and Bishops that have been accused. The statement, like the documents before it, stated that in homosexuals in general should not be ordained. The documents do not single out only active homosexuals, but men who have homosexual tendencies on the whole.

The previous statements state as to why it is not theologically acceptable for homosexuals to be ordained. It is known that there are already numerous homosexuals ordained into the priesthood at this time. As long as homosexual priests keep silent about their homosexuality then everything seems to run smoothly. However, there are problems and consequences when a priest comes out and announces that he is a homosexual. In an

article by Cindy Wooden, Cardinal-designate William J Levada discusses this topic. Levada first states that when a priest admits to being homosexual it makes it difficult for the people of the Church to view him as representing Christ. Not only does it make it difficult for the people in the Church to recognize the priests' representation of Christ, it also puts into question the ability of the priest to know what his role in the Church is. Does he not understand that being homosexual, whether open about it or not, is openly going against God's will? An openly homosexual priest makes it very difficult for the congregation to listen to him preach on love, marriage, and the family because of the negative attention that he has cast upon himself⁵⁴.

The issue of homosexual priests and women being ordained are two controversial topics in the Roman Catholic Church at this time. However, even with all the controversy that surrounds these two topics the Roman Catholic Church's view is unchanging. This shows that the Catholic Church stands the test of time and is not a Church that will conform to societal standards of a given historical moment. That is not true for the Anglican Church however.

Anglican View of Women in the Priesthood

The Anglican Church wants to be reformed, yet at the same time Catholic. As the previous four sections displayed, to be

Catholic is to not be reformed. The Anglican Church wants to keep up with the changing times, but the more that they strive to do that the further they move away from the true Catholic Church's mission. This first view has to deal with the ordination of women priests. The Catholics and Anglicans keep regular dialogue between each other to discuss matters of the Church. In an article by John L. Allen Jr. one of those dialogues is brought into light. The Anglican Church had wanted to ordain women for a while, but because they wanted to keep their Catholic identity they did not allow the ordination of women. However, in 1991, the Vatican gave a response to a dialogue between the two Churches stating that they would not ordain women priests. In light of this response the Anglican Church decided in 1992 that they would allow the ordination of women priests⁵⁵.

In 2006 Bishops in the Anglican Church of Wales decided to look into allowing the ordination of women into the Episcopate⁵⁶. They decided that it has been over ten years since they have been allowed to be ordained as priests and thought it was time to look into making women Bishops.

The act ordaining women as both priests and Bishops goes strictly against what the Catholic Church believes. In the Catholic Church there were a couple times that women were ordained as priests, however those women were immediately

excommunicated. How can a Church that wants to be Catholic flat out defy a major teaching that the Roman Catholic Church teaches?

However, there are not only problems between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church in regards to this topic. Inside the Anglican Church as well there is discrepancy. The Anglican Church did not vote for the ordination of women priests until 1992. However, even before the Vatican's response in 1991 there were Episcopal (The Anglican Church in the United States) churches that have already been ordaining women⁵⁷. Also, the evolution of women to the episcopacy is controversial within the world Anglican Church. At this time, the Anglican Church in Wales is still deciding whether or not to ordain women to the Episcopate. However, the Anglican Church's in Aotearoa/New Zealand/Polynesia, Canada, and the United States have already ordained women Bishops⁵⁸. That means that there are different churches in the Anglican Communion that disagree or even disobey their teachings. This is not the only issue in which this has occurred.

Anglican View on Marriage and Divorce

The Anglican view on divorce was a topic of discussion at the Lambeth Conference in 1958. At that conference there were 310 Anglican Bishops from 46 countries⁵⁹. In 1958 their view on divorce was that of the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglican

Communion in Britain was very firm about not allowing remarriage in the Church⁶⁰. However, as time progressed so did their view on divorce. In the Anglicans constant struggle to keep up with the changing times, they eventually changed their stance on divorce.

In 1981 the Church of England had over 75% of the votes to allow divorce and remarriage in the church under certain circumstances⁶¹. However, the Anglican Church never officially stated what the circumstances were to be. They left this decision up to each priest's interpretation. In doing so nearly 1/6th of all Anglican Weddings in 1999 involved at least one divorced person⁶².

There are a couple problems with allowing the priest to make individual decisions about any issue in the church. First, it allows members of the church to find a priest that will sympathize for their cause and remarry them even though they could have went to numerous priests before that denied the remarriage. Second, it shows that there is little order in the church. One of the reasons that there are so many discrepancies in the Anglican Church is because there is not enough structure. However, when they do have some sense of structure, they change it to fit the times that we are living in.

Anglican View on the Sacraments

Out of the four topics discussed in this paper this is

probably the least different as far as opinions between Anglicans and Catholics are concerned. Like Roman Catholics, Anglicans agree that there are seven sacraments. However, like it was mentioned earlier in the paper Anglicans only believe that baptism and Holy Communion are necessary for salvation. Around the time of the reformation the protestant churches were claiming that the Roman Catholic sacramental system was an invention centered on superstition⁶³. Therefore, the other five sacraments are recognized by the Anglicans, but they are merely termed as sacraments and not held in as high regard as the first two⁶⁴. In Peter Kreeft's article he says flat out that Protestants do not believe in the seven sacraments because all seven are not specifically named in scripture⁶⁵. He does not specify exactly which protestant denominations that this refers to, but it does have a similar tone as to the Anglican view on the sacraments.

Another viewpoint on the sacraments is found back in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One Anglican theologian of that time, Richard Hooker, had this to say about sacraments. "Sacraments are a part of 'the overall divine structure that allows humans to find union in the divine... For we take not baptisme nor the Eucharist for bare resemblances or memorialls of thinges absent..."⁶⁶. In saying this Hooker in no way mentions any of the other sacraments. He mentions both baptism and the

Eucharist as what is important as far as sacraments go.

Anglican View on Homosexuality

Along with Anglican's allowing women to become priests, homosexuality is another very heated, very controversial topic that Anglicans and Roman Catholics disagree on. Not only is homosexuality a heated topic between Catholics and Anglicans, it is also a heated topic among Anglicans themselves. This is probably the most divisive topic that Anglican Bishops, priests, and even lay people have to deal with.

First we will look at how the Anglican view differs from the Catholic view on homosexuality. What is written about the Anglican view on homosexuality is different than what some Anglicans' practice in regards to homosexuality. They say that homosexual practice is incompatible with scripture⁶⁷. While that is their official stance there is a lot of discrepancy in the Church as to what is actually going on.

The reason for a lot of upheaval in the Anglican Church is that in 2003 the Episcopal Church in the United States voted to approve the consecration of the first openly gay Bishop⁶⁸. This had a huge impact on all the members in the Anglican Communion. There were numerous churches throughout Africa, Asia, and South America that were outraged by this ordination. Many of those churches have actually threatened to leave the Anglican Communion if the ordination of the openly gay Bishop remained

intact.

What gave the Episcopal Church in the United States the right to make a decision of this magnitude on their own? The Archbishop of Canterbury's response seemed pretty tame. He said that the changing of a church teaching and practice should not be undertaken by one church in the Anglican Communion alone. He said that it is something that they should have come together and aimed for a consensus, either way, on the topic before any church made that kind of decision⁶⁹.

However, having an openly gay man ordained to become a Bishop is not the only homosexual controversy that is going on in the Anglican Church. Around May 28, 2003 the Anglican Bishop on New Westminster in Canada presided over and blessed the first Anglican same-sex marriage⁷⁰. If electing openly homosexual Bishops was not enough for the Anglican Communion to deal with, they now had another Bishop take the teaching and practices into his own hands by consummate a same-sex marriage.

This infuriated many Anglican Bishops around the globe. One went as far to say that Bishop Ingham (the Bishop that presided over the same-sex marriage) should not be invited to the 10-year council of Anglican Bishops because he is 'outside the flock'⁷¹. Others, like Rev. Rod Thomas, called for the expulsion of the entire New Westminster diocese if they did not reverse the decision⁷². What Rev. Thomas called for was

discipline. He was arguing that if nothing was done about this action that goes against the teaching of the Anglican Communion that it would allow other Bishops to make their own decisions about matters that they personally disagree with.

The homosexuality issue regarding openly gay Bishops and same-sex marriage is engendering harmful effects on the Anglican Church. The most harmful effect that this could have on the church is a schism between the Anglican Church and the Episcopalian Churches in Canada and the United States⁷³. There are some that are not opposed to that action. Bishop Stephen Charleston, president of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, comments, "Yes, I would accept schism. I would be willing to accept being told I'm not in communion with places like Nigeria if it meant I could continue to be in a position of justice and morality. If... I'm not considered a part of a flawed communion, so be it"⁷⁴. On February 21, 2007 there were already 15 churches in the United States that have voted to separate from the Episcopal Church⁷⁵.

This issue puts the Anglican Communion in an awkward situation. Although they meet regularly for reform, they have rogue diocese that are taking matters into their own hands. Next year in 2008 the Anglican Communion will once again come together at the Lambeth Conference. It will not be until then that we will find out how the Anglican Communion will change,

and what they will do in the future about such controversial issues.

Protestant Disorder

The previous four sections have given only a simple glance at the Anglican Church. On the issues of sacraments, homosexuality, women, and marriage the Anglicans cannot agree. They have a hierarchical system of Bishops, yet they do not have a belief system that is uniform for all the churches in the Anglican Communion. How is it that a Church with nearly 77 million followers can have so many differences in its teachings? True, the Archbishop of Canterbury is the figurehead of the Church, but there are Anglican Bishops all over the world that ignore, or flat out disregard what he advises them to teach.

One of the reasons for the reformation in the sixteenth century was because there was unrest in the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestants split away and created their own churches. To them this seemed like a good idea at the time. They got to interpret the Scriptures the way that they wanted to and had the ability to teach how they saw fit. For the most part they still believe in the main foundations of Christianity. Most Protestant denominations believe in the Trinity, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. For them, belief in these intrinsic qualities of Christianity is all that mattered to them.

As time passed, the ever lengthening roll of new protestant denominations wandered even a greater distance from their roots. What seemed like a good idea five hundred years ago in breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church has turned into the reason that many churches do not survive, or hold animosity towards each other. Each Church wants to be the 'true church' in the sense that the way that they teach about and worship God is the 'right way.' With this mindset the church is losing its original focus in helping people to get to know God and bring them to Christ.

Inability for Immediate Catholic and Anglican Reunification

This paper has looked into only four of the differences that separate the two Churches. There are numerous other differences, not as major as these four that will keep the two Churches from coming together. The Anglican Communion has tried to maintain a close bond to their Roman Catholic roots, but it is apparent that they too are distancing themselves from the original Church. With all the talk of the Anglican Communion breaking apart you can only imagine what is going to be left of the original Catholic ties fifty years from now.

There have been a few good steps that some of the members of the Anglican Communion have taken towards communion with the Catholic Church. Witnessing the outrage that most of the African, Asian, and South American Anglican Church's have had

against the ordination of the openly gay Bishop and the consecration of the same-sex marriage is promising for future talks with the Roman Catholic Church. Also their acknowledgement of the seven sacraments and some sense of apostolic succession is helpful as well, even though neither are exactly the way that the Roman Catholic Church teach.

If the Anglican Communion does break apart, chances for the traditional Anglican's and Catholics to come together will increase. While the North American and European Anglican Churches follow the trends of society, the Anglican Church in Africa, Asia, and South America want to hold fast to their Catholic heritage.

Conclusion

This paper has explored various aspects of the Christian religion. It has looked at some very controversial topics from both the Roman Catholic and the Anglican standpoint. Both the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans look at Scripture for most of their guidance, but it is in their interpretations that they differ. With the Roman Catholic standpoint on all the views they have two thousand years of background to look back on. In general, the Roman Catholic teaching has been steadfast and even in the changing times it has not budged to become more appealing to individuals' ever-changing societal views.

As for the Anglican Church, their reformed mindset has

hindered them. When their leaders cannot agree on fundamental issues, problems are bound to arise. When a Bishop decides to make decisions on his own there is talk amongst the Bishops as to what should be done. There is no set guideline as to what the repercussions should be. This stirs up controversy among the Bishops on both sides of the issue. Along those same lines there is no set guideline that they follow and keep updated regularly. They use the Book of Common Prayer, but that does not answer all the questions that one might have about certain topics.

The difference between Anglicans and Roman Catholics is the smallest split between the Roman Catholic Church and any Protestant denomination. While there is a small number of Anglican Churches that are growing further from Catholicism, there is still a greater number that wants to hold onto their Catholic background. As for now, unity between the two Churches does not seem immediately possible. However, nothing is impossible, and in the future we might see some parts of the Anglican Communion reuniting with the Roman Catholic Church.

¹ Toon, Peter. The Anglican Way: Evangelical and Catholic. (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow Co): 68.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Romans (3:29).

⁵ Romans (6:23).

⁶ Toon. 68.

⁷ Razingner, Joseph Cardinal. The Spirit of the Liturgy. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000): 171.

⁸ Ibid. 177.

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- ⁹ Ibid. 197.
- ¹⁰ Ibid. 195.
- ¹¹ Ibid. 197.
- ¹² Ibid. 185.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. 197.
- ¹⁵ Toon. 68.
- ¹⁶ Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. Called to Communion. (San Francisco, Ignatius): 67.
- ¹⁷ Toon. 68-69.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. 69.
- ¹⁹ Madigan, Janet Holl. "Understanding the All-Male Priesthood" (New Oxford Review): 25.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Campion, Msgr. Owen F. "Why only men are called to holy orders." (Our Sunday Visitor): 10.
- ²² John Paul II, Pope. "Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women."
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Miranda, Ida Iris. Undoing the "I Do". (San Jose: Resource): 7.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Campion, Msgr. Owen F. "Divorce and Eucharist." (Our Sunday Visitor): 18.
- ²⁸ Miranda. 8.
- ²⁹ Exodus (2:19-20).
- ³⁰ Miranda. 9.
- ³¹ Mark (10: 9).
- ³² Miranda. 17.
- ³³ John Paul II, Pope. "Address of John Paul II to the Prelate Auditors, Officials, and Advocates of the Tribunal of the Roman ROTA."
- ³⁴ Mark (10:11-12).
- ³⁵ Wrenn, Lawrence. "Marriage - Indissoluble or Fragile?" (New Your: Newman): 135.
- ³⁶ Campion. "Divorce and Eucharist." 18.
- ³⁷ Rue, James J. Ph.D. The Divorced Catholic. (New York: Paulist): 45.
- ³⁸ Campion. "Divorce and Eucharist." 18.
- ³⁹ Piault, Bernard. What is a Sacrament. (New York: Hawthorn): 125.
- ⁴⁰ Matthew (3), Mark (1), John (1), Luke (3).
- ⁴¹ Mark (1:8).
- ⁴² Matthew (26), Mark (14), John(6).
- ⁴³ John (20: 22-23).
- ⁴⁴ Piault. 93.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid. 94.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid. 95.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. 94.
- ⁴⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church. (Vatican City): #2357.
- ⁵⁰ Whitehead, Kenneth D. "Homosexuality: Is the Catholic Church Guilty of Discrimination?" (Linacre Quarterly): 218.
- ⁵¹ Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons: 7
- ⁵² Ibid. 6.
- ⁵³ Thomas, Gerard. "A Gay Priest Speaks Out." (Commonweal): 1.
- ⁵⁴ Wooden, Cindy. "Levada: Difficulty for openly gay priests to represent Christ." (National Catholic Reporter): 9.

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- ⁵⁵ Allen Jr., John L. "Anglican ordination of women hastened by Vatican document." (National Catholic Reporter): 1.
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- ⁵⁸ Church of Wales. 2.
- ⁵⁹ Bodoyere, Michael de la. "Anglican Bishops on Marriage and Birth Control." (The Catholic World): 2.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid. 3.
- ⁶¹ "Church of England to Permit Remarriage." (Christian Century): 1.
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- ⁶³ Martos, Joseph. Doors to the Sacred. (New York: Triumph): 80.
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- ⁶⁸ Seltser, Barry Jay. "Episcopalian Crisis." (Commonweal): 11.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Petre, Jonathan. "First Anglican 'gay wedding' infuriates traditionalists." (Telegraph): 1.
- ⁷¹ Ibid.
- ⁷² Ibid. 2.
- ⁷³ "Anglican Gay Divide Widens." (CBS News): 1.
- ⁷⁴ Cooperman. 1.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.

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Put a Catholic and Protestant Bible side by side and you'll notice the Catholic Bible has 7 books in the Old Testament that the Protestant Bible doesn't. Protestants claim that Catholics added books to the Bible; but in fact, it was Martin Luther who cut books out of the Bible. There was a catholic priest, and two ministers from two different reformed churches. One Sunday one of the ministers was leading and preaching and the other Sunday the catholic priest or the other minister and sometimes there was a guest. As for individual Protestants, they are coming into the Church daily and especially as we approach Easter, every Catholic Church will be celebrating the Rites of Acceptance of Candidates (validly baptized Protestants) and the baptism of unbaptized converts. Catholics believe in faith and works. You hear Protestants and Catholics say this all the time. But is it accurate? Following the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church held an ecumenical council in the Italian city of Trent to deal with the theological questions that were being debated. The Council of Trent issued the Decree on Justification (DJ), which set forth the Catholic position on the subject. In the heat of the times, Protestant leaders painted the Council of Trent as a great villain that simply reiterated the Church's false teachings and its false gospel. That characterization is still found today in a lot of Protestant literature on the subject. But if you read what Trent says, you find it a Catholics and Protestants have a different view on the nature of the church. The word "catholic" means "all-embracing," and the Catholic Church sees itself as the only true church worldwide, under the leadership of the pope. In contrast, the Protestant Churches which have emerged from Reformation, also called "Evangelical," which means "according to the Gospel," do not make up one united Church. There are rather several tens of thousands of different denominations around the world. Non-Catholics may not participate in Communion. In the Protest Church, every baptized person is invited to share and is allowed to lead the Lord's Supper. This approach is not accepted by Catholics. Additionally, Eucharist has a different meaning for Catholics and Protestants. Catholic-Protestant relations refers to the socio-political and theological relations and dialogue between the Catholics and Protestants. This relationship began in the 15th century with the beginning of the reformation and thereby Protestantism. A number of factors contributed to the Protestant Reformation. Namely, disagreement on the nature of salvation and by extension a number of doctrines including the sale of indulgences and more. These disputes led to a schism whereby Protestants chose to split While Catholicism teaches that only the Catholic Church can properly interpret the Bible, Protestants believe that the Bible teaches God sent the Holy Spirit to indwell all born-again believers, enabling all believers to understand the message of the Bible. Protestants distinguish between the one-time act of justification (when we are declared righteous by God based on our faith in Christ's atonement on the cross) and the process of sanctification (the development of righteousness that continues throughout our lives on earth). While Protestants recognize that works are important, they believe they are the result or fruit of salvation but never the means to it. A fourth major difference between Catholics and Protestants has to do with what happens after death.