

December 13th, 2012

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

This morning we continue our study of the 39 Articles of Religion. Last week we departed from our norm with a short teaching on Prayer and Fasting as I made the call to the diocese to pray and fast on Fridays in Advent asking God's favor in the lawsuits. We are in that section of the Articles about the life of the church and specifically the sacraments. Article 27 dealt with Baptism and article 28 deals with Holy Eucharist aka the Lord's Supper. I should mention at the outset that books have been written on this article and the doctrine of the Eucharist I cannot, in the space provided address all the issues but rather give an overview of the Article. Article 28 read: *"The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves, one to another, but rather it is [also] a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: to those who rightly, worthily, and with faith receive it, the bread that we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of bread and wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Scripture, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthrowes the nature of a Sacrament, and has given occasion to many superstitions. The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means by which the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped."*

The issues raised in Article 28 are a direct response to what had come to be understood as abuses of the Roman Catholic Church. By abuse I mean to say that the church had taken practice and ritual beyond the scope of scripture and into the realm of superstition.

The first and primary issue is *Transubstantiation* - or the belief that in the consecration of the elements the bread and wine literally become the physical body and blood of Jesus though maintaining the outward appearance of bread and wine. This led to the teaching of the "sacrifice of the mass" and the belief that Jesus was sacrificed every time that the Lord's Supper was or is celebrated. The problem here is that this idea is contrary to scripture which states that Jesus' sacrifice was a once for all event... **"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."** (Hebrews 10:10 ESV) This idea of a repeated sacrifice led to the false idea that Jesus atoned repeatedly for our sins.



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In addition, two other errors arose from the doctrine of transubstantiation...first, that one must receive the Lord's body and blood to be cleansed of sin each week. If in the intervening time if one would die unexpectedly having missed communicating then the issue of the souls salvation was at risk. Secondly, was the idea that being the literal body and blood of Christ it was so holy as only to be viewed by the common man and to be received by the priest. This was known as "ocular" communion - that to look upon the sacrament was sufficient. In 1549 those who opposed Archbishop Cranmer wrote: *"We will have the Sacrament to hang over the high altar, there to be worshipped and only to be delivered to the lay people at Easter, and then only in one kind."* *"We will have the Mass in Latin, as was before, and celebrated by the priest without any man or woman communicating with him."* (Carter, *The English Church and the Reformation*, p. 127.)

Both of these ideas are contrary to the teaching and practice of the Apostles and the early church where the common practice was to receive communion weekly when the church gathered...***"On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight."*** (Acts 20:7 ESV) Luke writing about the ministry of Paul simply states that the norm was to gather on the first day of the week (Sunday) to break bread together as the body of Christ.

For many of us today a second controversial part of this article is the last sentence which can be understood as a prohibition against the reservation of the sacrament or taking it to the sick or being maintained in a monstrance.

I believe Archbishop Cranmer and the English Reformers recognized the presence of Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist making it more than a memorial but less than the literal body and blood. This became known as the doctrine of Consubstantiation - that Christ is mystically present in the sacrament meaning that the elements are both the body and blood of Christ while maintaining all the properties of bread and wine. Thus while Jesus did not specifically say that the elements were to be reserved or carried about to the sick he also did not forbid it, neither did the early church as we know that deacons would take the elements from the assembly to those who were infirm.

We have such treasure in the Anglican Church with our understanding of the Holy Eucharist. It was that mystical presence of Christ that first quickened my heart when I first received, having been baptized but not a believer. It was the moment that I came home - home to Christ - home to the Church - HOME!

A blessed week to you all!

[December 2012 Edition of The San Joaquin Anglican](#)

Check this edition of the San Joaquin Anglican
for current news of the Diocese!

[Diocesan Calendar](#)

Check the Diocesan Calendar for information on upcoming events!

December 14th - 15th - Men's Retreat in Spanish @ ECCO

December 15th - Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.

December 16th - St. Andrew's in Mariposa

December 17-19th - Youth Commission Retreat @ECCO

December 23rd - St. Nicholas in Atwater

January 19th - Anglican 4th Day @10a.m. St. Paul's, Bakersfield

January 27th - Bishop @ St. Paul's in Bakersfield

February 1st - 2nd - Little Brothers & Sisters of Sacrifice Winter
Retreat & Joint Vestry Retreat with the Bishop (Both @ ECCO)

February 8th-9th - Joint Vestry Retreat with the Bishop @ECCO

February 15th-18th - Anglican 4th Day Retreat @ECCO

April 29th - May 1st - Clergy Conference