



Meeting of the Disciples of Christ-Catholic International Commission for Dialogue

23-27 June 2018



The sixth and final session of the fifth phase of the International Commission for dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Disciples of Christ took place in Green Bay (WI, USA) from 23 to 27 June 2018 under the pastoral guidance of the Catholic Co-moderator, Bishop David L. Ricken. This meeting was dedicated to the finalisation of the report entitled "Christians Formed and Transformed by the Eucharist", which is currently being revised in view of its publication.

CATHOLICS AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST COMMISSION FOR DIALOGUE PRESS RELEASE

Green Bay, WI, USA, 23-27 June 2018

The Sixth and Final Session of the Fifth Phase of the Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue took place in Green Bay, WI, USA, from the 23th to 27th of June 2018. This session was devoted to completing the final Report on the topic "Christians Formed and Transformed by the Eucharist". The Disciples Co-Chair of the Dialogue is Rev. Dr. Newell Williams, President of Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University [TCU], Fort Worth, TX, USA. The Catholic Co-Chair of the Dialogue is the Most Reverend David L. Ricken, Bishop of Green Bay, WI, USA.

The dialogue developed according to the following process: after an introductory meeting (Nashville, TN, USA, January 2014); the Commission approached the topics related to what it means to be "Formed by the Eucharist," discussing "The Structure of Liturgies among Catholics and Disciples" (Rome, Italy, June 2014) and "The Significance of Eucharistic Catechesis - 'Knowing by Doing' " (Bethany, WV, USA, 2015). The following two meetings were devoted to topics related to "Christians Being Transformed by the Eucharist," focusing on the general theme "The Eucharist and Relationships within the Church." (Calgary, Canada, 2016), and "Living the Sacraments" (Bayamón, Puerto Rico, 2017). The goal of the dialogue, which started in 1977, is full visible unity between the two communions.

Developing work done by a drafting group, the session in Green Bay was devoted to finalizing the Report of this Fifth phase of Dialogue. Each day of the dialogue began and concluded with common prayer led alternately by Disciples and Catholics. The Commission also attended the Sunday Eucharist at the Cathedral of St. Francis Xavier of the Diocese of Green Bay, followed by an exchange with Diocesan officers and staff. The Commission expresses its deep appreciation for the welcome and hospitality extended by the Diocese.

At the end of the meeting, the Disciples' Co-Chair, Dr. Williams affirmed, "We have discovered that despite differences in practice, Disciples and Catholics both experience in their celebrations of the Eucharist an encounter with the crucified and risen Christ that both forms and transforms them for their mission of witness and service."

In reflecting on this meeting, Bishop Ricken shared, "It has been a real privilege to host here in Green Bay the International Dialogue between the Disciples of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church. We have come to a much deeper understanding of the similarities and the differences between our celebrations and understandings of the legacy that our Lord Jesus gave us at the Last Supper. We have experienced real and mutual understanding as we have listened deeply to the other and agreed (or agreed to disagree) on any given item. We have finished our proposal for the Report to those who have given us this charge."

The Commission members from the Disciples of Christ are: Rev. Dr. Newell Williams, Brite Divinity School, TCU, Fort Worth, TX, USA, Co-Chair; Rev. Dr. Robert Welsh, Council on Christian Unity, Indianapolis, IN, USA; Rev. Dr. Thomas Best, Belmont, MA, USA; Rev. Dr. Merryl Blair, Stirling Theological College, University of Divinity, Melbourne, Australia; Rev. Dr. James O. Duke, Brite Divinity School, TCU, Fort Worth, TX, USA (unable to attend); Rev. Angel Luis Rivera, LAC Office, Global Ministries, Indiana/Puerto Rico; and Rev. Dr. David M. Thompson, Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge, UK.

The Commission members from the Catholic Church are: Most Reverend David L. Ricken, Bishop of Green Bay, WI, USA, Co-Chair; Rev. Msgr. Juan Usma Gómez, Bureau Chief of Western Section, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican City/Colombia, Co-Secretary; Msgr. Dr. Michael Clay, Assoc. Dean for Seminary and Ministerial Studies, School of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., USA; Dr. Mary Coloe, pbvm, Yarra Theological Union, University of Divinity, Melbourne, Australia; Mr. Julien Hammond, Ecumenical Officer, Archdiocese of Edmonton, Canada; Rev. Dr. Joseph T. Shenosky, Vice-Rector, Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, USA; and Rev. Dr. Michael G. Witzcak, Associate Professor, School of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., USA.