

The Call to Holiness: From Glory to Glory



**Report of the Joint International Commission for Dialogue
Between**

The World Methodist Council



and The Roman Catholic Church



**2016
Tenth Series**

PREFACE

This report has been prepared by the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church for presentation to the World Methodist Council, meeting in Houston, Texas, USA, in 2016, and to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It is the tenth such report to be published in the fifty years since the Commission was established in 1967, following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Each report investigates historically divisive issues in Christian doctrine in order to identify the degree of convergence between Catholics and Methodists, and to name areas where further dialogue is necessary. The Commission's work has been published for study within and beyond our two communions, and to record the deepening communion in faith between Catholics and Methodists.

In its recent reports, the Commission has adopted the convention of referring to 'Methodists' and 'Catholics' (rather than 'Roman Catholics') without implying that Methodists are not catholic Christians. Except where quoting directly from other documents, including its earlier reports, the Commission has once again adopted this convention. Here 'Methodists' and 'Catholics' denote members of our two world communions, some of whom would describe themselves in other terms, such as Wesleyans or Nazarenes, Latin rite Catholics or Eastern rite Catholics. Nevertheless, since the term 'Catholic Church' is ambiguous, and since the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity appointed the Catholic members of the Commission, this report refers to the 'Roman Catholic Church'.

The present report builds on theological foundations painstakingly laid in previous reports and ideally will be read in conjunction with these earlier texts, all of which were originally published in printed form (and subsequently reprinted by the World Council of Churches in collected volumes of the reports of bilateral dialogues at a world level under the series title *Growth in Agreement*) and are now available on the Vatican website and on the World Methodist Council website.

The initial phase of the dialogue was exploratory, recording areas of basic agreement in two short reports: *The Denver Report* (Denver, 1971) and *Growth in Understanding* (Dublin, 1976). A second phase began a more detailed investigation of core theological topics: *Towards an Agreed Statement on the Holy Spirit* (Honolulu, 1981); *Towards a Statement on the Church* (Nairobi, 1986); *The Apostolic Tradition* (Singapore, 1991); *The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith* (Rio de Janeiro, 1996); and *Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority among Methodists and Roman Catholics* (Brighton, 2001). Since then, the Commission has concentrated its attention on the Church and sacraments, recording significant convergence in two substantial reports: *The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church* (Seoul, 2006); and *Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments* (Durban, 2011). In each case, the place of publication denotes the location in which the World Methodist Council was meeting at the time of the report's approval.

In 2011, the Commission published a synthesis text, *Together to Holiness: 40 Years of Methodist and Roman Catholic Dialogue*, summarizing the state of consensus and convergence on a range of topics in Christian doctrine, as recorded in its first eight reports. The synthesis text provides a useful overview of our bilateral dialogue between 1967 and 2006 but is not intended to replace the original reports.

The convergence registered in the present report is the result not just of bilateral conversations since the Durban report (2011), but of nearly fifty years of dialogue between Catholics and Methodists at a world level, as indicated by the numerous references to previous reports of the Commission. By custom, these are cited by the location associated with that particular report and paragraph number – thus (Nairobi §20).

Members of the Commission, appointed in equal number by the World Methodist Council and by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, include professional theologians proficient in relevant fields of study, as well as those with expertise and experience in ecumenism, and those who exercise a ministry of oversight as bishops and church leaders. In appointing members, account has been taken of the need for a diversity of geographical representation.

In order to learn from the regional variations in ecumenical relations, ecclesiastical culture and the social setting of Methodists and Catholics, the Commission met in a variety of locations: Buenos Aires, Argentina (2012); Atlanta, USA (2013); Assisi, Italy (2014); and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2015). A drafting sub-group met in Boston, USA, in March 2015, and then again in Rome, Italy, in March 2016, in order to finalise the text for publication.

The nature of ecumenical dialogue means that much of the available time was absorbed in theological conversation. Yet, the spiritual dimension must not be overlooked, since dialogue is never solely an intellectual exercise, but always involves personal encounter. As members of the Commission met together, spiritual ecumenism led to a deepening experience of the real, but imperfect, communion that already exists between Methodists and Catholics through our baptism into the body of Christ. Each day, wherever the Commission happened to be meeting, dialogue took place in the context of shared prayer and in a setting that enabled members to interact with the local Methodist and Catholic communities.

In the conclusion to the Durban report (2011), the Commission signalled its future intention by outlining a new topic for investigation: ‘It is the whole question of the experience of salvation and the response of the believer to the gift of God’s grace. Catholics and Methodists have different emphases in the way they speak about this, which seem to underpin a number of other matters upon which they often diverge’ (Durban §197). The present report fulfils this intention.

Since grace and holiness are central to the Christian life, a theological study is usefully illustrated by practical examples of holy living. Accordingly, the report is illustrated by reference to the lives of exemplary figures from the Catholic and Methodist traditions.

This report is dedicated to two outstanding ecumenical statesmen and former Co-Chairs of this Commission. Bishop Michael Putney (+2014) of Townsville, Australia, served as Catholic Co-Chair from 1996 until his diagnosis with terminal cancer in 2012. Reverend Professor Geoffrey Wainwright, Professor of Christian Theology at Duke University, North Carolina, USA, served as Methodist Co-Chair between 1986 and 2011. We thank God for their collegueship and for their dedicated service to ecumenism.

Bishop Donald Bolen
Catholic Co-Chair

Reverend Dr David M. Chapman
Methodist Co-Chair

The Commission's members are:

Catholic:

Bishop Donald Bolen (Co-Chair), Canada (from 2013)

Bishop Michael Putney (Co-Chair), Australia (2012)

Reverend Mark Langham (Co-Secretary), Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (2012)

Reverend Anthony Currer (Co-Secretary), Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (from 2013)

Sister Dr Lorelei Fuchs, USA

Reverend Dr Gerard McCarren, USA

Bishop Joseph Osei-Bonsu, Ghana

Reverend Dr Jorge Scampini, Argentina

Bishop John Sherrington, England

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Reverend Dr David M. Chapman (Co-Chair), Great Britain

Reverend Dr Karen Westerfield Tucker (Co-Secretary), USA

Reverend Dr Young-Ho Chun, Korea/USA

Reverend Dr Edgardo Colón-Emeric, USA

Reverend Dr James Haire, Australia (2012-13)

Reverend Dr Trevor Hoggard, New Zealand

Bishop Chikwendu Igwe, Nigeria

Reverend Dr Reynaldo Ferreira Leão Neto, Brazil/Great Britain

Reverend Dr Priscilla Pope-Levison, USA (from 2014)

The Status of this Document

The Report published here is the work of the international Methodist-Catholic Dialogue Commission. Commission members were appointed by the World Methodist Council or by the Holy See's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The authorities who appointed the Commission have now allowed the Report to be published so that it may be widely discussed. It is a joint report of the Commission, not an authoritative declaration by the Roman Catholic Church or by the World Methodist Council, which will study the document in due course.

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS (LUKE 19.1-10 NRSV)

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

The encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus in Luke's Gospel is a story of divine grace and the call to holiness. Zacchaeus, an undeserving figure, is nevertheless graciously accepted by Jesus and drawn into a saving relationship with the Lord, which transforms his previously self-centred and selfish existence into holy living. On receiving Jesus' summons, Zacchaeus instantly resolves to make reparation for his sinful past by promising to give half of his possessions to the poor and repay fourfold all whom he had defrauded.

The background details of this Gospel story reinforce the drama of divine grace at work and its powerful salvific effect. Jericho, being a border city, was an important customs station and one of the wealthiest cities in Palestine, that benefitted economically from its location in the most fertile part of Judea and politically as the site of a Herodian palace. Altogether, the opportunities for imposing customs duties and raising other taxes were extensive. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus was responsible for the collection of tax and customs revenue and the supervision of subordinate officers. In such a position of power, Zacchaeus had ample opportunity to amass personal wealth through cheating and exploitation.

Zacchaeus may have possessed wealth and official status, but he was a social outsider since Jews generally despised tax collectors as traitors to Israel, defiled by a hated occupation and corrupted through greed. In the eyes of his Jewish compatriots, Zacchaeus' shortness in stature was more than physical: he was a nonentity, not worthy of the company of respectable Jews. From his lonely vantage point in the sycamore tree, Zacchaeus would be able to see Jesus unnoticed by the crowd.

Despite the intention and prior action of Zacchaeus, the real initiative in the story belongs to Jesus. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus has an uncanny insight into the secret affairs of others. Thus, Zacchaeus does not remain hidden from Jesus, who engages his anonymous observer in a life-giving personal encounter. By inviting himself into Zacchaeus' home, Jesus does something startling and significant: no matter how high their social status, Jews would not normally invite themselves into someone else's home. Moreover, scrupulous Jews such as the scribes and Pharisees would never enter the home of a tax collector and eat his food (implied in the offer of hospitality). By receiving Jesus as his guest, Zacchaeus is no longer an outsider.

The onlookers are scandalized at the social recognition conferred by Jesus upon such an obvious sinner. However, Jesus' gracious acceptance produces a deep change in Zacchaeus' situation as his life is transformed inwardly and outwardly. Zacchaeus' response is to dispose of half his fortune towards meeting the needs of the poor and to make generous provision for

putting right his past injustices in a very practical form of holy living. Thus, his restitution goes far beyond Pharisaic law, which required fourfold or fivefold restitution only for stolen oxen and sheep, and then only if slaughtered or sold in the presence of the requisite number of witnesses. In contrast, Zacchaeus' extravagant restitution reflects ancient accounts of discipleship in which a radical response with possessions was a sure sign of newly acquired devotion to the teacher. In this way, Luke vividly affirms that Zacchaeus has been drawn into a saving relationship with Jesus.

Throughout his Gospel, Luke equates the presence of Jesus with the coming of the kingdom of God and immediate salvation even for outsiders such as Zacchaeus. In Jesus, '[God] has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David' (Luke 1.69). At the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus announces that Isaiah's prophecy of salvation has been fulfilled 'today' (Luke 4.21). Fittingly, Zacchaeus, the archetypal outsider, has received salvation 'today'. Where grace abounds, holiness enters in.

INTRODUCTION

1. The story of Zacchaeus in Luke's Gospel illustrates beautifully how a loving God graciously calls all people to respond to an invitation to holy living in a familial relationship with God. From a Christian perspective, such a relationship is made possible by the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ and by the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. Catholics and Methodists describe the Christian response to this invitation in similar terms of growth in grace and holiness through an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus Christ (Denver §55).
2. This agreement concerning the Christian life – an agreement that will be consolidated and developed in the present report – is encapsulated in the evocative idea of 'the call to holiness'. For Catholics, this idea echoes the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning 'The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church' (LG, Chapter 5); for Methodists, it is consistent with the historical mission of Methodism 'to spread scriptural holiness over the land'.¹
3. The call to holiness is relational, dynamic, and holistic: it relates the God who calls and the people, individually and corporately, who respond to God's call in their particular historical and cultural context. The call to holiness relates the God who speaks to the world and those who hear and receive the divine word. In the book of Deuteronomy, God invites the people of Israel to 'choose life' that they might live fully (Deut 30.19), uniting in friendship a holy God and 'a people holy to the Lord' (Deut 14.2). The call to holiness is a transformative summons to life in a new community, joyfully living and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ: 'you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' (1 Pet 2.9).
4. Entitled *The Call to Holiness*, this report considers how Catholics and Methodists understand the nature and effect of divine grace upon the human person and the implications for the Christian life. In so doing, it investigates grace and holiness not simply as theological concepts, but in relation to their central place in the Christian life. For the God of grace calls people to holy living in a relationship of communion or fellowship (*koinonia*) with the Holy Trinity and with one another.
5. The call to holiness is also a call to unity in the Church, the body of Christ. Jesus prayed for his disciples to be sanctified in the truth that they might all be one (John 17.17, 21). Holiness and Christian unity belong together as twin aspects of the same relationship with the Trinity such that the pursuit of either involves the pursuit of the other. The goal of dialogue between Catholics and Methodists remains that of full communion in faith, mission and sacramental life (Nairobi §20).
6. Among the theological foundations of the report, three are particularly noteworthy. The first is the trinitarian mission in salvation history as recorded in scripture and tradition. The Honolulu report (1981) established significant agreement in understanding the person and work of God the Son in relation to the person and work of God the Holy Spirit, in the design and purpose of God the Father in creation and

¹ 'Large Minutes' (1763), WJW 10:845.

redemption. Second is the *Methodist Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation (MAJDDJ) (2006/1999), which is an agreed statement concerning certain basic elements of the nature and effect of divine grace and its relationship with works of mercy and piety. The third is the theme so fruitfully explored in the Durban report (2011): the common participation of Christians in the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

7. The present report is divided into three sections. The first section, comprising Chapters One and Two, outlines a shared Christian anthropology and understanding of the nature and effect of divine grace and holiness in relation to the human person, noting certain aspects where Methodists and Catholics continue to differ in significant respects. The second section, comprising Chapters Three and Four, then draws upon a shared understanding of grace and holiness to investigate particular elements of holy living in the communion of saints. The third section, comprising Chapter Five, offers a summary of this report's convergences and divergences, and asks how the fruits of dialogue might have a transformative effect in Catholic and Methodist communities. An appendix contains a select number of appropriate prayers from our two traditions.
8. To aid the reader, it may be useful to outline the content of each chapter. Chapter One, 'The Mystery of Being Human', articulates a Christian anthropology as the theological basis for the chapters that follow. It considers: what it means for human beings to be created in the image and likeness of God in relation to the rest of creation; the fall and its effect upon humankind and creation; the longing for reconciliation; and the person of Jesus Christ as the full measure of human being. Catholics and Methodists can say much together about humankind in the plan and purpose of God.
9. Christian anthropology is necessarily bound up with the study of salvation or soteriology. Chapter Two, 'God's Work of Re-creating Humankind', describes the saving work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in the mediation of divine grace before focusing on three particular aspects: the grace that enables, the grace that justifies, and the grace that sanctifies. The chapter also addresses the historically divisive issues of the 'merit' accruing from good works of mercy and piety, and Christian 'assurance'.
10. Just as Christian anthropology leads to soteriology, consideration of the saving work of Christ is inseparable from ecclesiology, since the experience of grace and holiness is always oriented towards the formation of relationships in the Church and the transformation of the world. Chapter Three, 'God's Holy People: The Saints Below', considers the personal and ecclesial effect of grace and what it means to be called by God to holy living in the Church and in the world. The chapter describes the pilgrim Church itself as a household of grace. Holy living is described in relation to the sacraments, witnessing to the Gospel, devotional practices, and service in the world.
11. Since the living and the departed are joined together in love and praise within the household of grace, Chapter Four, 'God's Holy People: The Saints Above', considers the eschatological effect of grace, and what this means for a communion among the saints which transcends death. The chapter explores a number of related topics: death and the hope of resurrection; judgement; purification and growth in grace beyond

death; prayer for the departed saints; the intercession of the departed saints and Mary, the Mother of Jesus; the Lord's return; images of final salvation; and the fulfilment of God's design and purpose for humankind in a new heaven and a new earth.

12. The final chapter, 'Growing in Holiness Together: Openings for Common Witness, Devotion, and Service', reflects upon the close relationship between holiness and unity. The work of reconciliation between our world communions is itself a Spirit-led response to the summons of holiness. Tracing how the dialogue between Methodists and Catholics over the past fifty years has led to significant consensus and convergences, the text notes that each step towards greater communion in faith should translate into fruitful engagement in terms of common prayer, joint witness and mission, a renewed commitment to reconciliation, and a deepening relationship in the Lord. The chapter ends with a creedal summary of what Catholics and Methodists have been able to say together in this document, and raises a series of questions to be discussed at a local or regional level about the practical ecclesial implications of our agreements and convergences in faith.
13. The report's subtitle, *From Glory to Glory*, reflects the transformative nature of the divine call to holiness, as attested by St Paul: 'And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another' (2 Cor 3.18). Charles Wesley drew on this same phrase in composing the hymn 'Love divine, all loves excelling',² a hymn that is still frequently sung by Methodists and Catholics today. The final stanza's summary of life in Christ anticipates the final consummation of the call to holiness:

Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and sinless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

² WJW 7:547; first published in Charles Wesley, *Hymns for Those that Seek and Those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* (London: Strahan, 1747), no. 9.

CHAPTER ONE

The Mystery of Being Human: Created by God and Re-created in Christ for being in Communion with God

14. Human beings are a mystery to themselves. Without communion with God, the human is unfulfilled. As St Augustine famously said, ‘our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you’.³ Humans are created with a desire for God, but the power of sin has corrupted this desire in unholy ways. The sin-sick heart is sought out by the Holy Spirit who intercedes ‘with sighs too deep for words’ (Rom 8.6) and witnesses to the human longing for God by crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ (Rom 8.15-16). Methodists and Catholics affirm that ‘The Father’s overflowing love created humanity for communion with himself, and that same creative love gathers together the followers of his Son into the visible community of the Church’ (Seoul §54).
15. Humans are made in the image of God. This affirmation is the point of departure in reflecting upon the dignity of every human being and the call to holiness. Even if it is not possible to find in the Bible a fully developed systematic anthropology, scripture offers profound insight into the human person. Its testimony to the mystery of the human starts with creation and finds its fulfilment in the mystery of Christ, truly God and truly human. The Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 8.11) and spoke through the prophets (Eph 3.5) plays a crucial role in the completion and revelation of this mystery. In this way, the plan of God, revealed initially in the gift of creation, is confirmed and re-created in the mysteries of the incarnation and redemption.
16. The starting point for this chapter is that humanity is created by and for God. This consideration is followed by an assessment of the effects of sin on human nature and concludes with a reflection on humanity as re-created in Christ. The re-creation of the first Adam into the new is God’s gift, but a gift that can only be received by means of repentance and conversion. The re-creation of the human does not mean the annihilation of human nature. The new creation is not out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) but out of the old (*ex vetere*). The old creation is not discarded but transformed. God does not say, ‘Behold I make all new things,’ but rather, ‘Behold, I am making all things new’ (Rev 21.5). Ultimately, the origin and destiny of the human being are connected to who God is. This is why, even in the light of revelation, the topic for this chapter is treated not as a puzzle to be solved, but as a mystery to be approached with humility and reverence.

Created with the Gift of Life and Called into Communion with the Creator

Created for relationship with God

17. The account of creation in Genesis (Gen 1.1-2.4) declares the uniqueness of human beings with respect to all other creatures: with humanity, God completes his work of creation. The special place and mission of human beings finds its foundation in the fact that they are created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) (Gen 1.26-27). Being created in God’s ‘image and likeness’ is a gift and responsibility. The human being has been created to exist in relationship with God, to be addressed by God and to hear and receive God’s word, and so to live in communion with him. Holiness is another

³ *Confessions*, Book I, Chapter 1.

name for this communion. The mystery of what it means to be made in the image of God is only fully revealed in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4.4; Col 1.15; Heb 1.3; Phil 2.6). While it is true that humans have been created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), it is also possible to affirm that they have been created out of the fullness (*ex plenitudine*) of Christ himself.

Created for relationship with others

18. From the very beginning, humanity has been created male and female (Gen 1.27). Genesis tells of how God gives to Adam a ‘partner’, Eve, because it is not good for him to be alone (cf. Gen 2.8, 20-24). Human beings are social beings created for relationship. The contemporary interpretation of gender is a controversial subject among Christians, one that this document does not address. As far as the call to holiness is concerned, it is important to underscore that human relationality finds expression not only in marriage, but also in friendships and in the realms of economics, politics, and culture. Sexual differentiation is a fundamental but not exclusive manifestation of the social dimension of human existence.
19. In the Christian vision, this social dimension is essentially grounded in the Trinity of Divine Persons, revealed in Christ. God is not a solitary being, but rather a perfect communion of Persons, who exist eternally in relationship with one another. By analogy, human beings, created in the image of the triune God, also find their identity in relation to God, one another, and the world. Only in the exercise of their social dimensions, and particularly in communion and interpersonal self-giving, can human beings truly be themselves. In the encounter with the other as person, humans find themselves before an image that has not been fashioned by human hands. The language of personhood refers not only to the identity of each individual, but also to the essential relationship with others that lies at the foundation of human community. No person as such is ever alone in the universe. Each person is always constituted with others and is called to form with them a community. Human beings find fulfilment to the extent that the essentially social nature of one’s humanity is fulfilled within the relationships of family, community, and society. This is the reason why Christian ethics and morality cannot be reduced to the individual aspects; rather, responding to everything that pertains to the human being, morality attains to the social dimension as well. It is on the basis of this anthropological reality that John Wesley said: ‘The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness’.⁴ Life in community is integral to the life of grace and holiness.

Created for relationship with creation

20. According to the scriptures, God placed humanity in relation to creation. God both plants the Garden of Eden and assigns to Adam the task of naming the animals (Gen 2.9, 19-20). These stories yield a rich anthropology: humans are made for communion with each other and they are called to care for creation. But they will live only if they maintain their relationship with the God who has created them and given them his very life, and if they remain faithful to God’s commands. The prohibition against eating ‘of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ spells this out, ‘for in the day that you eat of it, you shall die’ (Gen 2.17). That tree symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that the human being, as a creature, must freely recognize and

⁴ John Wesley, Preface, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: Strahan, 1739), p. viii.

respect with trust. This means that the relationship with God is essential for the human person, as the one absolute dimension from which every other dimension takes its point of reference. The human being was made to be in harmony with God, creation, and neighbour. Another name for this original harmony is holiness, and one of the chief obstacles to holiness is humanity's refusal to embrace its creaturely limits as gift.

21. Humans need the world that surrounds them for their own subsistence. That is a fundamental experience. But that same relationship of dependence upon the world allows humans to perceive their transcendence of the world. Humanity's work is a new phenomenon in the cosmos. The human being can be called 'co-creator' because with the creation of humans and their ability to transform the reality that surrounds them something new comes into being: new possibilities are found in nature which otherwise would never have been attained. These possibilities in nature, in turn, become new possibilities for humans themselves. Even as they are immersed in the world, human beings show by their very actions that they transcend the world; they are not simply cogs in a machine. Moreover, humans experience a persistent dissatisfaction with their accomplishments, between what they have and what they still desire. Thus, they can hardly expect the world to provide them with the ultimate meaning of life. The world cannot satisfy the longings of the human heart nor provide a satisfying meaning for human existence. Nevertheless, the world is filled with God's grace, and in caring for it as commanded by the Creator, human beings begin to live their vocation oriented towards communion with the Creator.
22. The witness of Francis of Assisi is confirmation that 'the dignity of the human race is that it is made in the "image" of God to be the royal representative of the ruler of creation by exercising "dominion" over the world (Gen 1.26). This "dominion" is not a license to exploit the earth, but to [nurture and] care for it, [even] as God does' (HEFG §16). The Garden of Eden is named as the first space appointed for the living out of this vocation; it was a place of intimacy with God and harmony with creation (Gen 2.8). Humans now live estranged from this reality. At the same time, they long for the restoration of this original harmony. This longing lies at the root of the call to holiness. According to Pope Francis, 'It is significant that the harmony which Saint Francis of Assisi experienced with all creatures was seen as a healing of that rupture' (*Laudato si'* §66).

The human being: body and soul

23. Human beings are constituted body and soul. Being embodied, humans are subject to space and time and are therefore finite and mortal. Being ensouled, humans transcend the world and are called to immortality. This immortality makes no sense except in communion with God, guaranteeing the continuity of the personal subject between the present life and the fullness of the resurrection, in full conformity to the risen Christ. Thus, any authentic Christian understanding of holiness eradicates all forms of dualism or reductionism. An account of perfection that expects the soul to escape its embodied existence is incapable of recognizing the integrity of the human being in its rich and complex reality.
24. The human being is a mysterious unity. Scripture describes in various ways the embodied and ensouled dimensions of the human being, all of which are necessary to

testify to the elusiveness of the reality that these seek to describe. Nevertheless, the human being in its entirety is created in the image of God, and therefore being embodied is essential to personal identity. This perspective excludes interpretations that situate the image of God only in one aspect of human nature or in one of its qualities or functions.

25. Christian theology affirms the goodness of the body. The body is also created by God and subject to final transformation in the resurrection. The negative views of embodiment, which have from time to time clouded the Christian witness to the gift of materiality, need to be eschewed. At the same time, the body is currently weak, fallen, and in need of transformation. In the words of St Paul, 'we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies' (Rom 8.23).

The Fall and Its Effect upon Humankind and Creation

The gift of freedom

26. Created in God's image in order to share in the communion of the divine life, human beings are constituted with the capacity freely to accept this communion. Humans receive the gift of freedom so that they can love. This freedom, like all aspects of human existence, is finite and limited. Freedom means not only the possibility of choosing between various specific goods or possibilities, but also, and above all, the ability to determine oneself according to one's own choices. In spite of the obvious creaturely limitations that condition human beings, the power of self-determination is real. Methodists and Catholics believe that 'there is a real moral order grounded in God; human dignity and freedom are real and crucial; [all people] are called to responsible living in community as well as individually' (Denver §40). One should speak, therefore, not only of freedom *from* impediments or restrictions, whether internal or external, but also of freedom *for* responding to God's invitation to be holy.
27. Yet with the gift of freedom also comes the possibility of freedom's own failure. Instead of accepting the supreme good of sharing in the divine life, humans transgressed the limits that were constitutive of their creaturely existence. The human being, made by God in a state of freedom for holiness, abused this liberty at the urging of the Evil One (Gen 3). While a venerable line of theologians has not hesitated to identify 'pride' as the first sin, the origins of sin are mysterious. Using figurative language, scripture's account of the fall affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place at the beginning of human history. Revelation declares that the whole of this history is marked by the original fault freely committed by the first parents of the human species, Adam and Eve. Indeed, this is the world as we encounter it, marked by goodness but also stained by human beings repeatedly turning away from or distorting their relationship with God, others and creation.

The failure of freedom: the reality of sin

28. Scripture portrays vividly the tragic consequences of this first disobedience. Adam and Eve immediately lose their original holiness (Gen 3). The harmony in which they had found themselves is now destroyed. They fear God whom they conceive to be jealously guarding his divine prerogatives. They are estranged from the creation in which God set them and experience even their own bodies as a source of shame. As a

result of that first sin, the world is marred by sin. There is Cain's murder of his brother Abel and the corruption that follows in the wake of this act of violence. Likewise, sin frequently manifests itself in the history of Israel, especially as infidelity to the God of the covenant and as transgression of the Law.

Human estrangement from God

29. The reality of sin, which divine revelation discloses, resonates with human experience. Examining their hearts, humans find that they have inclinations towards evil and are engulfed by manifold ills which cannot come from the good Creator. When human beings refuse to acknowledge God as their Creator, they disrupt their proper relationship to their own ultimate goal as well as their relationship to themselves, other humans, and all created things. Therefore, humans are internally split. As a result, human life entails an unavoidable struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, humans find that they are incapable of battling the assaults of evil successfully on their own and feel as though they are bound by chains (Rom 7.15ff).
30. Methodists and Catholics do not consider the fall as causing the destruction of the *imago Dei*. Catholic tradition has always insisted that sin can disfigure or deform God's image in the human being, but it cannot destroy it. Methodists similarly teach that the fall of Adam and Eve marred, but did not destroy, the image of God. The sinful person is still a human being made in the image of God.

Not without hope

31. God did not abandon human beings after the fall. On the contrary, according to Genesis 3.15, God continues to address his creatures, and in a mysterious way heralds the coming victory over evil and humanity's restoration from this fall. Catholic tradition reads Genesis 3.15 as the first proclamation of the Gospel (*Protoevangelium*): the first announcement of the 'New Adam', of a battle between the serpent and the woman, and of the final victory of a descendant of hers. The Wesley brothers too heard in this verse an announcement of the redeemer, 'the woman's heavenly seed', 'the bruiser of the serpent's head', who would 'crush the fiend that crushed us all'.⁵ Methodists and Catholics alike hold that God's saving purposes for humanity are evident from the beginning.
32. God's love for his fallen creatures is made concrete in salvation history. Methodists can affirm with Catholics that 'through the patriarchs, and after them through Moses and the prophets, He taught this people to acknowledge Himself the one living and true God, provident father and just judge, and to wait for the Saviour promised by Him, and in this manner prepared the way for the Gospel down through the centuries' (*Dei Verbum* §3). In choosing Israel as his own people, God's call to holiness assumes historical and social particularity. Israel is called to be holy, as the Lord is holy (Lev 11.44). The people of faith named in Hebrews 11 give an eloquent witness to how God has been at work throughout the history of Israel, but also outside it in people such as Rahab (Heb 11.31). These persons lived in hope of the coming of one who would be 'the pioneer and perfecter' of their faith (Heb 12.2).

⁵ Charles Wesley, *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures*, vol. 1 (Bristol: Farley, 1762), no. 22.

33. The incarnation of the eternal Word and the sending of the Spirit overcome the human estrangement from God, creation, and self, suffered in the fall. Scripture teaches that the remedy for sin has a greater effect than sin itself: 'where sin increased, grace abounded all the more' (Rom 5.20). In the profound words of Pope Francis, God 'does not want anyone to be lost. His mercy is infinitely greater than our sins, his medicine is infinitely stronger than our illnesses that he has to heal.'⁶ Thanks to God's work of redemption, says John Wesley, 'Hence will arise an unmixed state of holiness and happiness far superior to that which Adam enjoyed in paradise.'⁷ On account of the triune God's work of salvation, the fall of the first Adam turns out to be a *felix culpa*, a happy fault,⁸ because what is gained is greater than what is lost.

Christ, the New Adam, fully reveals the Mystery of the Human Being

Created as image of God and called to be image of Christ

34. The created image (*imago Dei*) marred by sin is made a new creation in the image of Christ (*imago Christi*). The theme of the image of Christ is most clearly expressed by St Paul, who proclaimed Christ to be the image of God. Being re-created in the image of Christ does not replace the image of God. Men and women are called to put on Christ and become members of the one body of Christ by accepting his offer of salvation through faith (Gal 3.27-28). God the Father has made human beings to be conformed according to the image of the Son by the power of the Spirit, so that the Son might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters (Rom 8.29). Just as the human being bears the image of the first Adam, moulded from the earth and filled with the breath of the Creator, so too are we made to bear the image of the heavenly Adam, Jesus Christ, in the sharing of his risen body (1 Cor 15.45-49). Christian hope looks to the return of Christ, who 'will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory' (Phil 3.21). Human destiny, therefore, is to be changed from the glory of the first Adam to the glory of the second (2 Cor 3.18). The Christian vocation to holiness is to be conformed to Christ and clothed with his image.
35. In his earthly life, Jesus lived out his eternal relationship as the Son of the Father, as he worked with his hands, loved with his heart, and thought with his mind. In the person of Jesus, all dimensions of human existence became places where his divine relationship with the Father was lived; thus, he hallowed all that it is to be human. The first Adam is a figure of the last Adam. In Christ, the dignity of the first Adam is affirmed, renewed, and elevated. Together, the mystery of creation and the mystery of redemption are the proper foundation for a true understanding of humanity.
36. Being re-created in the image of Christ has an eschatological orientation. Since orientation to Christ is the final goal of human existence, this must have been so from the beginning. The goal of creation and goal of salvation exist in an intimate relation. All has been made through Christ, and all is directed towards him (1 Cor 8.6; Col 1.15-20; Eph 1.3-10; John 1.3, 10; Heb 1.2-3). Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the

⁶ Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy: A Conversation with Andrea Tornielli*, trans. Oonagh Stransky (New York: Random House, 2016), p. 34.

⁷ John Wesley's sermon, 'The New Creation', WJW 2:510, §18.

⁸ Cf. the Exsultet or Easter Proclamation.

beginning and the end of everything (Rev 1.8; 21.6; 22.13). From this perspective, salvation is above all liberation from sin and reconciliation to God.

The Christian life as a gift already received and as a call to be realized

37. Christian life begins with the recognition of many gifts received: forgiveness, adoption, grace, virtues. These gifts give rise to responsibility; the giver calls the receiver to draw closer. The sisters and brothers of Christ are called to grow to the stature of Christ. Growing to the stature of Christ involves sharing in his divine sonship, that is to say, in the unique relation that Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, has with his Father. This relationship is possible only through the gift of the Holy Spirit in whom all have access to the Father through Christ (Eph 2.18). In other words, holiness consists in living into one's baptismal identity. The holy ones are those who lead lives of constant repentance and conversion in gratitude for God's bounteous gifts and mercies.
38. In Christ, the true vocation of every human being is revealed. Since 'all things have been created through him and for him' (Col 1.16), everything finds in him its direction and destiny. By the Holy Spirit, the vocation of every human being can be realized. The Holy Spirit will bring to completion the final conformity of Christians to Christ in the resurrection of the dead on the final day. But even now Christians share in the glory of the Risen Lord. In time and in history, the end is near, even though not fully here.

In Christ, All the Aspects of Human Existence are Re-created

39. The drama of human existence unfolds in history between the creation and its final consummation. The full meaning of humanity's present existential situation can be found only in Christ. Christ is the one who gives the image of God in the human its true and definitive form: 'through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross' (Col 1.20). In the midst of their sinful existence, humans are pardoned and, through the Holy Spirit, they know the saving love of God and grow in conformity to Christ.
40. In Christ, human freedom attains its goal – freedom in the Spirit. The Spirit breaks the bonds of sin and self-centredness that enslave humans so that they can enjoy the freedom of the children of God. Jesus reveals the true nature of this freedom. In him, freedom manifests itself as receptivity to the Father and openness towards all people in an attitude of service, mercy and love. 'For freedom Christ has set us free', says St Paul (Gal 5.1). Freedom *from* sin means freedom *for* God in Christ and the Holy Spirit; freedom *from* slavish observance of the law means freedom *for* joyful obedience; freedom *from* death means freedom *for* leading a new life in God. Many saints in the history of the Church have witnessed to this freedom, particularly the martyrs, who freely offered their own lives out of love.
41. In Christ, human existence receives a new and deeper meaning; the whole creation is restored. The human being, as 'co-creator', is called to participate in this work of re-creation of the whole universe. It should not seem strange that from the first centuries, and following the example of the apostolic community (cf. Acts 2.42-44), many Christians have shared a fraternal life in community, placing in common all of their goods, and giving mutual encouragement in discipleship. In these ruled forms of life,

which feature in both Catholic and Methodist traditions, Christians praise the Creator and defend the dignity of the human and the integrity of creation. ‘In reality, the name for that deep amazement at [human] worth and dignity is the Gospel’ (*Redemptor hominis* §10). St Francis is an excellent bearer of this Gospel: ‘He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace’ (*Laudato si*’ §10). But it is not only in consecrated life that Christians participate in the renewal of the face of the earth. By living into their baptismal identity in the ordinary tasks of daily affairs, Christians contribute to the re-creation of the universe. In mutual self-giving and receiving within families, the Church, and wider society, people from all walks of life find the path to their own human fulfilment in love and their sanctification in Christ.

42. ‘The glory of God is the human person fully alive, and the life of the human person is the vision of God’, writes St Irenaeus of Lyon.⁹ Human existence and the call to holiness need to be understood together. Being ‘changed from glory into glory’ does not diminish the human. Holiness humanizes. By the grace of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, humans are embraced in the love of God, and both discover and realize their true call. This assertion does not empty human life of its mystery. In the words of John, ‘we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is’ (1 John 3.2).

Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop

Mary Helen MacKillop (1824–1909) was born in early colonial Melbourne, Australia, to Scottish parents. Although her father provided for her education, the family was never comfortably off, and Mary had to start work in her teens to help provide for her family. She took work as a governess and so began a life-long ministry in education.

In 1866, Mary and her parish priest Father Julian Tenison Woods fulfilled their dream to found a congregation of religious sisters that would serve the needs of the poor and provide education for children in remote areas. The Rule of Life that Woods and MacKillop produced for the community emphasized a commitment to poverty; depending on divine providence, the sisters were not allowed to own any personal possessions. The Josephites, as they became known, were unusual in that they lived alongside the communities they served, rather than in secluded convents. As well as schools, the order also ran other social institutions such as orphanages and homes for the elderly and sick, but all of its work was united by an unwavering desire to serve the poor, and the order refused to educate the children of affluent families. The order’s principal focus remained that of educating the poor and, as the need was great, both the order and their schools grew rapidly.

During her lifetime, Mary encountered opposition and false accusation, and suffered tribulation at the hands of certain church leaders and even some of her own sisters. For a brief time, she was even excommunicated by her bishop. Her deep faith and especially her devotion to the cross of Christ gave Mary the strength and courage she needed to continue her work, a work that often entailed travelling vast distances. Mary’s vision had no boundaries and she enjoyed the support and friendship of people of all Christian traditions and faiths. She was even buried in a vault paid for by a lifelong Presbyterian friend. The Sisters of St Joseph

⁹ *Adversus haereses*, Book IV, Chapter 20.7.

and their companions who work in many parts of the world continue Mary's legacy by striving to bring dignity and love to all peoples.

John Sung (Song Shangjie)

John Sung (1901–1944) was the premier Chinese revivalist of the twentieth century, responsible for leading more than 100,000 people, or approximately 10% of all Chinese Protestants, to confess faith in Jesus Christ. As a young man, Sung had himself converted to Christianity after his life deteriorated because of mental illness. When, in the chaos of his mind, he found a way to name Jesus as Lord, his whole life became reordered around his Saviour.

This experience of divine healing shaped his proclamation of the Gospel. Travelling through China and Southeast Asia as a National Evangelist of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Sung preached a holiness message that emphasized full salvation: Jesus delivered people from both sin and sickness. Total restoration, he emphasized, was the result of entire sanctification, for only the Holy Spirit could cleanse hearts and restore bodies.

Those who responded to Sung's invitation to enter a holy life were to expect moral integrity to blossom in their lives, for God's Spirit would lead converts in paths of righteousness. Sung did not preach sinless perfection, but a vivified conscience. His own life provides an example. On one occasion he realized that a series of sermons inexplicably lacked power, until the Holy Spirit reminded him that in days past he had not given to a person who had asked of him (Matt. 5:42). Sung tracked down the offended party, confessed his sin, and made restitution. Thus purified from unrighteousness, Sung rejoiced that God began once again to work through his preaching.

In some ways, Sung's understanding of holy living could sound puritanical, for he demanded that Christians avoid movies, smoking, novels, dancing, plays, and even picnics. Sung, however, explained his position differently. Religion was not the opiate of the people, he argued, but rather these mind-numbing and time-consuming forms of leisure. Instead of using their free time to indulge themselves, converts should spread the Gospel. He organized evangelistic teams everywhere he went, and charged them to save the nation by eradicating sin.¹⁰

¹⁰ Material on John Sung drawn from Daryl R. Ireland, 'John Sung: Christian Revitalization in China and Southeast Asia' (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 2015).

CHAPTER TWO

God's Work of Re-creating Humankind

43. Having given a shared account of humankind created in the image of God, it is now possible to consider what Catholics and Methodists can say together about God's work of re-creating humankind. This work reveals the full depth of God's love because it involves overcoming humankind's estrangement from God as a result of sin. A central concept in this second chapter is that of 'grace'. Human salvation is possible only because a loving and merciful God undertakes the work of re-creating humankind through the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Beginning with a brief summary of the grace of God in the person and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, this chapter explores the nature and effect of divine grace in its personal and corporate aspects. The chapter concludes by investigating two related issues that have been contentious between Catholics and Protestants: the merit accruing from good works of mercy and piety, and whether it is appropriate to speak of an 'assurance' of salvation.
44. It is convenient for purposes of presentation to consider the effect of grace under three sub-headings: the grace that enables, the grace that justifies, and the grace that sanctifies. However, these are not separate effects, as if the work of grace was simply a linear process, but rather related aspects of God's work of salvation and the call to holiness. In addressing the subject of grace, the *Methodist Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is an important source of basic agreement between Catholics and Methodists (and Lutherans) concerning theological questions that have divided Catholics and Protestants since the Reformation.

The Grace of God in Jesus Christ

45. Catholics and Methodists describe 'grace' in similar terms. For Catholics, grace is 'favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons [and daughters], partakers of the divine nature and eternal life' (CCC §1996). For Methodists, grace is 'God's sovereign love and favour, freely given to undeserving and hostile people' (CPM §10). The mystery of salvation is the work of a gracious God through the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life' (John 3.16).
46. God's grace, then, is not an abstract idea but is saving love revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh and the one 'full of grace and truth' (John 1.14). Christians confess that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Tim 1.15), and his grace towards humankind is revealed in that 'he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross' (Phil 2.8). The grace of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 13.13) is directed towards the salvation of humankind, and it is 'from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace' (John 1.16).
47. In the mystery of salvation, the grace of Jesus Christ transforms the human nature and its condition, for 'if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation' (2 Cor 5.17-18).

Being re-created as human beings ‘in Christ’ constitutes a new way of living in the world, reconciled to God and to one another. St Paul urges the members of Christ’s body, the Church, to ‘let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus’ (Phil 2.5). In growing conformity with the mind of Christ, the Christian life is consciously patterned on his earthly life so that those ‘in Christ’ follow his example of holy living.

48. The saving love of God, which Christians proclaim for all people, is not confined to humankind as if the rest of creation were merely a stage for the drama of human salvation. While the focus of this present report concerns grace at work in human beings and communities, the full implications of the biblical view of salvation as new creation are that the work of Christ leads to the fulfilment of God’s purpose for the whole created order and not just for humankind. Consequently, holy living involves Christians witnessing together to the responsibility of humankind for stewardship of the earth (Gen 2.15b), which is God’s good creation (Dublin §22; cf. HEFG).

The Grace of God and the Holy Spirit

49. Luke–Acts describes how the Holy Spirit is constantly present and active in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that Mary conceives (Luke 1.35). The Spirit descends upon Jesus at his baptism ‘in bodily form like a dove’ (Luke 3.22). As a result, he is ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ (Luke 4.1) and ‘filled with the power of the Spirit’ (Luke 4.14). The Spirit anoints Jesus to proclaim good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour (Luke 4.18-19).
50. Jesus promises that God the Father will give the gift of the Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11.13). The Spirit will teach the followers of Jesus what to say in a time of trial (Luke 12.12). The risen Lord tells the apostles, ‘you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you’ (Acts 1.8). On the day of Pentecost, the apostles are together ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2.4), empowering Peter to proclaim that those who repent and are baptized ‘will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2.1-21). The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost establishes the Church as a worshipping community of faith (Acts 2.42-26) and not merely a collection of individuals.
51. The Holy Spirit continues to be present and active in the Church throughout the ages, testifying on behalf of Jesus (John 15.26), teaching the community of faith and reminding them of his words (John 14.26), and guiding the Church into the fullness of the truth revealed in Christ (John 16.13). The Holy Spirit is ‘the Spirit of grace’ (Heb 10.29), who makes the grace of Christ present and active, drawing people into a deepening relationship of communion or fellowship with God and with one another. The effect upon the human person is profound: ‘The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it’ (CCC §1999).
52. The diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit are always a gift of grace in one form or another. The Spirit bestows these gifts individually for the common good of the Church (1 Cor 12.7; LG §12). There are varieties of spiritual gifts and corresponding services for building up the Church, but the same Spirit (1 Cor 12.4). Besides those spiritual gifts that are associated with the sacraments and authorised ministries, Catholics and Methodists attest the freedom of the Holy Spirit to bestow particular gifts or charisms

‘just as the Spirit chooses’ (1 Cor 12.11). In both Catholic and Methodist traditions, charismatic renewal among the baptised has been a recurring feature.

The Grace that Enables

53. Catholics and Methodists ‘confess together that all persons depend completely on the saving grace of God for their salvation’ (JDDJ §19). As sinners, they are incapable of attaining salvation by their own efforts or even of turning by themselves to God to seek deliverance. Living under God’s judgement, they are saved solely as a result of God’s mercy. The initiative in salvation, therefore, rests with God, whose grace precedes and facilitates the human response. In all aspects of God’s work of salvation, the initiative, the agency, and the consummation are the work of the Holy Spirit, who brings Christ to us and leads us to faith in him (Honolulu §15).
54. The Holy Spirit is at work even before individuals come to faith in Jesus Christ since the preparation of people for the reception of grace is already a work of grace (CCC §2001). It is only by God’s grace that human beings have the ‘capacity to respond to salvation offered us through Jesus Christ’.¹¹ Such enabling grace, universally at work in human beings, is what the Council of Trent called ‘prevenient grace’ – a term later used by John Wesley in his account of salvation (Honolulu §14). Since human beings are never without enabling grace, there can be no radical separation of ‘nature’ and ‘grace’; thus, God’s work of salvation in Jesus Christ involves ‘grace upon grace’ (John 1.16).
55. Enabling grace is just that, however: it does not remove the need for a free human response to God’s initiative in salvation. Catholics and Methodists reject the idea of universal salvation where this is interpreted as meaning that all will be saved whether or not they freely consent. For Catholics, enabling grace arouses and sustains human collaboration in God’s work of salvation, but still requires a free response (CCC §§2001-2). Likewise, in Methodist understanding, enabling grace ‘assists’ but does not ‘force’ the human response.¹² Catholics and Methodists agree together that the ‘person who is saved is saved by grace *with* free consent (in the case of an adult) but not saved *by* free consent’ (JCS, p. 89). St Augustine expressed this eloquently: ‘God, who has created human beings without them, will not save them without them’.¹³
56. The positive human response to God’s saving love is what the New Testament calls repentance. At the outset of his ministry, Jesus proclaimed: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news’ (Mark 1.15). For Methodists, ‘Repentance is turning in sorrow away from sin and turning to God to seek forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ’ (CPM §4). Similarly, for Catholics, ‘moved by grace, [a person] turns toward God and away from sin’ (CCC §1989). Catholics and Methodists often refer to this first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit in terms of conversion.
57. The person of Mary, the Mother of the Lord, beautifully illustrates enabling grace at work to uniquely powerful effect. ‘She embodies in a special way the freely-given, unmerited grace of God. Mary can be said to be a sign or icon of “grace alone” (*sola*

¹¹ Saved by Grace: A Statement of World Methodist Belief and Practice (1986; repr. 1996) §7.

¹² Cf. John Wesley’s sermon, ‘The General Spread of the Gospel’, §11, WJW 2:489; MAJDDJ §4.1.

¹³ Cited in CCC §1847: *Sermo* 169, 11, 13: PL 38, 923.

gratia). By grace alone she was enabled freely and courageously to say her “Yes” to God’s call to her: “I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1.38). By grace alone, Mary’s poverty of spirit received the gift of becoming the mother of her Lord’ (MML §8).

The Grace that Justifies

58. One of the major controversies of the Reformation concerned the doctrine of justification. A foundational biblical text for the Reformers was Ephesians 2.8-9: ‘For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works so that no one may boast.’ For Catholic theologians at that time, the Reformers’ emphasis undermined the necessity for good works in the Christian life: ‘faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead’ (Jas 1.17). These contrasting perspectives became entrenched in seemingly irreconcilable doctrinal differences concerning justification.
59. Given the history of controversy between Catholics and Protestants concerning justification, it is of immense significance that today Catholics and Methodists together confess: ‘By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works’ (JDDJ §15). Even faith is not a human achievement since ‘faith is itself God’s gift through the Holy Spirit who works through word and sacrament in the community of believers’ (JDDJ §16).
60. The New Testament describes in various ways what it means for sinners to be ‘justified’ before God. Justification means liberation from the dominating power of sin and death (Rom 5.12-21) and from the curse of the law (Gal 3.10-14) through the forgiveness of sins (Rom 3.23-25; Acts 13.39; Luke 18.14). Justification unites a sinner with Christ and his death and resurrection (Rom 6.5). Justification means being accepted into a relationship of communion (*koinonia*) with God – already now, but then fully in God’s coming kingdom (Rom 5.1f; JDDJ §11).
61. Although good works do not contribute to justification, they are its inevitable consequence. Faith in the saving action of God in Christ is always and necessarily active in love and thus results in good works of mercy and piety. Nevertheless, ‘whatever in the justified precedes or follows the free gift of faith is neither the basis of justification nor merits it’ (JDDJ §25).
62. Justification occurs through the reception of the Holy Spirit and incorporation into the body of Christ (Rom 8.1f, 9f; 1 Cor 12.12f), of which the sacrament of Baptism is the effective sign. New birth, cleansing, regeneration, and conversion are all terms used to describe the process by which people are brought by God from the state of sin into the new life in Christ (CPM §15; CCC §§1214, 1987).
63. The grace of justification re-creates the human person, though not necessarily in a permanent state of being. Catholics and Methodists reject the idea that the justified will always persevere in grace to the end. It always remains possible for the justified to depart from grace and fall back into a state of sin, though, even then, the grace of God makes it possible to repent afresh and receive the grace that justifies.

The Grace that Sanctifies

64. Justification is not an isolated event in the Christian life but one aspect of a process of sanctification or being made holy through a deepening relationship with Christ in his body, the Church (Honolulu §13). ‘Justification and sanctification go together as two sides of one coin: distinct but belonging together’ (JCS, p. 88). Having received the grace of justification, the process of sanctification involves a deepening experience of sanctifying grace as the Christian grows in the image of Christ and is drawn more deeply into participation in the divine life of the Trinity (Seoul §110).
65. Sanctifying grace is not only interior to the human soul, but also involves a commitment to holy living in every sphere of human life (cf. Rom 12.1). Catholics and Methodists confess together that good works of mercy and piety are the fruit of justification and an obligation of holy living (JDDJ §37). As such, they belong to God’s victory over sin and death. For Catholics, ‘sanctifying grace is an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love’ (CCC §2000). Similarly, for Methodists, sanctifying grace is an habitual disposition such that ‘faith working through love’ (Gal 5.6) produces good works in the lives of the faithful.
66. Holy living itself leads to growth in sanctifying grace. For Catholics, ‘good works, made possible by grace and the working of the Holy Spirit, contribute to growth in grace, so that the righteousness that comes from God is preserved and communion with Christ is deepened’ (JDDJ §38). For Methodists, ‘works [of mercy and piety] also help the believers to live their lives in communion with God and to be “co-workers with God” (1 Cor 3.7) in the field of God’s mission and in ministry to the poor and to those who need the love of God most’ (MAJDDJ §4.7; cf. BDUMC/ART 10).
67. Being committed to holy living should not make Christians complacent about the state of their lives. As noted above, justification is not necessarily a permanent state. Christians must be constantly aware of the danger of backsliding and being caught by the power of sin (cf. 1 John 1.6-9; MAJDDJ §4.4). At the same time, awareness of the ever-present danger of sin should not lead Christians to doubt the effect of sanctifying grace in their lives.

The Universal Call to Holiness

68. The grace that enables, the grace that justifies, and the grace that sanctifies are aspects of God’s saving love and call to holiness. As such, they are always and necessarily related directly or indirectly to the Church: the people of God, the body of Christ, and temple of the Holy Spirit. For the Church itself is a fruit of God’s grace, and its nature and mission belong to the mystery of God’s loving plan for the salvation of all humanity (Seoul §49).
69. Catholics affirm the ‘universal call to holiness in the Church’: since Christ is holy, ‘in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or cared for by it, is called to holiness’ (LG §39). The call to holiness similarly lies at the heart of Methodism,

whose providential mission has been ‘to reform the nation, particularly the Church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land’.¹⁴

70. The call to holiness is addressed to people in their cultural, social, and historical contexts and is thus personal and collective, transcending but not eradicating those contexts. In the Old Testament, God calls the people of Israel to be a light to the nations (Deut 7.6). In the New Testament, the Great Commission is to ‘go therefore and make disciples of all nations’ (Matt 28.19). As the visible community of those who have responded to the call to holiness, the Church in the New Testament already comprises Jews and Gentiles, ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people’ (1 Pet 2.9).
71. As the people of God, ‘The Church is called to be an effective sign to the world of the saving and gathering purpose of God for all humanity, and a foretaste of our final gathering by God in heaven’ (Seoul §62). While elements of grace and holiness exist beyond the visible Church as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, these are always and necessarily directed ultimately towards incorporation into Christ. All recipients of grace are thereby related or ‘ordered’ to the Church in some way.
72. As God’s chosen agent and instrument of the call to holiness, the Church on earth is essentially missionary, oriented towards the transformation of all things into the new creation in Christ. The work of evangelisation is directed towards bringing all peoples into the community of faith, and developing relationships and social structures that conform to the new creation in Christ.

Perfection in Love and Holiness

73. Jesus exhorts his disciples to ‘be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Matt 5.48). While absolute perfection belongs to God alone, Catholics and Methodists agree together that ‘sanctification is a process that leads to perfect love’ (Honolulu §18) as Christians grow in grace and devote themselves to the love of God and neighbour. The culmination of holy living and personal growth in grace is perfect love, which Methodists call entire sanctification or Christian perfection (cf. 1 Thess 5.23; Seoul §66).
74. For Methodists, Christian perfection is loving God ‘with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind’ and ‘your neighbour as yourself’ (cf. Matt 22.37-39; 1 John 2.5; MAJDDJ §4.4). Such love ‘does not imply an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations’.¹⁵ Those who receive sanctifying grace will continue to struggle against temptation and sin. ‘But in this struggle they are strengthened by the promise of the gospel that in Christ God has broken the power of sin.’ Christian perfection is always God’s gift and the work of grace and never the result of human merit or achievement (MAJDDJ §4.4).
75. Although Catholic theology generally does not refer to Christian perfection or entire sanctification as such, Catholic teaching affirms that ‘all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity [...] In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they

¹⁴ BDUMC, ‘Our Distinctive Heritage as United Methodists’, p. 49; cf. British Methodist ‘Deed of Union’, §4.

¹⁵ John Wesley’s sermon ‘Christian Perfection’, §1.9, WJW 2:104.

must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbour. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history' (LG §40).

76. Catholics and Methodists affirm in their respective ways that perfection in love is possible before death. Catholics emphasise the difficulty in conquering sin because of temptation and self-deception (cf. 1 John 1.8). Nevertheless, 'all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect' (LG §11). Methodists similarly recognize the reality of sin, but emphasise the possibility of perfection in love in the present life since there is no limit to the power of God's grace. For Wesley, such perfection, which is as much a process as a final state, is the deep desire and goal of holy living – the grace-enabled anticipation in time of the Christian's sanctification. An historical difference of emphasis between Catholics and Methodists should not obscure this substantial agreement concerning Christian perfection. The lives of the saints in the Catholic tradition and the lives of exemplary Christian persons in the Methodist tradition bear witness to the possibility of perfection in love.
77. Being brought into a final state of perfection in love and holiness is the work of grace. For Catholics, this final state of perfection is for most people attained through a post-death experience of purification, which is traditionally called 'purgatory'. Methodists take seriously those passages in scripture that suggest a process of purification from the effects of sin, but do not accept the Catholic doctrine of purgatory as it was understood and rejected by the Reformers (cf. BDUMC/ART 14). This subject will be addressed in Chapter Four.

Good Works and Merit

78. The question of whether and how Christians acquire 'merit' before God by virtue of their good works of mercy and piety has been controversial between Catholics and Protestants since the Reformation. The Reformers interpreted Catholic teaching on merit as contrary to their core theological conviction that justification is by grace through faith alone. Methodists inherited this perspective; for example, 'we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings' (BDUMC/ART 9).
79. Today, however, Catholics and Methodists agree together that 'by grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works' (JDDJ §15). Good works of mercy and piety in the Christian life do not contribute to justification but are its fruit.
80. For Catholics, the possibility that good works in the Christian life acquire merit arises because God has freely chosen to involve human beings in the work of grace. The merit of good works is to be attributed primarily to the grace of God, and only in a derivative way to the faithful (CCC §2008). 'When Catholics affirm the "meritorious" character of good works, they wish to say that, according to the biblical witness, a

reward in heaven is promised to these works, which are motivated by love of God and neighbour and not calculated to obtain benefit. Their intention is to emphasize the responsibility of persons for their actions, not to contest the character of those works as gifts, or far less to deny that justification always remains the unmerited gift of grace' (JDDJ §38).

81. Methodists similarly affirm that individuals freely cooperate with the work of grace in such a way that they are fully responsible for their actions.¹⁶ Insofar, then, as good works motivated by love of God and neighbour are 'pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith' (BDUMC/ART 10), a gracious God will reward them corresponding to the 'merits' of the human actions involved. Thus, Jesus refers to a 'reward' from God the Father in response to almsgiving, prayer, and fasting (Matt 6.4, 6, 18).
82. Where Catholics and Methodists continue to differ concerns the possibility that the merit arising from the good works of Christians might aid the sanctification of others. For Catholics, such merit denotes the just recompense accruing to a community according to the benefit or harm done to it by one of its members (CCC §2006). In the Church, the merit of Christ is shared and celebrated by all. Since the Father's saving love enables Christians to become co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8.17), their prayers for undeserved reward will not go unanswered: 'Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, *we can then merit* for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life. Even temporal goods like health and friendship can be merited in accordance with God's wisdom' (CCC §2010).
83. While Catholics affirm the sufficiency and all-embracing value of God's saving action in Christ, nonetheless the bonds of love between Christians make possible a 'wonderful exchange' whereby the 'the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others' (CCC §1475; *Indulgentiarum doctrina* §5). The 'treasury of the Church' comprises the infinite value of Christ's merits, together with the 'prayers and good works' of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints of God (CCC §§1476-77; *Indulgentiarum doctrina* §5). By virtue of its power of binding and loosing granted by Christ, the Church 'intervenes in favour of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishments due for their sins' (CCC §1478; *Indulgentiarum doctrina* §5). The Church's intervention, known as granting an 'indulgence', is on behalf of the departed saints being purified of their sins.
84. Methodists ask why, if Catholics affirm that it is sufficient to rely on the infinite value of Christ's merit to aid individual Christians in their struggle against sin, it should be necessary to maintain the concept of a treasury of merit accruing from the prayers and good works of the people of God. Recognizing the undeserving nature of prayerful appeals to God, Methodist prayers for God's mercy often refer to 'the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ'. To the Methodist way of thinking, any idea that the reward for good works might somehow supplement Christ's merit to the benefit of specific

¹⁶ Cf. John Wesley's sermon, 'Working out your own salvation', WJW 3:199–209.

individuals undermines the sufficiency of his saving death and risks creating a mechanistic and transactional view of such works.

85. Nevertheless, the bonds of love between Christians lead Methodists to believe that the prayers of the faithful are mutually beneficial. Fervent intercessory prayer has always been at the heart of Methodist worship, whereby Methodists pray for the application of God's love and mercy for particular situations and people. Similarly, prayer meetings, in which the ordinary faithful gather to pray for specific concerns, have been a notable feature of Methodism and remain an integral part of congregational life in many Methodist churches. The efficacy of such prayers stems from the belief that God responds graciously and mercifully to interceding by the Church. In that sense, Methodists accept that good works of piety may benefit particular individuals.
86. Some Methodists would further accept that the prayers of the departed saints and the prayers of the saints on earth may also be mutually beneficial, albeit in ways that cannot be identified precisely in terms of their salvific effect. Following John Wesley's example, authorised liturgies in a number of Methodist churches make provision for a general prayer of intercession for the faithful departed. Further theological reflection on the implications of the bonds of love within the communion of saints may lead to greater convergence between Catholics and Methodists concerning the possibility of an 'exchange' whereby the holiness of one benefits others.

The Assurance of Faith and Salvation

87. 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen' (Heb 11.1). The Letter to the Hebrews urges that 'since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water' (Heb 10.19-22).
88. What the Letter to the Hebrews calls 'the assurance of things hoped for' or the 'full assurance of faith' stems from God's promises in Christ. Catholics and Methodists 'confess together that the faithful can rely on the mercy and promises of God. In spite of their own weakness and the manifold threats to their faith, on the strength of Christ's death and resurrection they can build on the effective promise of God's grace in Word and Sacrament and so be sure of this grace' (JDDJ §34).
89. Being sure of God's grace stems from the trustworthiness of God's promises and is confirmed by the interior work of the Holy Spirit: 'Christian religious experience includes the assurance of God's unmerited mercy in Christ, the inner witness of the Spirit that [Christians] are indeed children of God, pardoned and reconciled to the Father (Rom 8.12-17)' (Honolulu §24). Such experience of the 'full assurance of faith' is part of the Catholic and Methodist traditions. Famously, on 24 May 1738, John Wesley's heart was 'strangely warmed' in an experience of 'assurance' that God had taken away his sins and freed him from sin and death. In the Catholic tradition, there are lives of saints recorded that manifest this same joyous assurance of faith (e.g., Philip Neri).

90. But how, and in what sense, might it be possible to speak of an ‘assurance of salvation’? In the past, when Catholics heard Methodists speak of having the assurance of salvation they considered this to be a presumptuous assertion based on subjective experience. For their part, when Methodists heard Catholics question such experience, they considered this to reject the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the difference is one of emphasis and does not constitute a substantial disagreement between Catholics and Methodists in understanding the nature of Christian assurance. The objective work of salvation and the subjective awareness of that salvation coalesce in dynamic personal experience.
91. For Catholics, to have faith is to trust in God. No one can have faith in God and at the same time consider the divine promise untrustworthy. Recognizing their own weaknesses, shortcomings, and failures, believers may yet be certain that God *intends* their salvation (JDDJ §36). ‘Reflection on God’s blessings in our life and in the lives of the saints offers us a guarantee that grace is at work in us and spurs us on to even greater faith’ (CCC §2005). Having confidence or an assurance that saving grace is at work in them should not lead Christians to suppose they are thereby assured of salvation in any sense that denies the possibility of falling away from grace.
92. For Methodists, the assurance of salvation comes ‘through the promises given us in the Bible, by the inner assurance given us by the Holy Spirit, by the evidence in our actions of God’s working within us, and through the encouragement of fellow Christians’ (CPM §18). The experience of assurance is a treasured feature of Methodist piety, not as a guarantee of perseverance, which removes the need for hope, but as the Holy Spirit’s endowment of an inner conviction of having received saving grace (Seoul §120). As such, ‘assurance of faith and assurance of salvation have always belonged to the core of Methodist preaching. Such assurance is not seen as the certainty of possession, but as the reliability of a relationship which is founded in God’s love. This relationship is lived by using the “means of grace”, especially searching the Scriptures and receiving the Lord’s Supper’ (MAJDDJ §4.6). The assurance of salvation does not amount to an assurance of final salvation since it remains possible to fall from grace.

Phoebe Worrall Palmer

Phoebe Worrall was born in New York City in 1807 to devout Methodist parents, who nurtured her in the Christian faith through prayer, Bible study, and twice-daily family worship. From childhood, Phoebe desired to experience the emotional and datable conversion attested by others, but her spiritual longing would persist until 1837, ten years after her marriage to the Methodist physician Walter Clarke Palmer. On July 26, what she subsequently would describe as the ‘day of days’, she perceived that the Holy Spirit was leading her into an absolute and unconditional covenant with God.

Motivated out of heartfelt love for God and the aspiration to promote holiness, Phoebe held weekly prayer meetings for women – a practice that soon spread beyond her home and eventually permitted men. A powerful public speaker and preacher, she appealed for her hearers to place everything upon God’s altar that they might become perfect in love. Teaching that holiness necessarily issued forth in service to society and neighbour, Phoebe was an example by her support of the temperance movement and the abolition of slavery, and

by her involvement with the Methodist Ladies' Home Missionary Society. She is credited with being a founding director of the Five Points Mission in the slums of Lower Manhattan.

Several publications bear her name, among them: *The Way of Holiness* (1843, which went through multiple printings), *Entire Devotion to God* (1845), and *Faith and its Effects* (1848). She was a regular contributor to *Guide to Holiness*, and at the end of her life was the publication's editor. Because of her life example and her literary contributions, Phoebe is often described as the 'mother of the holiness movement'. Phoebe Palmer died in New York City on 2 November 1874. She continued to hold Tuesday prayer meetings right up to the time of her death.

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam combined his family life and professional life with a deep love for the poor and a dedication to relieving their suffering. His example has inspired many men and women within the Society of St Vincent de Paul throughout the world to be active in the care of the needy. The Society is well known and respected for its practical spirituality and ministry.

Born in Milan in 1813 and brought up in Lyon, Frédéric became a lawyer. He contributed to French Catholic intellectual life through his writings and association with leaders of the neo-Catholic movement of the early nineteenth century such as François-René de Chateaubriand, Jean-Baptiste Henri Lacordaire, and Charles René de Montalembert. He was also deeply involved in a discussion group with students, which often focused on the social teaching of the Gospel.

It was in this latter context that one of his adversaries pressed him regarding his Church's engagement with the poor of Paris. Stung by this challenge, Frédéric and a friend began to visit the tenements of Paris. Moved with compassion for the destitute they found there, in May 1833 Frédéric founded the Society of St Vincent de Paul. This association of laymen served those in need, inspired by the example of St Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) and under the influence of Sister (now Blessed) Rosalie Rendu, Daughter of Charity, who was prominent in her service of the poor in the slums of Paris. During a cholera epidemic, his newly founded society assisted the sick and became living examples of Christian faith in action in the 12th arrondissement of Paris.

Ozanam combined the intellectual and academic life of the university with his service of the poor and destitute. He died from consumption at the age of forty in 1853. Under his inspiration, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society has grown and is now present in countless parishes in many different countries. The practical spirituality of this organisation has helped many Catholic lay people to find a life of holiness serving the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.

CHAPTER THREE

God's Holy People: The Saints Below

93. The life of holiness for the Christian is fundamentally a walking with the risen Christ. In Luke's Gospel, the first encounter with Jesus after the resurrection takes place on a road – where bewilderment, anxiety, and doubt are transformed on recognising Jesus' presence (Luke 24.13-35). Through conversations about the scriptures, and through fellowship and the breaking of bread, Cleopas and his companion meet their risen Lord, their hearts 'burning within them'. It is this encounter that turns them around on their road to go back to the disciples in Jerusalem. Here they share the good news of Jesus' resurrection and abiding presence, and move the apostolic household another step along the road of mission in and to the world. It is this same journey into holiness and mission to which this chapter now turns.

The Church: A Holy People

94. Catholics and Methodists affirm the social nature of holy living. 'Being a Christian has necessarily both a personal and a communal aspect. It is a vital relationship to God in and through Jesus Christ in which faith, conversion of life, and membership in the Church are essential. Individual believers are joined in a family of disciples, so that belonging to Christ means also belonging to the Church which is his body' (Nairobi §11). It is this belonging together as Christ's body that characterises the communal practice of holy living for Methodists and Catholics. We are called to be holy together, as Church.
95. Previous reports from this Commission reveal a substantial common understanding of the nature of the Church despite some obvious differences in our respective ecclesial practices. A shared conviction that the Church is essentially missionary, and a common commitment to the life of grace and holiness as socially embodied, are key beliefs: 'both Catholic and Methodist churches are now concerned with structures *and* with holiness and mission, and indeed with the relationship among them. We agree that the Church's structures must effectively serve both the holiness of its members and the mission of the Church' (Seoul §101; cf. CLP §4.7.10).
96. The holiness of the Church is that of a people on the road, on pilgrimage, and so has the quality of both a present reality through the presence of the risen Jesus, who walks with us, and of a promise of holiness towards which disciples travel, step by step. The Church on its pilgrim way is still possessed of the sins and failings of its members, yet unmistakably oriented towards its future fulfilment in God. It is in this sense that Catholics and Methodists confess together, in the words of the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds, their belief in the church as holy.
97. The eschatological orientation of ecclesial life gives a theological context in which to locate and resolve some historically divisive issues, such as whether the Church itself is sinful. Catholics emphasise that the Church as an eschatologically present reality in the world is without sin, even though its individual members may be sinful. The Church is *sancta simul et semper purificanda* – 'at the same time holy and always in need of being purified' and so 'always follows the way of penance and renewal' (LG §8). The eschatological reality of the Church in Christ, however, does not find sinless

expression in the fallen world, where church members, along with some church processes, bear the marks and weakness of sin.

98. Methodists, whilst also affirming the holiness of the Church, emphasise that ecclesial structures can themselves be affected by sin. The Methodist reluctance to claim that the Church is sinless reflects a sensitivity to the risks in such a proposition, which can lead to a failure to repent and reform when sin occurs in the Church. Holiness can never simply be reduced to a possession or an unquestioned characteristic of the Church, but must always be understood as God's action and free gift.
99. These contrasting emphases are not mutually exclusive, though they have implications for the way that Methodists and Catholics respectively speak of the Church, its institutional forms, and the possibility and limitations of authoritative discernment. The implications are significant and underlie many persisting differences and divisions among Christians, especially concerning the relationship between the Church 'visible' (its historical, institutional reality) and 'invisible' (its spiritual reality in Christ). Although Catholics and Methodists each understand these realities to be related to one another, they differ in the way they describe that relationship. For Methodists, the correlation between the visible and the invisible Church is less theologically precise than it is for Catholics. Whilst such basic ecclesiological differences are not addressed here, they shape the context in which Methodists and Catholics respectively practice holy living.
100. The idea of the pilgrim journey lies at the heart of all aspects of the Church and Christian life. The risen Christ appears on the road from Jerusalem, and in the gathering of disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24.36ff), but his message is always the same – to move his friends from fear and doubt to faith and joy, so as to send them out into the world as witnesses to his resurrection (Luke 24.48-9). There is a proper sense in which Christian communities can be understood as 'households' of grace and holiness. As such, they are places of sending out and return, equipping the people of God for God's mission in and for the world. Thus, mission and service are characteristic of the call to holiness.
101. The Church, as the household of grace always preparing to set out on the road, is holy in that it communicates assuredly the blessings and graces of Christ's paschal mystery. This common belief in the Church as holy should never mask the realities of the Church as the home of sinners and a place of human brokenness or, to use the words of Pope Francis, as a 'field hospital'.¹⁷ For the Christian community, holiness is lived through the practices of love despite, and in, our woundedness. As a people shaped by the Lord's Prayer, Methodists and Catholics together know themselves to be a people totally dependent on God, the Father, who provides for all the needs of his children, and a forgiven people called to forgive and embody God's loving plan for a broken world. The holiness of the Church is not the product of Christian endeavour, but rather a free gift of God, which calls for gratitude, humility, and a desire to share this gift with all.

¹⁷ Pope Francis, in an interview with Antonio Spadaro SJ, August 2013:
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro.html.

102. The language of sacrament provides an approach for a shared understanding of the nature of the Church. This language is especially strong for Catholics, for whom ‘the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race’ (LG §1). As the body of Christ, the Church is not simply one means of grace among others, but is the essential means of grace for the world. At the same time, it is not that the Church *is* a sacrament, in the same way as the Eucharist, for example; rather, the Church is *like* a sacrament as a visible, concretely realised, and assured means of grace in the world.
103. Methodists also affirm that the Church is a means of grace. The Church itself, as sign, instrument, and foretaste of the kingdom of God, is grace-filled and instrumental in conferring grace (CLP §1.4.1; §3.1.7; §3.2.1; cf. Seoul §102). Again, as the ‘redeemed fellowship’ in Christ, the Church is grace-filled; as the ‘redeeming fellowship’, it is a means of grace (BDUMC/CON 5). Methodists agree with Catholics that the Church is sacramental in character, although they reserve the term ‘sacrament’ to describe Baptism and the Eucharist alone (cf. Seoul §102).
104. Building on this common sense of the Church as the sacramental and missionary means of grace for the world, the sections that follow explore the ecclesial practices of the Church that seek to nurture the holy living and mission of God’s pilgrim people. Beginning with the liturgical celebration of sacraments and rites in our churches, the following sections move on to shared thinking around practices of social justice, ethics, and personal and public devotions before reflecting on our traditions’ approaches to dying and death as the end of the Christian’s pilgrimage on earth.

The Household of Grace: Holy Living and the Sacraments

105. Just as Jesus, the incarnate Word, communicated with people through the senses, so in the Church Christians meet Christ in ways consistent with our human existence as embodied and social beings. The economy of salvation is sacramental in nature; God uses particular sensory experiences (sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste) in order to mediate grace assuredly, inviting men and women into a deepening relationship of communion or fellowship with God and one another, and calling them to holy living. Liturgies and worship practices, and especially the sacraments and preaching, are public ecclesial ways of nurturing holy living in the world.
106. For both Catholics and Methodists, the sacrament of Baptism is ‘a *vocation* – a continuous call into a life of pilgrimage toward the kingdom’ (Durban §68); ‘being baptised is a living, continuous reality’ (Durban §67). As a lifelong sacramental gracing of the Christian’s journey, Baptism is that participation in Christ that enables our hearts to burn with the Spirit as we hear God’s word, and brings us to communion with Christ in the breaking of bread, consecrating us for the holy work of God’s mission.
107. Despite certain differences in belief regarding the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, Methodists and Catholics affirm together that ongoing participation at the Eucharist renews the faithful for mission and holy living. In the breaking of the bread, Christ is truly present, and believers are sent out on the road to bear new witness to him. The Eucharist is food for the pilgrim journey which transforms disciples more and more into the likeness of God’s own Son (cf. Seoul §94). For Catholics, the Eucharist is the

‘source and summit of all the Christian life’ (SC §7; LG §11). For Methodists, the Lord’s Supper is among the chief means of grace.¹⁸

108. For Catholics, Baptism and Eucharist, along with confirmation, constitute the sacraments of initiation. Methodists regard Baptism as the single sacrament of initiation, but agree that Baptism usually culminates with participation in the Eucharist. Methodists may also have a supplementary rite of confirmation or some other liturgical form of reception into ‘full membership’ of the Church, which for some Methodists may be like a sacrament in character. Rites of confirmation, for Catholics and for Methodists who practise them, deepen the bonds of relationship that bind persons to the Christian community and strengthen growth in holiness for mission, through the power of the Holy Spirit (Durban §70).
109. Catholics identify four further sacraments: matrimony, holy orders, penance and reconciliation, and the anointing of the sick. Methodists recognise a sacramental character to these rites without naming them as sacraments. Such rites call upon the Lord to confer grace for the holiness of the individual Christian and that of the household of faith. The two principal rites of vocation for adults – marriage and orders – give structure to the household. Prior to each rite there is a strong tradition of discernment, a prayerful questioning: to what is God calling me, and where do I belong within the Christian community? These questions properly belong together. The grace given and the holiness sought in married or ordained life is always rooted in the context of the community of faith, but lived in service to the world beyond. Sacramental grace is always conferred upon the individual, but destined for the gracing of the wider community.
110. In addition to the married and ordained states, many Christians have felt called to holiness in the single life or in various forms of consecrated and community life. Historically, for Catholics, consecrated modes of life have often been inspired by a charismatic founder. In some cases, the emphasis has been a particular approach to prayer. In other cases, the *charism* has been a mode of evangelical life that reinvigorates the spiritual life of the Church. Still more communities were established to respond to particular needs such as poverty, education or health. For Catholics and Methodists alike, community life and emerging forms of consecrated life continue to be discovered and lived with integrity as Christians prayerfully discern how God is calling them to respond to the Gospel and the needs of the world. There is no hierarchy between the various states of Christian life: all are called to avenues to, and expressions of, holiness (cf. LG §39).
111. In all forms of life – and often very publicly in ordained ministry and married life – there are tragedies of sin, weakness, and human frailty. The earthly pilgrimage into holiness is marked not only by Christ’s presence but also by weakness and sin. Here, too, the ecclesial celebrations of our communities seek to nurture the holy life. Catholics and Methodists stand together in their commitment to a vision of the Church as a community close to those in want; close particularly to those whose sin, weakness, and marginalisation leaves them in need of compassion, accompaniment, and the binding of wounds. Holiness is not primarily about success in being good, but

¹⁸ John Wesley’s sermon ‘The Means of Grace’, §II.1, WJW 1:381.

rather about being open in all the brokenness and giftedness of human life to God's transforming grace.

112. In response to the reality of sin, weakness, and frailty, Catholics recognise two sacraments of healing: penance and reconciliation (commonly called 'confession'), and the anointing of the sick. Whilst Methodists do not name such rites as sacraments, they count them among the 'prudential means of grace' (Nairobi §13; Brighton §§59-60).
113. Methodists have a long history of the careful and communal examination of conscience: in early Methodism, small groups such as the weekly class meeting provided a forum for such examination. The same desire to engage with the question 'How is it with your soul?' and to speak freely about obstacles to holy living can also be recognised in the Catholic instinct towards the confessional and the tradition of a nightly examination of conscience. For Catholics and Methodists, rites of self-examination, repentance, and reconciliation are intended to be core practices of a pilgrim people.
114. In continuation of Jesus' healing ministry, Christians from earliest times prayed with, laid hands upon, and anointed those amongst them who were ill (Jas 5.14-15). Catholics and Methodists alike have seen caring for the sick as an intrinsic part of holy living, which has included the establishment of health facilities and places for tending to the infirm. In these and other ways, both our traditions find a place for physical frailty within the life of those called to holiness. Indeed, sickness itself can be transformed by grace into a particular form of holy living and service.
115. Whilst participation in these sacraments and rites does not, of itself, necessarily constitute holy living, nevertheless such events are particular and effective moments in the reception of grace strengthening a pilgrim people traversing a difficult terrain. For Methodists and Catholics, the graces conferred in the household of the Church are always oriented to the living of holiness in and for the world, which compels disciples out on to the road to recognise the Lord's presence there in new and sometimes surprising ways.

Shared Practices of Holy Living

116. The importance of the sacraments and other liturgical celebrations in the life of the Church should not be allowed to eclipse the many other practices of holiness in the world, which also are constituent of holy living. Central to these is the reading and study of the scriptures, in personal as well as communal settings. Sacred scripture is 'the highest authority in matters of faith' (*Ut unum sint* §79) and thus a privileged means of encountering the life of God. As we journey in holiness, 'it is Christ, through the Holy Spirit, who opens our minds to understand the Scriptures' (Seoul §55), firing our hearts anew. For both Catholics and Methodists, public worship necessarily includes the faithful reading of the scriptures, which is itself a means of grace for nurturing growth in holiness (Rio §107).
117. Both Catholic and Methodist traditions encourage Bible reading and study in small groups as well as regular personal reading of the scriptures. This aspect of holy living has undergone significant renewal among Catholics in the last two generations. At the

Second Vatican Council, St Jerome's saying that 'ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ' was invoked in order to encourage 'all the Christian faithful [...] to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the "excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil 3.8)' (*Dei Verbum* §25). This renewal of scriptural devotion draws our two communions into a deepening relationship, as increasingly Christians are able to read and study the scriptures together.

118. In different ways both Catholics and Methodists have sought to describe the characteristics of personal holiness from a particular reading of the scriptures, notably the Beatitudes and the New Testament Epistles. Thus John Wesley referred to a 'holy disposition' or 'holy tempers' as a way of giving a more detailed and practical account of what holiness looks like in the Christian. A holy 'disposition' or 'temper' is an orientation of the human heart (i.e., the will) towards God, resulting in particular behaviours. Holy tempers are 'stable, orienting dispositions' that stem from the love of God, arising out of grace and human responsibility. Hence, Wesley could speak of 'working out' one's own salvation. Such holy tempers include humility, meekness, and simplicity. In comparison, 'affections' are more 'transient' (Wesley's word), less enduring and habituated, and include the temporary experience of joy, hope, gratitude, fear, holy mourning, and peace. Tempers are foundational and even inform the affections.
119. This Wesleyan language of holy tempers, with its strong emphasis on basic dispositions and habits that shape the affections, has a good deal in common with the Catholic language of virtues. St Gregory of Nyssa makes clear the role of the virtues in the Christian call to holiness: 'The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God'.¹⁹ As with Wesley's 'tempers', the virtues are not themselves acts, but rather orient the whole person to what is good and so shape a person's actions and decisions (cf. CCC §1803). For the Catholic tradition, growth in virtue requires human effort, especially in relation to the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. At the same time, it is the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which originate in God and the gift of the Holy Spirit, that are the foundation of all Christian moral life: 'they are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being' (CCC §1813).
120. The Christian life of holiness is characterised by the joyful proclamation of the risen Christ as he is encountered on the road: 'Woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!' (1 Cor 9.16; cf. Rom 10.14-15). This witness requires a profound engagement with the complexity of the world and the diversity of human cultures. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, giving an account of Christian hope requires all the intelligence and skill that disciples can bring to the task. Methodists and Catholics agree together that Christians witness to the Gospel and evangelise not only, or even primarily, through their words, but above all by holy living as characterised by personal faithfulness and Gospel-based action in the world.
121. Both Catholics and Methodists have long traditions of witness to the Gospel through active engagement with the world in service to God's reign, and can together speak with a common voice into the places of power and decision-making. Thus, holiness is practical as well as spiritual. Holy living is expressed socially in the pursuit of justice

¹⁹ St Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus*, 1.

and in acts of mercy. It is, for example: to speak into political debates concerning the environment and how human beings are called to inhabit God's creation; to welcome the stranger, offer sanctuary to the foreigner, protect the vulnerable, and confront human enslavement and trafficking; to challenge unjust social structures and promote the development of the poor by working for improved access to education, healthcare and employment with a just wage; and to eradicate the structural causes of poverty.²⁰ Such holy living will require personal and corporate divestment of status and privilege in solidarity with those being served, so as to be a 'church that is poor and for the poor', thereby embodying God's compassion and love for the world.

122. Works of holiness in and for the world are deeply rooted in the practice of prayer in all its corporate and personal forms. Many of these are common to the Catholic and Methodist traditions: private and family prayers; the singing of Christian songs and hymns; pilgrimages to holy sites and shrines; quiet days and spiritual retreats. Similarly, both Catholics and Methodists encourage fasting and almsgiving as foundations both for growth in personal holiness and as acts of charity and solidarity with others. In many parts of the world, such holy practices are lived out ecumenically with fellow Christians.

Areas for Continuing Dialogue

123. Whilst there is much that Methodists and Catholics hold in common in terms of holy living in the world, there are also areas of unease and difference. In particular, there are a number of devotional practices traditional in Catholic life that raise questions, and even some alarm, for Methodists. Particular areas of Methodist discomfort relate to the Catholic emphasis on certain bodily gestures, the use and veneration of images, the blessing of inanimate objects, and specific devotions regarding Mary, the saints, the veneration of relics, and adoration of the Eucharist. The particular concern is whether the centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ is in danger of being obscured and whether the Gospel is in danger of being compromised by superstition. Whilst some Methodists appreciate the use of Christian images in worship, devotions and education, they also share John Wesley's concern that 'what were at first designed as monuments of edification, became the instruments of superstition'.²¹
124. Nevertheless, in many parts of the world, Methodists are beginning to rediscover a more sensual or embodied spirituality as a way towards holiness, through the use of candles and religious artefacts in worship, anointing with oil, and devotional practices related to the liturgical year. Such developments not only reflect something of the holistic spiritual sensibilities of contemporary Western culture, but also revive the strong sacramentality of the Wesleyan tradition, and so open ways into a deeper understanding of more especially Catholic devotions.
125. Devotional practices spring from the hearts and life of faithful people in particular places and times, and so necessarily reflect cultural and contextual features. This means that certain devotional practices in one part of the world may seem strange or

²⁰ This has been a major emphasis of recent teaching of Pope Francis; cf. 'A Church Seeking Justice: The Challenge of Pope Francis to the Church in Canada', Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (2015) (<http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/184-902.pdf>).

²¹ John Wesley, 'The Origin of Image-Worship among Christians', *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., vol. 10 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984; repr. 1872 ed.), p. 176.

even alien elsewhere, even to those of the same ecclesial tradition. The ecclesial discernment of what constitutes appropriate devotional practice is a delicate task for both Methodists and Catholics.

126. Characteristic of many traditional Catholic devotions is an instinct for the *embodied* nature of holiness. ‘Genuine forms of popular religiosity are incarnate, since they are born of the incarnation of Christian faith in popular culture. For this reason they entail a personal relationship, not with vague spiritual energies or powers, but with God, with Christ, with Mary, with the saints. These devotions are fleshy, they have a face. They are capable of fostering relationships and not just enabling escapism’ (*Evangelii Gaudium* §90). Yet the Roman Catholic Church also expresses caution in regard to some devotional practices that have taken exaggerated forms and may be considered false expressions of piety (cf. LG §67).²² In this task, Catholics can be aided by the observations of their Methodist brothers and sisters.
127. Methodists and Catholics together recognise on the basis of scripture the unique role of Mary as Jesus’ Mother and God-bearer (*Theotokos*) (Matt 1.18-25; Luke 1.26-29), holy exemplar (Luke 2.19, 51), advocate for the poor and lowly (Luke 1.46-55), and disciple (Acts 1.12-14). Catholics also name Mary as intercessor (John 2.5) and Mother of all Christians (John 19.26-27). Whereas Methodists have no tradition of Marian devotion, Catholics have a significant tradition of devotions relating to the Mother of Our Lord: Marian prayers and anthems, praying the rosary, feast days, processions, and pilgrimages to sites of Marian apparitions. Many of these Marian devotions raise concerns for Methodists.
128. For Catholics, authentic Marian devotion draws the Christian into a closer relationship with God’s incarnation and humanity in Jesus through the mystery of Mary’s motherhood by the power of the Spirit. Although Marian devotion as such is not obligatory, whenever Catholics address Mary as ‘Mother’ or pray to and with her, they are expressing a natural, loving response to the mystery of this faithful woman in whose flesh God becomes incarnate, and in whose maternal love and care all people can trust. Catholics look to Mary as one who knows Jesus in a privileged and unique way; Marian devotions are simply expression of love for her.
129. A staple of Catholic devotional life is the ‘Hail Mary’ and particularly the rosary. While the origins of the rosary remain obscure, it is clear that, through the middle ages, the development of the 150 Hail Marys arranged in fifteen meditations or mysteries became established as a lay alternative to the monastic recitation of the 150 Psalms of the Divine Office: a means to holiness for the vast majority of the faithful who at that time would have been illiterate. These meditations reflect on the incarnation (joyful mysteries), the passion (sorrowful mysteries), and the resurrection (glorious mysteries). In 2002, Pope St John Paul II added five new mysteries (luminous mysteries), focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus. Catholics understand the rosary as ‘a Gospel prayer’ (*Marialis Cultus* §44), and its repeated prayers may be seen as means of entering into contemplation of the incarnation, ministry, suffering, and resurrection of Christ. Through its recitation, the Christian draws closer to Jesus in loving companionship with his Mother, the Mother of all Christians and the exemplary disciple: pondering, as she did, these things in her heart. ‘In the spiritual

²² See also *Directory on Popular Piety in the Liturgy*, 2001.

journey of the Rosary, based on the constant contemplation – in Mary’s company – of the face of Christ, this demanding ideal of being conformed to him is pursued through an association which could be described in terms of friendship’ (RVM §15). Catholics invite other Christians to recognise the spiritual benefit of praying the rosary to deepen their relationship with Jesus.

130. The Catholic practice of the veneration of relics causes concern for many Methodists. Though less common than it once was, the veneration of relics – often taken from the bodies or personal possessions of saints – is a long-established tradition within Catholicism. Permanent altars in Catholic churches typically include in their structure small relics of a saint related in some way to the community. This custom dates back to the ancient practice of celebrating the Eucharist in the catacombs or in cemeteries, where the tombs of the martyrs and other faithful departed were used as altars, thereby emphasising Christian belief in the resurrection of the body. Praying at the tombs of the saints, and venerating their relics, extends this practice. These affective actions give tangible expression to the real communion that the saints on earth have with the saints in heaven.
131. These devotional practices spring from the natural human desire to visit the graves of those we love, and to remember them by retaining certain of their possessions. Methodists similarly reverence special objects and places including the sites associated with significant figures in the Methodist tradition. Catholics would ask Methodists if they might be more accepting of the practice of venerating relics if understood in humanly affective ways. At the same time, Catholics might appropriately be challenged by the Methodist concerns about the attendant risk of idolatry; for even a very holy thing can become a focus for sinful idolatry. For both Catholics and Methodists, popular devotion to holy relics must always be properly discerned so that it does not detract from the worship of God alone.

Holy Dying

132. Holy living comes to its natural conclusion in death as the end of the pilgrim journey on earth. Catholics and Methodists believe that holy dying is part of holy living, and that the people of God witness to the Gospel in the manner of their dying. Edifying accounts of holy dying have inspired and encouraged the faithful in every generation as they contemplated the prospect of their own death. The possibility of seeking a ‘good death’ in the hope of the resurrection to eternal life is a powerful witness to the Gospel in the face of contemporary social trends where the end of life is regarded as a negative experience to be hastened.
133. In the Catholic tradition, a ‘good death’ has been a consistent theme for corporate and private prayer. At the end of life, the prayers and rites of the Church support holy living in the particular form of holy dying. Through repentance and the confession of sins in the sacrament of reconciliation, and in the anointing of the sacrament of healing, the dying person is strengthened to undertake his or her final journey. In these special circumstances, the dying person receives the Eucharist as ‘food for the journey’ (*viaticum*). The passing from this life through death is thus a profound moment of grace. Such a reverence for the end of life and the desire to enable holy dying continues to find expression today in the hospice movement advocated by Catholics and other Christians.

134. In a similar way, early Methodists believed that holy living prepared a person for the experience of holy dying, with a ‘good death’ regarded as a powerful and exemplary witness to Christ. Thus inspirational accounts of holy dying were often published in Methodist literature. Dying was viewed as an opportunity for further growth in grace, and so was often accompanied at the bedside by prayer, the singing of hymns, the reading of scripture, and sharing in the Lord’s Supper. Today, Methodists continue to follow these and similar rites and practices with the dying and at the time of death. Some liturgical resources draw upon prayers from the Catholic tradition, such as ‘Go forth, Christian soul’ (*Proficiscere*) (e.g., UMBW, p. 167; MWB, p. 431).
135. Methodists and Catholics share an understanding of dying as a graced experience, even in the face of suffering and loss. Therefore, holy dying is not simply a private affair or something exclusively for a spiritual elite. On the contrary, belief in holy dying informs Catholics and Methodists in their contribution to the spheres of public policy making and social and medical care, where the call to holiness finds expression in respecting the dignity of the dying and those close to them, and in presenting a vision of the end of life as a place of love, patience, care, and hope. At a time when, increasingly, dying is seen as ‘a waste of time’, and moves are being made towards the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide, Methodists and Catholics can speak together to political authorities to challenge some secular approaches to the end of life which demean the dying.

On the Road to Jerusalem—and Beyond

136. This chapter has investigated the ways in which Catholic and Methodist churches enable and accompany God’s pilgrim people in their growth in holiness. Implicit in the living of holiness – through the encounter with the risen Christ in scripture and sacraments, in prayer and action – is a call to life with God in beatitude. The journey of the Christian is a journey into the heart of the Trinity, into the perfect love which is the beginning and end of holiness. These reflections on holy living by pilgrims on ‘the way’ lead to a consideration of the ‘saints above’ and the final goal of holy living.

Saint Josephine Bakhita

Josephine Bakhita (a name which means ‘fortunate’) was canonised in 2000 and is recognised as a saint because of her holiness and the way in which she overcame unspeakable sufferings, discovered human freedom, and came to trust and profess faith in her Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Born in the region of Darfur in southern Sudan in 1869, Bakhita was kidnapped as a young girl and sold into slavery in the markets of El Obeid and Khartoum. Her owners treated her cruelly and she bore the physical scars of this suffering for the remainder of her life. Eventually she was bought by the Italian consul Callisto Legnani, who treated her well and showed her respect through small gestures of kindness. When Legnani had to return to Italy for political reasons, Bakhita obtained permission to travel with his family and so began the passage towards freedom. After spending some time with another family, she was entrusted to the Canossian Sisters in Venice. There she came to know about the God she had acknowledged since childhood: ‘I remembered how, as a child, when I contemplated the sun,

the moon, the stars, and all the beautiful things of nature, I was wondering, “who is the master of it all?” And I felt a keen desire to see Him, know Him, and pay Him homage’.²³

In 1890, she received baptism and was given the name Josephine. Six years later she entered the convent and spent the rest of her life in prayer, simple work, and welcoming people with kindness and warm hospitality. In spite of sickness and pain, she trusted and prayed ‘as the Master desires’. She died in 1947. Catholics recognise her as a Patron for those who are the victims of human trafficking and ask her intercession for freedom and dignity for those who are abused in this way.

The Reverend Dr Donald Oliver Soper, Baron Soper of Kingsway

Donald Soper made his mark in the world as a prophet of the soapbox. He preached in the open air weekly, on Wednesdays and Sundays, at Tower Hill and Speakers’ Corner in London – a ministry that he continued from 1926 until three weeks before his death in 1998 at the age of 95. He always managed to link profound Christian piety, holiness, and evangelical witness with concern for social justice and service to the poor. He led the West London Mission and its social work ministry for forty-two years.

Donald took the Sermon on the Mount not as a beautiful but impossible piece of idealism, but as a practical programme for living. His faith led him to a ministry which was always spiritually rooted, but to which social and political action was integral. He coined the phrase ‘fellowship of controversy’, which well describes the way he lived his Christian faith. Donald defended pacifism in an age of war and conflict. Though an outstanding broadcaster, he was banned from the BBC during the Second World War because he refused to soften his pacifist convictions. He was regularly knocked off the wall at Tower Hill because of his views.

As well as being President of the Methodist Conference of Great Britain in 1953, the highest office of that denomination, Soper founded or was active within organisations that reflected the convictions that sprang from his faith. He co-founded the Christian Socialist Movement in 1960, was for a time Chairman of the homelessness charity Shelter, President of the League against Cruel Sports, President of the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship, and President of the Methodist Peace Fellowship. In 1981, the World Methodist Council presented him with the World Methodist Peace Award. Despite all this, Donald Soper was content to be known as ‘one of Mr Wesley’s travelling preachers’.

²³ Maria Luisa Dagnino, *Bakhita Tells Her Story* (Rome: Casa Generalizia, Canossiane Figlie della Carità, 1993), p. 61.

CHAPTER FOUR

God's Holy People: The Saints Above

137. This chapter explores the transition of the Christian from death to eternal life, and to the final consummation of all things in Christ at the end of time. It focuses on the saints in heaven – the ‘saints above’. The culture of contemporary scientific thought makes it difficult for many people to understand the Christian mysteries concerning what follows death. The subject matter of this chapter, therefore, must be approached with humble Christian faith and due reticence, recognising that words, concepts, and images are inadequate to express the mystery of God's love and life beyond the grave. In the presence of mystery, it is better to say less rather than to attempt to speculate.
138. The richness of God's revelation in the scriptures provides the foundation for Christian teaching about the resurrection and eternal life. This truth is known both from Jesus' teaching – ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live’ (John 11.25) – and the witnesses to the resurrection. St Paul teaches that if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then faith is futile (1 Cor 15.20-21). Christians trust that ‘what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is’ (1 John 3.2). The Christian hope is that ‘we will be with the Lord for ever’ (1 Thess 4.17).
139. As friends and followers of Christ, Christians journey together as pilgrims towards the promise of eternal life and fellowship with the saints ‘standing before the throne’ (Rev 7.9). Jesus commands his disciples to love God and one another in relationships that begin in this life, but extend beyond death when knowledge and love will be perfected. ‘For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known’ (1 Cor 13.12).
140. There are many questions relating to ‘the last things’ which Christians explore because ‘faith seeks understanding’. The Gospels contain many references to the final judgement (cf. Matt 25.31-46) and speak of Christ's return in glory (cf. Mark 13.26). In Luke's Gospel (23.43), Jesus says to the penitent thief on the cross, ‘Today you will be with me in paradise’. This promise raises the question about what happens between a person's death, and the final judgement and general resurrection. Is there an intermediate state? What does it mean to speak of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ (Rev 21.1) when ‘Christ is all and in all’ (Col 3.11) and God's kingdom is fulfilled? What is the relationship between the saints below and the saints above?
141. Catholics and Methodists profess together the ecumenical creeds that affirm the communion of saints, the forgiveness sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. This common profession expresses a shared Christian hope, and yet there are differences in theological understanding between our communions, some of which stem from Reformation controversies. Moreover, what a Christian community believes is articulated in the context of particular local cultures, so that a common belief in the resurrection and life after death may yet be expressed in a diversity of liturgical and cultural forms.

Communion with the Saints Above

142. All the baptized, living and dead, make up the communion of saints. However, Methodists and Catholics recognize within this communion the exemplary presence of divine grace in specific persons whose words and holy living – even to the shedding of their blood for Jesus – testify to the transforming action of the Spirit. This ‘cloud of witnesses’ transcends ecclesiastical divisions (Singapore §66). The saints above, who have passed into the fullness of the mystery of God’s grace, are forever part of the community. Their witness and example from the past continue to be cherished; the saints above are held as instances of Christ’s closest love and as signs of the eventual fulfilment of all God’s promises (Singapore §75). Holy living among the saints below can be inspired by contemplating and meditating upon the witness of these exemplary figures.
143. The communion between the saints below and the saints above is like that of a family, where bonds of love continue to exist between the living and the departed. The dead are still remembered as family members in prayer and on special days as well as at particular places. There is a sense of solidarity with the saints above as faithful Christians who have lived the Gospel and become holy during their lives.

Come let us join our friends above
that have obtained the prize,
and on the eagle wings of love
to joy celestial rise;
Let all the saints terrestrial sing
with those to glory gone,
for all the servants of our King
in earth and heaven are one.²⁴

Death and the Hope of Resurrection

144. Death brings people to the uttermost limits of human experience, imposing a finality immersed in mystery. Human life is a life unto death. It is precisely in the face of death that the proclamation of the Gospel bursts forth: Jesus Christ has conquered sin and death and offers the promise of salvation, resurrection, and eternal life to all who believe in him (John 3.16-17). Through Baptism, the faithful share in the death and resurrection of Christ and become his adopted children to ‘walk in newness of life’ (Rom 6.3-8) as members of his body, God’s holy people. The assurance of Christ’s triumph over evil and sin inspires the pilgrimage of the Christian who desires to see God face to face and whose life anticipates the final resurrection. Physical death completes the dying with Christ that begins at Baptism and anticipates the fulfilment of the promise of resurrection. Whilst grief and loss naturally surround the end of life, Christians attribute a positive meaning to death: ‘For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain’ (Phil 1.21).
145. The rituals of dying are followed by rituals of death. Methodists and Catholics hold in common: prayer with the bereaved, often in the presence of the deceased; a wake or vigil; a funeral, memorial service or Mass; and burial or else cremation followed by the reverent disposal of the ashes. In these rites, the Christian community offers

²⁴ Version as first published in *Funeral Hymns* (London: [Strahan], 1759), no. 1.

consolation to those who mourn and proclaims its hope of resurrection by reading the scriptures and singing Christian hymns, and by entrusting the deceased to the mercy of God.

146. Christian teaching holds in tension the continuity of personal identity from this world to the next, and the discontinuity between life on earth and in heaven. St Paul expresses the conviction that not even death can separate a person from the love of Jesus Christ (Rom 8.38-39). This hope holds for all people. Christian belief affirms that God's creative power will reunite body and soul at the general resurrection after the pattern of Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15.49-53).
147. Catholics and Methodists together believe that God wills the salvation of all people, whilst also believing that salvation is attained exclusively through Jesus Christ (Acts 4.12). Hope for those who do not come to an explicit saving faith in Jesus Christ rests in a just and merciful God. Catholic teaching affirms that '[t]hose also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience' (LG §16). Methodists have not found it necessary to articulate authoritative teaching concerning the possible salvation of those who do not come to an explicit saving faith in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the Wesleyan theological tradition maintains that there is a basic knowledge of God available to those who have not heard the Gospel of Christ. Such knowledge is itself the result of universal prevenient grace, which is grounded in the atoning work of Christ. When humans respond to God's call to holiness, according to the enlightening knowledge that they have received by grace and through the power of the Holy Spirit, then there are grounds for hoping that this will lead to a saving relationship with God, which is always and necessarily through Jesus Christ.
148. Both Methodists and Catholics affirm their trust in the mercy of God regarding infants and others who die without receiving the sacrament of Baptism, believing that they, too, share in the promise of eternal life. Nevertheless, Catholics and Methodists are encouraged to baptize premature babies and others in danger of death. In cases of emergency, any person may baptize another using water in conjunction with the trinitarian formula. In response to pastoral need, Catholics and Methodists provide funeral rites for stillborn babies, who are commended to God's mercy (cf. UMBW, p. 171; MWB, p. 492). Pastorally, it is often important to offer parents a liturgical rite that enables them to voice their grief for the loss of their stillborn child and to show respect for the child's human dignity. More recently, liturgical rites have also been developed for women and parents who have suffered miscarriages. In tragic circumstances such as these, liturgical rites and pastoral care for the bereaved help acknowledge the reality of death and loss whilst assisting the process of grieving.

God's Judgement

149. The Apostles' Creed affirms that Christ 'will come again to judge the living and the dead'. Though some Christians find this idea of divine judgement unpalatable and prefer to focus exclusively on God's mercy, the fullness of the Gospel challenges believers to hold mercy and justice together. On the Day of Judgement, a person will stand before the holiness of God and the full story of his or her life will be laid bare (Matt 12.35-37). The consequences of holy living and the failures of sin will be

revealed before the Lord, who commanded his followers to love God and neighbour (Mark 12.30-31), to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, and to visit the sick and those in prison (Matt 25.31-46). At the same time, God bestows upon each person the gift of freedom so that there is always the possibility of accepting or rejecting God's gracious gift of salvation and the call to holiness.

150. Methodists and Catholics believe that God's particular judgement at the point of death determines a person's final destiny. Although some Methodist Holiness traditions teach and expect perfection in this life, both our traditions accept that many will fail to attain the unqualified holiness required before a person can see God face to face (Heb 12.14). When a person dies not having attained such perfection, Methodists and Catholics agree that this will be conferred in the transition to eternal life (JCS, p. 90). The nature of this transition is debated.
151. God's mercy is limitless, but neither Catholics nor Methodists believe in universalism (that all will be saved irrespective of their free will), accepting that a person may choose to sever his or her relationship with God. Catholics and Methodist traditions allow for a range of interpretations concerning what happens at the judgement, and both acknowledge the possibility of everlasting damnation. Likewise, both traditions have described hell in terms of the vivid scriptural image of everlasting fire. However, contemporary accounts of heaven and hell focus on the relationship with God. Like any relationship, a person's relationship with God after Baptism may mature and deepen or else diminish and wither. Hell can then be understood as the death of a relationship with God and thus total alienation from God. Both Catholics and Methodists consider it appropriate to hope that no one will be eternally damned.
152. A significant difference between Methodists and Catholics relates to the question of how unqualified holiness is conferred upon those who have died without having attained it. The Catholic doctrine of purgatory envisages a process of purification following death, in which intermediate state the deceased person is purged of sins and made perfect in holiness through the cleansing effect of God's grace. However, the Reformers rejected this teaching as merely speculative and liable to misuse. Following the lead of John Wesley, who similarly rejected the doctrine of purgatory as interpreted by the Reformers, Methodists have been circumspect in their teaching about this transition. Some Methodists understand perfection to be a gift from God bestowed instantaneously at death whilst others consider growth in holiness to continue in an intermediate state beyond death. Interestingly, Wesley appears to have held this latter view and writes of souls held in Abraham's bosom 'continually ripening for heaven' and states further: 'it is certain, human spirits swiftly increase in knowledge, in holiness, and in happiness, conversing with all the wise and holy souls that lived in all ages and nations from the beginning of the world'.²⁵
153. In recent times, Catholic teaching has further refined the doctrine of purgatory. Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 encyclical *The Hope that Saves (Spe salvi)* offers possibilities for developing an ecumenical understanding of purification after death. The encyclical describes the purification of the soul in terms of the dramatic encounter with Christ, before whom all falsehood melts away. There is pain in this encounter, as the sickness

²⁵ John Wesley's sermon 'On Faith', §6, WJW 4:191-92.

of our lives becomes evident to us, but ‘it is a blessed pain, in which the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God’ (*Spe salvi* §47). Seeking to overcome the theological controversy that arose when purgatory was conceived in terms of space and time, the encyclical states that ‘we cannot calculate the “duration” of this transforming burning in terms of the chronological measurements of this world. [...] it is heart’s time, it is the time of “passage” to communion with God in the Body of Christ’ (*Spe salvi* §47). Catholics offer this encyclical to Methodists as a possible way of describing a process of purification and perfection following death. The shared understanding of Catholics and Methodists that the transition from earthly to heavenly life depends on the gracious action of God provides a christological foundation for further dialogue concerning purification after death and the doctrine of purgatory.

Prayer for the Departed

154. Just as Christians pray for one another here on earth, Catholics continue to pray for those still being purified, and particularly their loved ones. That ‘all the ties of affection which knit us as one throughout our lives do not unravel with death’ encourages Catholics to believe that a spiritual exchange of prayer and its effects is possible between all members of the body of Christ.²⁶ Furthermore, a precedent for this practice can be found in a prayer in the deuterio-canonical scriptures for those who have died (2 Maccabees 12.44-45; cf. 1 Cor 3.15). Intercessory prayers are an act of trust in God’s merciful power to save through the redeeming work of Christ. Similarly, acts of charity, prayer, the celebration of the Mass for the intention of a loved one, or good works such as almsgiving through God’s grace can assist those who have died. Catholics pray for the faithful departed that their sins may be forgiven and that they may be welcomed into heaven: ‘Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.’
155. In rejecting the doctrine of purgatory, the sixteenth-century Reformers similarly rejected the practice of prayer for the departed. The twentieth century, however, witnessed a growing interest in prayer for the departed in response to pastoral needs created by a huge number of distant deaths caused by warfare. As a result, there are indications that Methodists may increasingly be open to the practice of prayer for the departed. Some Methodist liturgical rites acknowledge the place of the faithful departed within the communion of saints. In Eucharistic liturgies, the Sanctus in the prayer of thanksgiving refers to the saints above joining with the saints below in the worship of God. Methodist funeral liturgies sometimes refer to the communion of saints, especially at the commendation of the dead (‘Into the glorious company of the saints in light’; UMBW, p. 150). Specific prayers for the departed are often inspired by texts in the Catholic Requiem Mass; for example, ‘we pray for those who we love but see no longer’ (MWB p. 458) and ‘we praise you for the great company of all those who have finished their course in faith and now rest from their labor [...] Let perpetual light shine upon them’ (UMBW, p. 143).

The Saints joined in Love and Praise

156. Methodists and Catholics honour the saints above as witnesses to holiness and exemplars of holy living. Some, such as the apostles and martyrs of the early Church,

²⁶ Cf. *Order of Christian Funerals*, Invitation to Prayer from the Vigil for the Deceased, and CCC §§1475-6.

are publicly named and honoured as saints by all Christians. The saints in heaven praise God, while the saints on earth join in their praise through prayer, song and worship, especially in the Eucharist. The saints above encourage the saints below as they continue on their earthly pilgrimage: 'The saints on earth remain on pilgrimage, journeying towards and praying for an ever fuller expression of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. The saints in heaven are their unseen friends, divided temporarily by death, but united in faith, love, thanksgiving and praise' (CLP §2.4.13).

157. For Catholics, the saints in heaven are also intercessors because of the bonds of love that exist between all the members of the Church and Christ. The intercession of the saints is a daily occurrence as the saints are mentioned in liturgical prayers. In the words of the Preface of the Mass for the Saints, 'By their way of life you offer us an example, by communion with them you give us companionship, by their intercession, sure support, so that, encouraged by so great a cloud of witnesses, we may run as victors in the race before us and win with them the imperishable crown of glory' (RM). As well as soliciting the prayers of those around them, earthly pilgrims can ask their friends in heaven to intercede for them. This strong sense of mutual friendship and support builds up the communion of the Church through reciprocal prayer. All such prayer relies upon the merits gained by the death and resurrection of Christ, the one mediator, which are applied for the benefit of individuals and the community. In Catholic imagination, the earthly and heavenly choirs worship God in unison and pray for one another as friends in Christ.
158. Methodists acknowledge the mysterious solidarity of the saints above and the saints below, which stems from the indissoluble bonds of love and communion that unite them in the body of Christ. At the same time, Methodists have been reluctant to explore in detail the possible implications of that solidarity and mutual encouragement between the saints below and the saints above. They have generally been resistant to the invocation of saints lest the absolute uniqueness of Christ as sole mediator be compromised. Article 14 in John Wesley's abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England denounces the invocation of saints (among other Catholic practices) as 'a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God'. On the other hand, Wesley suggests elsewhere that the spirits of the faithful departed may minister alongside the angels to the living: 'may we not probably suppose that the spirits of the just, though generally lodged in paradise, yet may sometimes, in conjunction with the holy angels, minister to the heirs of salvation?' He then adds, 'how much will that add to the happiness of those spirits which are already discharged from the body, that they are permitted to minister to those whom they have left behind!' ²⁷ This suggests that God may commission the departed saints to minister to the living, though the living may not petition the saints for their specific intervention. Further convergence will depend on whether and how Methodists develop the liturgical and practical implications of the solidarity between the saints above and the saints below.
159. In this regard, the naming of saints days demonstrates the importance of the saints in Catholic and in certain Methodist liturgical calendars. Some Methodists have found the observance of saints' days and prayerful reflection on the lives of the saints to be

²⁷ John Wesley's sermon 'On Faith', §12, WJW 4:197.

helpful as signs of the love of God and the fruits of the Spirit, which inspire growth in holiness.

Mary: Life and Sign of Grace and Holiness

160. Chapter Three considered Mary, the Mother of the Lord, as a woman of prayer (Acts 1.14) who finds favour with God (Luke 1.30), is the servant of the Lord (Luke 1.38), and whose holiness always points towards Christ. Here the dogma of the Assumption of Mary is briefly examined in relation to grace and holiness, recognising that Methodists, in company with others, have reservations about its scriptural foundations.
161. Catholics believe that Mary, at the end of her bodily life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. The feast of the ‘falling asleep’ of Mary dates from the end of the sixth century. In the East, the feast was known as the ‘dormition’, which implied her death but did not exclude her being taken into heaven. In the West, the term used was ‘assumption’, which emphasized her being taken into heaven, but did not exclude the possibility of her dying. This belief is reflected in the theology of the early Church, though the dogma of the Assumption was not formally defined until 1950.
162. It is important to recognise that the ‘dogma does not adopt a particular position about how Mary’s life ended, nor does it use the language of death or resurrection, but rather focuses on the action of God in her’.²⁸ At the heart of the dogma is the conviction that at the end of her life Mary would be embraced and brought into the immediate presence of the God who took flesh in her womb. Prepared by grace for her unique role in salvation history, her path to holiness was lived in the intimacy of being Mother to the incarnate Word. Mary already shares fully in the hope of the resurrection, which is the hope of all. Her assumption into heaven is the completion of her redemption, being raised up by Christ and totally dependent on him. Catholics understand Mary to be all holy, *panagia*, thoroughly sanctified and perfected by the gift of the Holy Spirit who overshadows her and fills her life. In this, Mary is an anticipatory sign of what Christians are to become as individuals, but above all as the Holy Church of God. She is a sign and icon of the universal call to holiness (cf. MML §26).
163. Methodists similarly affirm the unique role of Mary in salvation history, as recorded in the scriptures – notably her grace-filled response to God’s invitation to carry the incarnate Word in her womb, and her exemplary discipleship in which she urges others also to heed the call to holiness (John 2.5). Although they find no scriptural foundation for the Catholic dogma of the Assumption, Methodists can affirm its core intention to bear witness to God’s saving work in Christ and the final consummation of holy living. By grace, Mary was made perfect in love and holiness through her close relationship with her son. From a Methodist perspective, Mary’s life is readily seen to manifest Christian perfection or entire sanctification. Thus, her ‘falling asleep’ anticipates and testifies to the glorious future of all God’s children made possible through the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
164. Where Catholics and Methodists continue to differ, however, concerns the way in which they respectively understand the spiritual and pastoral implications that Mary’s

²⁸ ARCIC, *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*, §58.

unique place within the communion of saints holds for the saints below. In invoking the prayers of the departed saints, Catholics regard the intercession of Mary as particularly effective because of her exalted status within the communion of saints through being 'Mother of God'. Methodists, on the other hand, find no reason to seek the intercession of Mary (or any other departed saint), for all are equally dependent upon Christ for their redemption. Methodists would ask Catholics whether an appeal to the intercession of Mary does not show a lack of confidence in Jesus Christ who lives forever to intercede for us (Heb 7.25; cf. Rom 8.34). Moreover, appealing to the intercession of Mary encourages an excessive devotion that detracts from the worship due to God alone, despite the theoretical distinctions present in Catholic doctrine. Catholics would ask Methodists whether being faithful to the witness of scripture does not lead to the recognition of Mary's exalted status in the new creation: 'my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant' (Luke 1.48). Moreover, scripture itself points to an appropriate devotion to Mary: 'Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed' (Luke 1.48). Continuing joint reflection on these questions will lead to greater mutual understanding and, hopefully, to greater convergence between Catholics and Methodists about Mary, the Mother of the Lord, as a sign of grace and holiness.

Awaiting the Lord's Return

165. Christian hope in the resurrection looks to the time when 'death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away' and all things will be made new (Rev 21.4-5). The scriptures speak of the end of salvation history in vivid imagery, prominent among which is the idea of 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Rev 21.1). In this heavenly state, all the saints will finally come to experience eternal life in the fullest and most immediate communion of love with God, joyfully participating in the 'messianic banquet' (Isa 25.6; Matt 22; Luke 14.15; Rev 7.16). Whereas 'now we see in a mirror, dimly, then we will see [God] face to face' (1 Cor 13.12). Catholics and Methodists believe heaven to be the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme happiness and bliss.
166. The article of the Apostles' Creed 'I believe in the resurrection of the body' – literally, the resurrection of the flesh – means not only will our immortal soul live on after death, but the 'mortal body' will also experience resurrection. Scriptural images speak of a transformation in which Christ 'will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body' (Phil 3.21) and of a 'spiritual body' in which perishable bodies put on imperishability (1 Cor 15.44, 49-55). Since Christ assumed all that is human, all that is human will be redeemed. Catholics and Methodists share this common hope and a responsibility to keep the promise of eternal life alive in the hearts of believers and to evangelise the world.
167. United in worship and prayer with the saints above, the saints below await the return of the Lord, as dramatically portrayed in the scriptures (1 Thess 4.16-17; Rev 21.2), which will bring salvation history to its close. The mission and ministry of the Church will finally be fulfilled when all things are restored in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1.10). Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses among the saints above, the saints below run with perseverance the race that is set before them, looking

to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of their faith (Heb 12.1-2). ‘Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!’ (Rev 22.20).

Heleny Guariba

Heleny Guariba is one of the ‘disappeared’ from the time of the military dictatorship and the so-called *anos de ferro* (‘iron years’) in Brazil (1964–1985). She was persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, and, it seems, executed by the National Intelligence Service. Despite all the suffering she underwent, Heleny remained faithful to her Lord and Saviour and to her understanding of God’s kingdom of justice and peace.

A Methodist, Heleny was a leader of her church youth movement and was dedicated to religious education particularly through her contributions to the magazine *Cruz de Malta*. These pedagogical writings always emphasised ecumenism, social issues, and the courage Christians required to witness in contemporary Brazil. On the strength of these articles, Heleny was dismissed from her job with the church as the regime’s grip tightened.

However, Heleny’s resistance continued. She was part of an underground network that provided safe passage for those under suspicion and in danger of arrest. One person she helped was Frei Beto, a Dominican friar and theologian. A year after his escape, the pair met again, this time in prison. Frei Beto wrote of her, ‘Even in prison your joy was contagious. I recall the scene of the last time we met: it was your birthday, and your children brought a cake with candles and a small present. When you untied the pink silk ribbon and unwrapped the paper, you saw the present and started to find it hilarious: how paradoxical after all the torture you had undergone. You started showing everybody and kissed your children who laughed with you [...] Soon after, you were released from prison. Even under torture nothing was proven against you! In July 1971, the news circulated about your disappearance. The only thing that is known is that you were taken by the national security service and died under torture. I heard that your body was thrown into the sea. I don’t know, I can’t accept it. The only thing that I know is that now Iemanjá (Queen of the seas) has for me a joyful face’.²⁹

Christian de Chergé

Christian de Chergé (1937–1996) was born in France, but spent part of his childhood in Algeria. He returned there for a time as a seminarian, and during that time, a Muslim friend saved his life during a military skirmish; the next day the friend was murdered for protecting Christian. Years later, Christian wrote, ‘in the blood of this friend, I came to know that my call to follow Christ would have to be lived out, sooner or later, in the very country in which I received the token of the greatest love of all.’³⁰

Eventually, Christian became a Trappist monk and, in time, prior of Notre Dame de l’Atlas Monastery, located in Tibhirine, Algeria. He and his community lived their monastic observance with dedication and in peace, having built strong relations with their Muslim neighbours. Christian occasionally gathered to pray with one of those neighbours, Mohammed, without losing sight of the significant differences between Muslims and Christians. They referred to their prayer as ‘digging a well together’. One day Christian asked Mohammed: ‘at the bottom of our well, what will we find? Muslim water or Christian water?’

²⁹ Frei Beto, *O Batismo de Sangue*, 6th ed. (1983), pp. 51-52.

³⁰ Christian Salenson, *Christian de Chergé: A Theology of Hope*, trans. Nada Conic (Trappist, KY: Cistercian Publications, 2012), p. 24.

Mohammed replied: 'You know very well that at the bottom of that well, what we'll find is God's water.'³¹

In 1993, unrest broke out between rebel forces and the Algerian government. All foreigners were warned to leave the country. The small community of monks decided to stay, eschewing government protection, in solidarity with their Muslim neighbours.

On 27 March 1996, seven of the monks were kidnapped by rebels belonging to the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). Weeks later, they were found dead, and Christian was among them.

Two years before the kidnapping, and aware of the danger his community was in, Christian sent a letter to his family in France to be opened in the event of his death. The letter concludes with this prayer for his would-be executioner:

And also you, my last-minute friend, who will not have known what you were doing: Yes, I want this thank you and this goodbye to be an 'A-Dieu' for you, too, because in God's face I see yours. May we meet again as happy thieves in Paradise, if it please God, the Father of us both. Amen! Inch'Allah!³²

³¹ Ibid., pp. 49-50.

³² Ibid., p. 199.

CHAPTER FIVE

Growing in Holiness Together: Openings for Common Witness, Devotion and Service

How Far have Catholics and Methodists travelled on their Shared Pilgrim Journey?

168. In the introduction to this report (§5), it was noted that ‘the call to holiness is a call to unity in the Church’, and that ‘holiness and Christian unity belong together as twin aspects of the same relationship with the Trinity such that the pursuit of either involves pursuit of the other’. The relationship between holiness and unity speaks directly to why our two world communions have entered into dialogue in the first place, and why the present topic has been addressed. Like Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus and then back to Jerusalem, Catholics and Methodists are communities of disciples who have encountered the risen Lord and been transformed by the encounter. We are travelling on the same road, seeking faithfully to follow the same Lord, desiring to be led by the same Spirit, and yearning to find our identity as children of the same Father. The triune God who calls us to holiness also calls us to unity.
169. It is now fifty years since the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church entered into dialogue, and that dialogue has been tremendously fruitful. In the ten rounds of this dialogue, commission members have repeatedly reached more convergences than were anticipated. The consensus between Catholics and Methodists concerning the trinitarian and christological foundations of faith, and convergence on many other aspects, is a tangible sign that the Holy Spirit has been fruitfully at work in our churches, and in our dialogue and efforts at reconciliation. When we consider all that the Spirit of God has achieved through fifty years of dialogue and growing relations, there is much cause for rejoicing.
170. The Commission’s experience in the current round of dialogue has been deeply encouraging. Mindful that the call to holiness is a universal and corporate summons, we have set out to address the ways our communities understand and seek holiness, naming common ground and addressing differences. We have found common ground in our understanding of the human person, created by and for God; in our understanding of divine grace at work, enabling, justifying, and sanctifying stumbling human beings, and creating sons and daughters of God capable of witnessing to and sharing in God’s saving work for the world; in the ways in which human beings are called to live holy lives in the Church and in the world; and in a shared hope for life with God after death. We have reflected upon continuing differences, and that conversation has led us to a deeper understanding of each other. When we have encountered differences which keep us from being in full communion, we have not experienced them as dead ends, but as areas where further work is necessary, and where the Spirit of God will need to show us a way forward in God’s time.
171. In the work of dialogue, the identification of common ground and exploration of divergences bring different tasks to our respective communions as dialogue partners on the road to the full visible unity of the Church. What are our next steps? Where is the Holy Spirit leading us next? At the end of the very first round of Catholic–Methodist dialogue, the Denver report (1971) spoke of its goal in terms of the ‘education of our Churches at lay, ministerial and local levels, for the overcoming of

prejudices and misunderstandings' (§121); closer communication and 'the stimulating of good relations, of dialogue and cooperation at national and local level' (§122); and of spiritual renewal, spiritual sharing (§129) and joint witness to Christian values (§131). In 1986, the Nairobi report identified a more comprehensive goal: 'full communion in faith, mission and sacramental life' (§20). That goal has been reiterated in subsequent reports and remains the objective of Catholic–Methodist dialogue.

172. Methodists and Catholics have come to see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and our churches as being in a relationship of real but incomplete or imperfect communion. For those engaged in dialogue over these past fifty years, that sense of a real communion, which binds us in God's love, has become increasingly strong and tangible.
173. The Commission is mindful that our dialogue reports are not well known among Catholics and Methodists, and that the consensus and convergences these texts have registered have not had the transformative effect on our relations for which we had hoped. Convergence statements such as these hold rich potential but, in the end, they are only documents until the insights and understandings they carry are received. This leaves us with both a sense of urgency and an abiding hope that our and other efforts at reconciliation between divided Christians will contribute to fruitful engagement in our churches.
174. The members of the Commission come from eleven different countries, and we have also met on four different continents in the current round of dialogue. This has provided frequent reminders that relations between Methodists and Catholics differ greatly in different parts of the world. In some regions, relations are cordial; in others, they are marked by suspicion. In some places, it is commonplace for Catholics and Methodists, often joined by Christians of other communities, to work together for justice or in charitable outreach; in other areas, the prospect of cooperation seems difficult and problematic. In some countries, gathering together for prayer and giving common witness to Christian faith happens frequently and with ease, whereas in other countries, such gatherings are rare. There are historical, social, and ecclesiastical reasons that help to explain the state of Catholic–Methodist relations in different parts of the world. But it is also the Commission's conviction, out of the experience of dialogue and encounter with each other, that those relations could be strengthened in every part of the world; that none embodies a full realization of what is possible; and that God wills that Catholics and Methodists learn to walk more closely together.
175. In 1952, shortly after the World Council of Churches was formed, the Lund Principle was formulated, inviting churches to ask themselves 'whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately'. Methodists have turned to the Lund Principle in numerous ecumenical engagements over the past decades. A Catholic version of the Lund Principle is articulated in the 1993 Ecumenical Directory, which notes that the contribution that Christians can make in responding to the world's needs 'will be more effective when they make it together, and when they are seen to be united in making it. Hence they will want to do everything together that is allowed by their faith' (§162). Unfortunately, the history of ecumenism suggests that it is not easy to change the way churches do things, and that there is a resistance to engage deeply in

shared witness and mission; churches tend to choose to do things separately except where extraordinary circumstances move them to act together.

176. In approaching this final chapter, readers are invited to ponder the relationship between holiness and unity, and to make a connection between the pursuit of holiness and the taking of steps towards reconciliation between our two communions based on our shared understanding of what binds us together. Each area where there is consensus in our understanding of the faith can translate into aspects of common witness, joint prayer, and a deeper sharing in the mission entrusted by Christ to his Church. Each convergence can be a stimulus for common study and ongoing dialogue. Each step towards a greater communion in faith, mission, and sacramental life is a valuable step.
177. At the opening of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome on 6 April 2016, Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, commented on the relationship between various steps moving Catholics and Methodists towards reconciliation: ‘We say that a principal duty of ecumenism is to join together in common witness and mission. But how can we engage in common witness unless we know we are inspired by a common love, flowing from the Trinity? And how can we locate that common love unless we pray together and speak with each other? Finally, as two worldwide communions, how can we hope to find one another in common prayer before the Lord and in holy conversation unless we create places to encounter each other and draw our structures, our mission, indeed our ecclesial lives into a closer relationship with each other?’
178. Ecumenical relations are not moved forward by compromise or negotiation. Rather, they are moved forward when encounter with the other leads to a recognition that our brothers and sisters in Christ of another Christian community hold much in common with us; that each of our communities is enriched when open to receiving gifts from the other; and when that which we hold in common is given lived expression in our churches through common prayer, ecumenical friendship, joint mission, and common witness. To engage in this work of reconciliation is an intrinsic part of the path to holiness willed by the all-holy God. Indeed, it is the Holy Spirit who is leading us on this journey, it is the Risen Lord who is accompanying us as we walk together.
179. In this final chapter, the Commission offers a summary, in the form of creedal statements based on previous chapters, of what Catholics and Methodists are able to say together. Where divergences have been registered, these will also be noted. Then we will raise a series of questions in terms of what might be able to flow from both common statements and divergences, mindful that these questions need to be answered not principally on the level of the universal Church, but in each country, region and congregation or parish where Methodists and Catholics live side by side. It is our hope that these creedal summaries and questions might be studied in congregations and schools, in families and among groups of clergy, in areas where Methodist–Catholic relations are strong, and in areas where they are minimal. It is our hope that these resources are approached with an eye to the profound relationship between the search for unity and the pursuit of holiness. All references in the section below are to paragraphs in this document, except where otherwise noted.

Revisiting Chapter One: The Human Person

180. Methodists and Catholics have come to recognize that in very significant ways they hold a common understanding of the human person. Together, we believe that:
- human beings are a mystery to themselves, a mystery that is to be lived in relationship with God, with others, and with creation (14, cf. 17-22);
 - humans are created by and for God (16), in the image of God (15), to be addressed by God and to hear and receive God's word (17);
 - the origin and destiny of the human person are connected to the identity of God (16); we are created with a desire that can only be fulfilled by communion with God (14);
 - our relationship with God is the one absolute dimension from which every other dimension takes its point of reference (20);
 - in our social nature we reflect the triune God in whose image we are created (19); as social beings, we are created for relationship with family, community, and society; life in community, which calls forth interpersonal self-giving, is integral to holy living (18-19);
 - in the encounter with the other as person, humans find themselves before an image that has not been fashioned by human hands (19); we thus have an obligation to respect and care for the other, and our identity and fulfilment is intrinsically linked to others;
 - human beings are created by God in such a way that they need the world that surrounds them for their own subsistence; furthermore, the world is filled with God's grace, and it is part of the human vocation to care for and nurture creation (20-22);
 - human beings were made to live in harmony with God, creation, and neighbour (20), and doing so carries both gifts and responsibilities which are an essential part of holy living;
 - human beings are a mysterious unity, constituted of body and soul (23-24); being embodied, humans are finite and mortal; being ensouled, we transcend the world and are called to immortality (23-24);
 - the human body was created good, is essential to personal identity, and is called to final transformation in the resurrection, but is currently weak, fallen, and in need of transformation (24-25);
 - human beings have been created with freedom, making us capable of love, communion, and the shaping of our identity by the choices we make; like all aspects of human existence, our freedom is finite and limited (26);
 - holiness requires human beings to recognize and respect the limits of our creaturely existence, and in our failure to do so, we have fallen; in our sin, we have become estranged from God, from others, and from the created world (27-29); all of history is shaped both by sin and by God's grace;
 - while sin can disfigure or deform God's image in the human being, it cannot destroy that image (30);
 - God does not want anyone to be lost; in God's great mercy, God does not abandon his fallen creatures but continues to overcome human estrangement by acting in our history and calling us into relationship (31-33).
181. Catholics and Methodists agree that the full mystery of the human person is revealed in Jesus Christ:

- just as the human being bears the image of the first Adam, so too are we made to bear the image of Jesus Christ, in the sharing of his risen body; the created image (*imago Dei*) marred by sin is made a new creation in the image of Christ (*imago Christi*) by the power of the Holy Spirit (34);
- the Christian vocation to holiness is to be conformed to Christ and clothed with his image (34);
- all has been created through Christ, and all is directed towards him; Christ is the one who gives the image of God in the human its true and definitive form; he is the full measure of human being, and the final goal of human existence (8, 36, 39);
- the plan of God, revealed initially in the gift of creation, is confirmed and re-created in the mysteries of the incarnation and redemption (15);
- salvation is above all liberation from sin and reconciliation to God in Christ (36);
- holy living begins with the recognition of many gifts received; it consists in living into one's baptismal identity in the ordinary tasks of daily affairs; in so doing, Christians contribute to the transformation of the world, the re-creation of the universe (37, 41);
- in Christ, human freedom attains its goal, receptivity to the Father and openness towards all people in an attitude of service, mercy and love (40);
- the glory of God is the human person fully alive, and the life of the human person is the vision of God; being conformed to Christ in holiness does not diminish the human, but humanizes us (42).

182. Questions for local or regional discussion: How might Catholics and Methodists support each other in living the Christian vocation to holiness by being more deeply conformed to Christ? How might we learn from each other as we strive to live into our baptismal identity?

Mindful of our common understanding that human beings are created by and for God, to be addressed by God and to hear and receive God's word, what are some ways that we could creatively gather in prayer or come together to study the word of God?

What are some ways in your region where human dignity is challenged or threatened? What are some of the key ethical questions being grappled with in your society? Given that in significant ways Methodists and Catholics hold a common understanding of the human person, what can you do together in defence of the dignity and integrity of the human person?

In light of our shared recognition that it is part of the human vocation to care for and nurture creation, and that we are called to live in harmony with the natural world, how might we pool our energies at the service of the environment and the safeguarding of the earth and its creatures?

We proclaim together that God does not want anyone to be lost and does not abandon us. How might we work together to overcome human estrangement by serving the marginalised and those in greatest need in our midst?

How might you structure a local or regional dialogue between Methodists and Catholics? Would a sharing of ways in which our respective communities understand and seek holiness be a good first topic for that discussion?

Revisiting Chapter Two: The Grace of God

183. Catholics and Methodists share a common understanding of God's grace. Together, we believe:
- grace is God's work of re-creating humankind, overcoming humankind's estrangement from God as a result of sin and leading us to salvation (45);
 - grace is the saving love revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, in his incarnation, and in the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection; in the mystery of salvation, the grace of Jesus Christ transforms human nature and its condition, giving us a new way of living in the world, reconciled to God and to one another, patterned after his way of holy living (43, 46-47);
 - the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is 'the Spirit of grace' (Heb 10.29), was bestowed upon the early Church at Pentecost, and continues to be present and active in the Church throughout the ages; the Spirit seeks us out in our sinfulness, and makes the grace of Christ present in our lives; the gifts of the Holy Spirit are always a gift of grace in our lives (49-52, cf. 14);
 - the grace that enables, the grace that justifies, and the grace that sanctifies are intertwined aspects of God's saving love and call to holiness (68);
 - enabling or 'prevenient' grace, universally offered to human beings, is at work even before individuals come to faith, preparing people to receive and respond to salvation offered us through Jesus Christ. It is through God's initiative that we are saved, and we are saved solely as a result of God's mercy. Since human beings are never without enabling grace, there can be no radical separation of 'nature' and 'grace' (53-54);
 - enabling grace, which precedes and facilitates the human response to God's initiative in salvation, does not remove the need for a free human response, but we are not saved by our response. Catholics and Methodists refer to this first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit in terms of repentance or conversion (53, 55-56);
 - 'by grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit'; the grace of faith which justifies is never merited, but 'renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works' (59, citing JDDJ §15);
 - while not contributing to justification, good works of mercy and piety in the Christian life are its inevitable consequence and an obligation of holy living (61, 79);
 - 'justification is not an isolated event in the Christian life but one aspect of a process of sanctification or being made holy through a deepening relationship with Christ in his body, the Church' (64, citing Honolulu §13). Sanctifying grace is an habitual gift or disposition such that the Christian grows in the image of Christ and is drawn more deeply into life with the triune God (64-65);
 - by God's grace, all in the Church are called to holiness, and that holiness is both personal and communal (68-70; cf. 94);
 - sanctifying grace leads to perfect love, as Christians grow in grace and devote themselves to the love of God and neighbour; because there is no limit to the power of God's grace, Catholics and Methodists affirm that perfection in love is possible before death (73-77);
 - the experience of grace and holiness is always oriented towards the strengthening of the Church and bringing all things into the new creation in Christ; as God's

chosen agent and instrument of the call to holiness, the Church on earth is essentially missionary, oriented towards the transformation of the world; elements of grace and holiness exist beyond the visible Church, but are always directed towards incorporation into Christ (71-72, cf. 10);

- being sure of God's grace – what Hebrews 11.1 calls 'the assurance of things hoped for' – stems from the trustworthiness of God's promises and is confirmed by the interior work of the Holy Spirit (89; cf. Honolulu §24). Catholics and Methodists 'confess together that the faithful can rely on the mercy and promises of God' (88, citing JDDJ §34); this is not understood as the certainty of one's personal salvation, but as the reliability of a relationship which is founded in God's love (92).

184. Methodists and Catholics have not yet reached full agreement regarding God's grace. Regarding the possibility of reaching a state of perfect love in this life, Methodists are much more hopeful than Catholics (77). The text returns to this subject in Chapter 4 when it treats the subject of purgatory. The area where continuing disagreement is most evident concerns good works and merit (80-86). Catholics and Methodists jointly affirm that individuals can freely cooperate with the work of grace in such a way that they are fully responsible for their actions; but 'justification always remains the unmerited gift of grace' (80, citing JDDJ §38). Where Catholics and Methodists differ concerns the possibility that the merit arising from the good works of Christians might aid the sanctification of others. For Catholics, the bonds of love between Christians make possible a 'wonderful exchange' whereby 'the holiness of one profits others' (83, citing CCC §1475). Methodists are uncomfortable with any idea that might undermine the sufficiency of Christ's saving death and that risks creating a mechanistic and transactional view of such works (84). Further reflection on the implications of the bonds of love within the communion of saints is invited (86).

185. Questions for local or regional discussion:

Catholics and Methodists share a common understanding of grace as the saving love revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ and as God's work of re-creating humankind, giving us a new way of living in the world. In your culture and region, what makes it difficult to believe in God's grace, and what can we do together to give common witness to what God is doing for us in Christ and in the Holy Spirit?

How does our common understanding of God's grace help us to regard each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and to see our churches as being in a relationship of real but imperfect communion? How does it move us towards the goal of full communion in faith, mission, and sacramental life?

Catholics and Methodists confess together that the faithful can rely on the mercy and promises of God, and on the work of God's enabling, justifying, and sanctifying grace in our lives. Mindful of Jesus' desire that his disciples be one, how might our shared understanding of God's grace and faithfulness translate into common worship?

The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ), signed by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation (1999) and affirmed by the World Methodist Council (2006), brought reconciliation on a major controversy of the

Reformation. What are appropriate contexts in your region for studying the JDDJ and the pastoral implications of this agreement?

Methodists and Catholics agree that the Church on earth is essentially missionary, oriented towards the transformation of the world. What are major areas of injustice in your region, and where is reconciliation needed in your society? How can we act together as artisans of reconciliation and agents of justice?

Acknowledging that elements of grace and holiness exist beyond the visible Church as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, are there ways in which Catholics and Methodists, working with other Christian communities, can strengthen relations and enter into dialogue with adherents of other religious traditions?

Revisiting Chapter Three: The Saints Below

186. Methodists and Catholics agree that the Christian life of holiness involves walking with the risen Christ. Faith, conversion of life, and membership in the Church are essential (93-94). Together, we believe that:
- ‘individual believers are joined in a family of disciples, so that belonging to Christ means also belonging to the Church which is his body’; we are called to be holy together, as the Church (94, citing Nairobi §11);
 - ‘the Church’s structures must effectively serve both the holiness of its members and the mission of the Church’ (95, citing Seoul §101);
 - the risen Christ summons his disciples from fear and doubt to faith and joy, so as to send them out as witnesses to the world; the Church is holy in that it communicates assuredly the blessings and graces of Christ’s paschal mystery (100-101);
 - the Church equips the people of God for God’s mission in and for the world; mission and service are characteristic of the call to holiness (100);
 - the holiness of the Church is that of a people on the pilgrim way; it is marked by the sins of its members and is a place of human brokenness; it is a forgiven people called to forgive and embody God’s loving plan for a broken world; holiness is not primarily about success in being good, but rather about being open in all the brokenness and giftedness of our lives to God’s transforming grace (96, 101, 111);
 - Christian communities are called to be ‘households’ of grace and holiness; the Church is sacramental in character; as sign, instrument and foretaste of the kingdom of God, it is grace-filled and instrumental in conferring grace (100, 102-103);
 - the economy of salvation is sacramental in nature; liturgies and worship practices, and especially the sacraments and preaching, are public ecclesial ways of nurturing holy living in the world (105);
 - baptism is a lifelong sacramental gracing of the Christian’s journey, immersing us in the paschal mystery and consecrating us for the holy work of God’s mission (106);
 - ongoing participation at the Eucharist renews the faithful for mission and holy living, transforming disciples more and more into the likeness Christ; in the breaking of the bread, Christ is truly present, and those who receive him are sent out into the world to bear new witness to him (107);

- the two principal rites of vocation for adults – marriage and orders – give grace to the individual or couple, so that the wider community might grow in grace; there is no hierarchy to the various states of Christian life, and all can be avenues to, and expressions of, holiness; community life and emerging forms of consecrated life continue to be discovered and lived with integrity as Christians prayerfully discern how God is calling them to respond to the Gospel and the needs of the world (109-110);
- the Church is called to be a community close to those in need, and close particularly to those whose sin, weakness, and marginalisation leaves them in need of deep compassion, accompaniment, and the binding of wounds (111);
- rituals of self-examination, repentance, and reconciliation are intended to be staple practices of a pilgrim people (113);
- caring for the sick is an intrinsic part of holy living; and sickness itself can be transformed by grace into a particular form of holy living and service (114);
- the reading and study of the scriptures, in personal as well as communal settings, is a privileged means of grace for nurturing growth in holiness; reading and studying the scriptures together (ecumenically) is a source of grace (116-117);
- the pursuit of holiness is enhanced by basic dispositions and habits which shape the affections; these virtues or ‘holy tempers’ orient the whole person to what is good and so shape one’s actions and decisions (118-119);
- the Christian life of holiness is characterised by the joyful proclamation of the risen Christ, and by giving an account of the hope that is within us; witness to the Gospel requires a profound engagement with the complexity of the world and the cultures in which we live (120);
- we witness not only through our words, but above all by holy living, characterised by both personal faithfulness and active engagement with the world in service to God’s reign; holy living is expressed socially in the pursuit of justice and in acts of mercy, embodying the compassion and love of God for the world (120-121);
- holiness is fostered through private and family prayers; the singing of Christian songs and hymns; pilgrimages to holy sites and shrines; quiet days and spiritual retreats; fasting and almsgiving (122);
- holy dying is part of holy living; the saints below witness to the Gospel in the manner of their dying; the passing from this life through death is a profoundly human place of grace even in suffering and loss; by aiding and honouring the dying and those close to them, and in presenting a vision of the end of life as a place of love, patience, care, and hope, Catholics and Methodists can challenge some secular approaches to the end of life and to death itself (132-135).

187. There are also differences in holy living that reflect underlying theological disagreements between Methodists and Catholics that often have their origin in Reformation disputes. In particular, there are differences regarding the number of sacraments, though Methodists do see a sacramental character in what Catholics identify as the seven sacraments (107-114). Here are other areas of divergence regarding holy living:

- Catholics emphasise that the Church, as an eschatologically present reality in the world, is without sin, even though its individual members may be sinful. Methodists speak of the holiness of the Church, but see the correlation between the visible and the invisible Church in less theologically precise terms than

- Catholics, and are uncomfortable with language that suggests the Church is without sin (97-99);
- While Methodists and Catholics jointly recognise Mary's unique role as Jesus' Mother and God-bearer, and see her as a holy exemplar, disciple, and advocate for the poor, Methodists have significant questions about Marian devotions in the Roman Catholic Church, including praying the rosary and pilgrimages to sites of Marian apparitions, and would ask whether the centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ is in danger of being obscured (127);
 - The Catholic practice of the veneration of relics causes concern for Methodists about the attendant risk of idolatry. Catholics and Methodists agree that popular devotion to holy relics must always be properly discerned so that it does not detract from the worship of God alone (130-131);
 - Other Catholic devotional practices involving the saints, adoration of the Eucharist, the use and veneration of images, and the blessing of inanimate objects, evoke Methodist discomfort and concern that the Gospel may be in danger of being obscured by superstition (123).

188. Questions for local or regional discussion:

Methodists and Catholics agree that belonging to Christ means belonging to the Church, and that we are called to be holy together. Through recent rounds of dialogue, we have made great strides towards a common understanding of the Church. Yet our dialogue texts have hardly begun to fulfil their potential for transforming our relations; nor can documents alone build and strengthen our relations. Identify some contexts in your region where Catholics and Methodists can encounter each other, forging ecumenical friendships, and discerning ways to grow together in communion and mission.

How can we more visibly acknowledge our recognition of each other's baptisms and our common understanding that Baptism is a lifelong sacramental gracing of the Christian's journey, immersing us in the paschal mystery and summoning us to a share in Christ's mission? Given that further dialogue is needed before Methodists and Catholics can share fully in each other's eucharistic celebrations despite much common ground regarding the Lord's Supper, what are ways in which we can pray and give thanks to God together?

What might Methodists and Catholics learn from each other about fostering and encouraging all forms of Christian vocation, including married and single life, ministry and consecrated life? Are there new forms of community life, including those with an ecumenical character, forming among Christian communities in your region?

Where Catholics and Methodists live side by side, they face the common challenge of witnessing to the Gospel by engaging with the complexity of the world and the cultures in which they live. In what ways might we work together in giving an account of the hope that is within us (1 Pet 3:15)?

In many parts of the world, euthanasia and assisted suicide are allowed or their legality is being publicly debated. Catholics and Methodists jointly witness to holy dying as a constitutive part of holy living, and see the end of life as a time of grace even in the midst of suffering and loss. Are there ways in which you can work

together in your region to uphold the dignity of human life, protect the freedom of conscience of healthcare workers, and build up our social structures to care well and compassionately for the dying?

As this chapter details, we hold some devotional practices in common, and differ on others. Encourage conversations between neighbouring Methodist and Catholic congregations about devotional practices, making sure to share about both common and different ways of seeking holiness. Encourage participants to listen respectfully to each other with the possibility of gaining new insights, but also being able to ask each other difficult questions from which we might learn.

Revisiting Chapter Four: The Saints Above

189. Methodists and Catholics alike acknowledge that words, concepts, and images are inadequate to express the mystery of God's love and life beyond the grave (137), but the richness of God's revelation in the scriptures allows us to profess together:

- Jesus Christ's conquering of sin and death and his promise of eternal life provide a wellspring of hope for human beings, who encounter death as the uttermost limit of human experience (144);
- resurrection hope leads us to look to the time when 'death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more,' and all things will be made new; heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme happiness and bliss (165, citing Rev 21.4-5); our Christian hope is that 'we will be with the Lord for ever' (138, citing 1 Thess 4.17). Catholics and Methodists share this common hope and a responsibility to keep the promise of eternal life alive in the hearts of believers and to evangelise the world (166);
- the ecumenical creeds that affirm the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting (141);
- we are called to love God and one another in relationships that begin in this life but extend beyond death when knowledge and love will be perfected (139). The communion between the saints below and the saints above is like that of a family, where bonds of love continue to exist between the living and the departed (143);
- within the communion of saints, we recognize the exemplary presence of divine grace in specific persons whose words and holy living – even to the shedding of their blood for Jesus – testify to the transforming action of the Spirit; their witness can inspire the saints below (142); some, such as the apostles and martyrs of the early Church, are publically named and honoured as saints; the saints above are unseen friends to the saints below, encouraging them as they continue on their earthly pilgrimage (156);
- God wills the salvation of all people; we also believe that salvation is attained exclusively through Jesus Christ. Hope for those who do not come to an explicit saving faith in Jesus Christ rests in a just and merciful God (147). We can entrust to the mercy of God infants and others who die without receiving the sacrament of Baptism, believing that they, too, share in the promise of eternal life (148);
- God's creative power will re-unite body and soul at the general resurrection after the pattern of Jesus Christ (146); since Christ assumed all that is human, all that is human will be redeemed (166);
- Christ 'will come again to judge the living and the dead'; on the Day of Judgement, each person will stand before the holiness of God and the full story of his or her life will be laid bare (149). God's mercy is limitless; a part of the mercy

is the gift of human freedom, including the freedom to accept or reject God's gracious gift of salvation and the call to holiness (149, 151); while human beings can choose to sever their relationship with God, Catholics and Methodists consider it appropriate to hope that no one will be eternally damned (151);

- we await the return of the Lord; his coming will bring salvation history to its close; the mission and ministry of the Church will finally be fulfilled when all things are restored in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (167).

190. Flowing from this common profession, Catholics and Methodists also hold certain practices in common:

- rituals for the dying and the deceased which offer consolation to those who mourn and proclaim our resurrection hope, including prayer with the bereaved, often in the presence of the deceased; reading the scriptures, singing Christian hymns, and entrusting the deceased to the mercy of God; a wake or vigil; a funeral, memorial service or Mass; and burial or else cremation followed by the reverent disposal of the ashes (145).

191. Methodists and Catholics have not yet reached full agreement on the transition of the Christian from death to eternal life, nor on the relationship between the saints below and the saints above. Principal divergences include:

- the doctrine of purgatory. When a person dies still unprepared to see the face of God, the Catholic doctrine of purgatory envisages a process of purification following death, in which intermediate state the deceased person is purged of sins and made perfect in holiness through the cleansing effect of God's grace. Reformers rejected the doctrine of purgatory, and Methodists have been circumspect in their teaching about this transition. Methodists and Catholics are in agreement that God's particular judgement at the point of death determines a person's final destiny, and that the transition from earthly to heavenly life depends on the gracious action of God; this provides a foundation for further dialogue (150-153);
- prayer for the departed. Catholics, believing that a spiritual exchange of prayer and its effects is possible between all members of the body of Christ, continue to pray for those still being purified after death and in so doing ask for the intercession of the saints in heaven. While there are indications that Methodists may increasingly be open to the practice of prayer for the departed, it remains a subject for further conversation (154-155);
- intercession of the saints. Closely related to the previous point, Catholics also view the saints above as intercessors for themselves and those still living, ever mindful that Jesus is the one mediator between God and humanity. Methodists acknowledge the mysterious solidarity of the saints above and the saints below, but have generally been resistant to the invocation of saints lest the absolute uniqueness of Christ as sole mediator be compromised (157-158);
- the Catholic dogma of the Assumption of Mary and the intercession of Mary. Catholics believe that Mary, at the end of her bodily life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. Methodists can affirm the dogma's core intention to bear witness to God's saving work in Christ and the final consummation of holy living, but find no scriptural foundation for the dogma (160-163). Catholics and Methodists continue to differ concerning the way in which they respectively understand the spiritual and pastoral implications that Mary's unique place within the communion of saints holds for the saints below. It would be fruitful for

Methodists and Catholics to continue to ask each other questions with regard to Mary as a sign of grace and holiness (164-165).

192. Questions for local or regional discussion:

Christian hope is ultimately grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus; his conquering of sin and rising from the bonds of death is the good news at the heart of our witness. How can Methodists and Catholics join with other Christians in proclaiming the new life – and promise of eternal life – given us in Christ?

Catholics and Methodists agree that bonds of love exist between the living and the departed, and that there is a real communion between the saints below and the saints above, as the latter inspire and encourage us on our earthly pilgrimage. We are not in full agreement about prayer for the departed, intercession of the saints, and the role of Mary in the lives of believers. Consider ways in which Catholics and Methodists can share stories and reflections on the relationship between the saints above and the saints below. Also consider ways in which we might gather together to pray for those who have gone before us.

Methodists and Catholics both hold that God wills the salvation of all people, and that all salvation is in Christ, leaving Christians with a summons to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Likewise, we both believe and hope that God, ever rich in mercy, can offer salvation to the unbaptized and to non-believers. Do Catholics and Methodists engage together in inter-religious dialogue in your region, and if not, what might enable them to do so?

Methodists and Catholics readily acknowledge that words, concepts, and images cannot adequately grasp or communicate the mystery of God's love and life beyond the grave. Whatever our way of picturing this, we both believe that we will stand before the judgement seat of God, and rely utterly on God's great mercy. Invite pastors to share how they hold together God's mercy and God's justice in their teaching and preaching.

The doctrine of purgatory has been a point of strong disagreement between Catholics and Protestants since the time of the Reformation, but there are signs that our differences are not as great as they once were in this regard. When you enter into dialogue about purgatory and the transition from death to eternal life, try not to allow differences to lead the conversation into a dead end, but rather see them as the subject of further dialogue and be ready carry forth the conversation.

In all of these questions and reflections, return often to the relationship between holiness and unity, and encourage the people of our two communions to make connections between the pursuit of holiness and the taking of practical steps towards reconciliation between us.

EPHESIANS 1.1-10 (NRSV)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In this opening section of the Epistle to the Ephesians, St Paul reflects on the themes of grace and holiness in relation to the broad sweep of salvation history. By grace, God has made it possible for humankind to attain salvation. From the foundation of the world, God elected a people, in Christ, to be ‘holy and blameless before him in love’, a state only made possible by redemption through the atoning death of Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

The redemption achieved by Christ is the source of abundant blessings. In response, God deserves to be blessed because he has so richly blessed us ‘in the heavenly places’. The blessing of the age to come has been bestowed on Christ, who reigns at God’s right hand. United with Christ, his elect people already participate in this hoped for blessing.

To say that election in Christ took place before the foundation of the world is to emphasise that it was not on account of historical contingency or human merit but solely by God’s sovereign grace. The reference here is to collective rather than individual election: God eternally chose a people in Christ (that is, the Church), to be holy and blameless before him at the final judgment and so enter into the full blessings of the age to come.

Election is described in familial terms as God’s adoption of sons and daughters, through Jesus Christ. Borrowing from Graeco-Roman law, where adoption conferred the status of heir upon those who were not so by birth, St Paul employs this same idea to describe the privileged new relationship that those in Christ now enjoy with God. Under God’s free elective will, those in Christ are adopted into God’s family to enjoy intimate fellowship as children and heirs.

Redemption in Christ is made possible through God’s grace, which is ‘glorious’ and ‘freely bestowed’. These terms suggest both abundance and extravagance, though words are inadequate to describe the inexhaustible riches of God’s grace, which not only makes redemption possible, but also supplies the spiritual insight and wisdom necessary to sustain and deepen holy living.

The ‘mystery’ of God’s elective and salvific will was revealed in the life and ministry, death, and resurrection-glorification of Jesus Christ. St Paul affirms that God’s election is not limited in scope. For it is God’s intention in the fullness of time ‘to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth’.

APPENDIX

Resources for Prayer and Meditation

Prayers of Self-Offering

Prayer of St Anselm

Lord Jesus Christ; Let me seek you by desiring you,
and let me desire you by seeking you;
let me find you by loving you,
and love you in finding you.
I confess, Lord, with thanksgiving,
that you have made me in your image,
so that I can remember you, think of you, and love you.
But that image is so worn and blotted out by faults,
and darkened by the smoke of sin,
that it cannot do that for which it was made,
unless you renew and refashion it.
Lord, I am not trying to make my way to your height,
for my understanding is in no way equal to that,
but I do desire to understand a little of your truth
which my heart already believes and loves.
I do not seek to understand so that I can believe,
but I believe so that I may understand;
and what is more,
I believe that unless I do believe, I shall not understand.

Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.³³

Suscipe of St Ignatius Loyola

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace; that is enough for me.

A Hymn of Charles Wesley

Thou to whom all hearts are known,
Attend the cry of mine,
Hear in me thy Spirit's groan
For purity divine:
Languishing for my remove,
I wait thine image to retrieve;

³³ MWB, p. 290.

Fill me, Jesus, with thy love,
And to Thyself receive.

Destitute of holiness,
I am not like my Lord,
Am not ready to possess
The saints' immense reward;
No; my God I cannot see,
Unless, before I hence depart,
Though implant thyself in me
And make me pure in heart.

Partner of thy nature then,
And in thine image found,
Saviour, call me up to reign
With life immortal crown'd;
With thy glorious presence blest
In speechless ecstasies to gaze,
Folded in thy arms to rest,
And breathe eternal praise.³⁴

Prayers of Gratitude that we have been Saved and Prayers of Desire to Imitate Christ

A Prayer of Susannah Wesley

I thank Thee, O God, for the abundant reason that I have to adore, to praise, to magnify Thy goodness and love in sending Thy Son into the world to die for sinners. What reason have I to praise and adore and love that Saviour who suffered so much to redeem me! What sentiments of gratitude should I conceive for such boundless charity to souls! Help me gladly and cheerfully to take up my cross for Him who suffered death upon the Cross for me. Enable me to praise and adore the blessed Spirit, who sanctifies and illumines the mind; who cooperates with the means of grace; who condescends to visit and assist and refresh my soul by His power influences. Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, joint Authors of my salvation! Amen.³⁵

A Prayer of Carlo Maria Martini, SJ

We praise and thank you glorious Lord Jesus Christ, for being present among us and in us. In us you praise the Father with the voice of the Spirit, whom you have given us. Lord may this voice of the spirit be roused in us as we listen to the words of Scripture in a manner that is worthy and fitting, appropriate to the meaning of the text and in harmony with what is revealed to us. Make us ready to recognise how we can correspond to the teaching and example proposed to us, for you are God, living and reigning for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer of Mary Ward

O Parent of parents, and Friend of all friends, without entreaty you took me into your care and by degrees led me from all else that at length I might see and settle my love in You.

³⁴ Cited from ST Kimbrough, Jr. and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds., *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, vol. 3 (Nashville: Kingswood, 1992), pp. 367-68.

³⁵ W. L. Doughty, ed., *The Prayers of Susannah Wesley* (London: Epworth, 1956), p. 37.

What had I ever done to please You? Or what was there in me wherewith to serve You?
Much less could I ever deserve to be chosen by You. O happy begun freedom, the beginning
of all my good, and more worth to me than the whole world besides.
Had I never hindered Your will and working in me, what degrees of grace should I now have.
Yet where as yet am I?
My Jesus, forgive me, remembering what You have done for me and whither You have
brought me, and for this excess of goodness and love let me no more hinder Your will in me.

A Hymn of Charles Wesley

How happy every child of grace
Who knows his sins forgiven!
This earth, he cries, is not my place,
I seek my place in heaven:
A country far from mortal sight;
Yet, O! By faith I see
The land of rest, the saints' delight,
The heaven prepar'd for me.

A stranger in the world below,
I calmly sojourn here,
Nor can its happiness or woe
Provoke my hope or fear:
Its evils in a moment end,
Its joys as soon are past;
But, O! The bliss to which I tend
Eternally shall last.

To that Jerusalem above
With singing I repair,
While in the flesh, my hope and love,
My heart and soul are there:
There my exalted Saviour stands,
My merciful high-priest,
And still extends his wounded hands
To take me to his breast.³⁶

Prayers for the Saints Below

Traditional Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O
God, who taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the
same Spirit we may be truly always truly wise and ever enjoy His consolation; through Christ
Our Lord, Amen.

³⁶ Charles Wesley, *Funeral Hymns* (London: Strahan, 1759), no. 2, ss 1-3.

John Henry Newman's Prayer - Our place in the Household of God

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work.

I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.

A Prayer from the *Didache* for Christian Unity

We give you thanks, our Father,

For the life and knowledge you have made known through your son and servant Jesus

Glory to you world without end.

As this broken bread, once scattered over the mountains was gathered together and made one,

So may your church be built up from the ends of the earth,

And gathered into your kingdom,

To you be glory and power through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

A Hymn of Charles Wesley

Christ, from whom all blessings flow,

Perfecting the saints below,

Hear us, who thy nature share,

Who thy mystic body are:

Join us, in one spirit join,

Let us still receive of thine,

Still for more on thee we call,

Thee, who fillest all in all.

Closer knit to thee our head,

Nourish us, O Christ, and feed,

Let us daily growth receive,

More and more in Jesus live:

Jesu! We thy members are,

Cherish us with kindest care,

Of thy flesh, and of thy bone:

Love, forever love thine own.

Move, and actuate, and guide,

Diverse gifts to each divide;

Plac'd according to thy will,

Let us all our work fulfil,

Never from our office move,

Needful to the others prove,

Use the grace on each bestow'd,

Temper'd by the art of God.

Sweetly now we all agree,
Touch'd with softest sympathy,
Kindly for each other care:
Every member feels its share:
Wounded by the grief of one,
All the suffering members groan;
Honour'd if one member is
All partake the common bliss.

Many are we now, and one,
We who Jesus have put on:
There is neither bond nor free,
Male nor female, Lord, in thee.
Love, like death, hath all destroy'd,
Render'd all distinctions void:
Names, and sects, and parties fall;
Thou, O Christ, art ALL in ALL!³⁷

Prayers concerning the Saints Above

Prayer of St Ambrose in the face of death

Carry me, Christ, on your Cross, which is salvation for the wanderer, rest for the wearied, and in which alone is life for those who die.

Prayer for the Dying (*Proficiscere*)

Go forth upon your journey, Christian soul,
in the name of God the Father who created you;
in the name of Jesus Christ who suffered for you;
in the name of the Holy Spirit who strengthens you;
in communion with the blessed saints,
with angels and archangels and with all the heavenly host.
May you rest in peace
and may the City of God be your eternal dwelling. Amen.³⁸

Prayers of Thanksgiving for the Faithful Departed

Eternal Father, God of the living and not of the dead: we thank and praise you for the faithful of all generations who served you in godliness and love and are now with you in glory. We thank you for those who have enriched the world with truth and beauty, for the wise and good of every land and age. Teach us to follow them as they followed Christ; that at the last we may receive with them the prize of eternal life; through Jesus the Christ, our Lord.³⁹

³⁷ 'The Communion of Saints, Part IV', John Wesley and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: [Strahan], 1740).

³⁸ MWB, p. 431.

³⁹ *Uniting in Worship 2* (Sydney: Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, 2000), p. 304.

A Hymn of Charles Wesley

Happy the souls to Jesus join'd,
And sav'd by grace alone,
Walking in all thy ways we find
Our heaven on earth begun.

The church triumphant in thy love
Their mighty joys we know,
They sing the Lamb in hymns above,
And we in hymns below.

Thee in thy glorious realm they praise,
And bow before thy throne,
We in the kingdom of thy grace,
The kingdoms are but one.

The holy to the holiest leads,
From hence our spirits rise,
And he that in thy statutes treads
Shall meet thee in the skies.⁴⁰

Prayers for Mission

A Prayer for the Earth from Pope Francis's *Laudate Si'*

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

⁴⁰ John Wesley and Charles Wesley, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (Bristol: Farley, 1745), no. 96.

ABBREVIATIONS

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|-----------|---|
| BDUMC | <i>The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church</i> . Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012. |
| BDUMC/ART | Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church (1808), ¶104, pp. 63-70. |
| BDUMC/CON | Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church (1963), ¶104, pp. 70-75. |
| CCC | <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church: Second edition</i> . 1997. |
| CLP | The Methodist Church in Britain. <i>Called to Love and Praise</i> . 1999. |
| CPM | The Methodist Church in Britain. <i>A Catechism for the Use of the People called Methodists</i> , Rev. ed. 2000. |
| ENNT | John Wesley. <i>Explanatory Notes on the New Testament</i> . |
| GUG | <i>Grace Upon Grace: The Mission Statement of the United Methodist Church</i> . Nashville, Tenn.: Graded Press, 1990. |
| HEFG | Heaven and Earth are Full of Your Glory: A United Methodist and Roman Catholic Statement on the Eucharist and Ecology. 2012. |
| JCS | English Roman Catholic–Methodist Committee. ‘Justification – A Consensus Statement’. 1991; in <i>One in Christ</i> 28 (1992): 87-91. |
| JDDJ | Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church. <i>Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification</i> . 1999. |
| LG | <i>Lumen Gentium</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church). 1964. |
| MAJDDJ | The World Methodist Council <i>Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification</i> . 2006. |
| MML | British Methodist/Roman Catholic Committee. <i>Mary, Mother of the Lord: Sign of Grace, Faith and Holiness. Towards a Shared Understanding</i> . London: CTS Publications and Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1995. |
| MSB | <i>The Methodist Service Book</i> . London: Methodist Publishing House, 1975. |
| MWB | <i>The Methodist Worship Book</i> . Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1999. |
| PL | Migne, <i>Patrologia latina</i> |
| RM | <i>Roman Missal: Third edition</i> . 2002. |
| RVM | <i>Rosarium Virginis Mariae</i> . 2002. |
| SC | <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> (Constitution on the Liturgy). 1963. |
| UMBW | <i>The United Methodist Book of Worship</i> . Nashville, Tenn.: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992. |
| UR | <i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> (Decree on Ecumenism). 1964. |
| WJW | <i>The Works of John Wesley</i> , various volumes and editors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975-1983; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984–). |
| Brighton | <i>Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority among Catholics and Methodists</i> , 2001. |
| Denver | <i>The Denver Report</i> , 1971. |
| Dublin | <i>The Dublin Report</i> , 1976. |
| Durban | <i>Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments</i> , 2011. |
| Honolulu | <i>The Honolulu Report</i> , 1981. |
| Nairobi | <i>Towards a Statement on the Church</i> , 1986. |
| Rio | <i>The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith</i> , 1996. |
| Seoul | <i>The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church</i> , 2006. |
| Singapore | <i>The Apostolic Tradition</i> , 1991. |

English translations of Roman Catholic documents may be found at www.vatican.va.

Note on Scripture Quotations

All scriptural quotations are from the New Revised Standard (Anglicised) Version.