

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

OF ECCLESIA APOSTOLICA DIVINORUM MYSTERIORUM

BEING A SUMMARY OF THE APPROACH OF THE
ECCLESIA TO MATTERS OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE



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STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum is an autonomous Rite or jurisdiction that has developed from the Roman Catholic Church by way of the Old Catholic Church of Holland and the Liberal Catholic Church. While it honours its origins and regards the See of Rome with respect, it is not subject to that See, nor is it dependent upon any other See or authority outside its own administration. It is fully Catholic and Orthodox and considers itself to represent the authentic faith of the undivided Church. It is in no respect a Protestant church and considers itself to be traditionalist in its beliefs and composition.

Catholic means universal, but the word has also come to stand for the outlook and practice of the historical church as distinct from that of the later sects. The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum allies itself with this historical tradition. It combines the Catholic form of worship with its stately ritual, its deep mysticism, and its abiding witness to the reality of sacramental grace with the widest measure of intellectual liberty and respect for the individual conscience consistent with the Catholic faith.

The Liberal Catholic Church came into existence as the result of a complete reorganization in 1915-16 of the Old Catholic movement in Great Britain upon a more liberal basis. This Church derived its Orders from the Mother See of the Old Catholic movement, the ancient archiepiscopal See of Utrecht in Holland. The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum has carefully preserved this succession of Orders. In addition, the work of creating the Oecumenical Apostolic Succession has meant that during the past seventy or so years, all significant lines of the Apostolic Succession in the various denominations that hold the Catholic and Orthodox faith have been combined, following a recommendation of the 1920 Lambeth Conference, so that no party from whatever denomination may reasonably deny the validity of the Sacraments and Orders of our body.

DOCTRINE

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum believes that the vitality of a church gains in proportion as its members increasingly draw their central inspiration from an intense faith in the LIVING CHRIST. The Ecclesia accepts in the plain and literal sense the marvellous promise of Jesus Christ when on earth: “And behold I am with you all through the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world.” (Matthew 28:20)

In regards these promises as validating all Christian worship, of whatever kind, so long as it be earnest and true. But it further holds that, while the promise of the Presence with individual believers is thus effective, our Lord also appointed certain rites or Sacraments (called mysteries in the Eastern Church) for the greater helping of His people, to be handed down in His Church as especial channels of His power and blessing. Through these means of grace He is ever present with His Church, giving to His people the wonderful privilege of fellowship and communion with Him, guiding and protecting them at every stage from the cradle to the grave.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum recognizes seven Sacraments, which it enumerates as follows: Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Absolution, Holy Unction, Holy Matrimony, Holy Orders. To insure their efficacy to the worshipper, the administration of all sacramental rites is guarded with the most jealous care. It has preserved an Episcopal succession that is valid, as understood throughout the whole of those Churches in Christendom that maintain the Apostolic Succession as a tenet of their faith.

Besides perpetuating these sacramental rites, the immediate followers of Christ handed down in His Church a body of doctrine and certain principles of ethics. Some of this original teaching of Christ has been lost, and some of it has been obscured by the accretions of the ages. What remains is a priceless heritage to be guarded with loving care and reverence.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum regards the Holy Scriptures, the Creeds, and the Traditions of the Church as the means by which this teaching of Christ has been handed down to His followers. It regards them as fundamental, true, and sufficient as a basis of right understanding and right conduct.

The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds are authorized for use in the Liturgy of the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Membership in most of the Christian Churches rests on the acceptance of a common belief. There is frequently wide discrepancy between the real belief of a thoughtful individual and the official profession which is expected of him. This leads to suppressed disbelief, to say nothing of insincerity, and tends to check the free exercise of the mind.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum permits to lay members who adhere to its parishes considerable freedom in the interpretation of Creeds, Scriptures and Traditions, and of the Liturgy, providing only that such

interpretation be in keeping with the undivided Catholic and Orthodox faith and any differences of interpretation be courteously expressed. The Ecclesia holds strongly that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, not its antecedent. A truth is not a truth for a man, nor a Revelation a revelation, until he sees it to be true for himself. As a man grows spiritually, so will he grow into the perception of truth. No mere lip profession or superficial assent of the mind can take the place of this growth, and to ask anything less than this is a sacrilege.

Christ surely meant His religion to be one of love and freedom, one which would help people at their different stages of spiritual growth. He did not prescribe formulae whose literal acceptance should be a condition of salvation. The consequence of being unable to recognize a truth is simply to lose the help that the knowledge of the truth would give.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum considers, therefore, that it acts in accordance with the spirit of its Master in welcoming gladly into its ranks those who are still seeking for truth. As a working basis of fellowship, it asks of its members the acceptance of the essentials of the Catholic and Orthodox faith, and for their willingness to worship corporately through a common ritual. It tries to help them discover truth for themselves by providing them with opportunities for spiritual growth. It asks of them sincerity, purity of motive, tolerance, breadth of mind, courtesy of expression, willingness to work, and a constant pursuit of high ideals confident, above all, that the power of the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's love may well be trusted to work God's own true purpose in their souls.

ETHICS

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum lays great stress on the corporate aspect of Christian life and worship, believing that as a system of ethics, philosophy, and worship, Christianity was intended chiefly to help mankind grow into the love of Christ, and in so doing to solve the many difficulties that beset the way of human brotherhood that brotherhood which is the cornerstone of a truly religious life. Without mutual goodwill, no system of social organization can be other than chaotic.

While the nature of some of the work of the Ecclesia is not open to the public, this work is not undertaken in the expectation that it will be purely for the benefit of the individual concerned, but in order that the spiritual and moral development of that individual may enable him or her to grow in love for humanity and increase in the desire to serve his or her fellows.

TERMS OF COMMUNION

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum welcomes to its altars all who reverently and sincerely approach them. It looks upon the Christian Church as a great brotherhood of all who turn to Jesus Christ their Master and their Friend as the inspirer of their spiritual life. It offers the Blessed Sacrament of His love to any member of the family who reverently desires it.

Candidates are admitted to the parishes of the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum by Baptism, or (if that has been received in complete form) by Confirmation or Admission. Admission is a simple ceremony in which the person is accepted into membership and a blessing invoked on their religious aspirations.

The essentials of its baptismal rite are the use of water and the usual Trinitarian formula, together with the application of the Oil of Catechumens and Chrism; and those of the Confirmation rite are the imposition of the Bishop's hand with the proper formula, and the use of Chrism. When persons who wish to join the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum have received these Sacraments in a less complete form, it is usual to repeat them "conditionally."

RELATION TO OTHER CHURCHES

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum is a constituent part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church: that historical Church which is truly One, despite its many outward divisions both in East and West, because the One Life of Christ animates and sustains it through the Sacraments He instituted. The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum has preserved these Sacraments in their integrity and plenitude and believes its doctrine to be in conformance with the teachings of Christ, with the true Catholic and Orthodox faith, and freed from the corruption of later ages.

It regards Christ's Church as consisting of "the blessed company of all faithful people." The different churches, whether historical or new, receive His blessing in proportion to the earnestness of their members and the extent to which they retain the Sacraments of His grace and reflect His teachings.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum, therefore, seeks to work in amity with all other Christian denominations. It has no wish to proselytize, and welcomes all interested laypeople to regular and full participation in the public services of its parishes, without asking or expecting them to leave their own church. On the other hand, if members of other churches are attracted by the distinctive features of its work, they are invited to join.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum is at all times ready to establish friendly relations with other Churches, and where there is significant commonality in doctrine and practice, to establish relations of intercommunion with such bodies holding the Catholic and Orthodox faith. It would be far from denying to the nonepiscopal bodies the charismatic or prophetic ministry of preaching and inspiration. At the same time, it does not concede to them the Catholic priesthood which, of course, they do not claim. The Catholic view is that the priesthood depends for its efficacy upon the valid transmission of the Episcopal succession. Where both parties are willing, the Ecclesia permits its clergy to exchange pulpits with ministers of nonepiscopal Churches, but it does not invite the latter to officiate at its altars.

MYSTICISM AND SCHOLARSHIP

The Ecclesia seeks to bring into alliance with its worship all that is true and good in modern scholarship. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18) Spiritual truths are at all times capable of discovery or rediscovery. The traditional path of Purification, Illumination, and Union is still open for the seeker's treading. Those who approach by this path may hope to attain the spiritual insight that is the aim of every earnest Christian.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum, as a Christian Church preserving faithfully the pre-Nicene tradition, maintains that religion should keep pace with human growth and enlightenment, and holds that the Church has handed down a very precious heritage from Christ Himself. At the same time, the Ecclesia is not a Modernist body, and rejects those schools of thought that seek to make the Church subsidiary to social or political doctrines, or that promote changes to its practices influenced by such beliefs.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum welcomes to its membership all who are seeking truth, and does not require acceptance of any specific esoteric teachings or adherence to any esoteric group. The distinctive contribution of the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum to Christian thought is the reconciliation of the Catholic and Orthodox Faith and a traditionalist Catholic sacramental theology with a wide openness to esoteric practice where that practice is in keeping with the undivided Faith.

These Principles are derived from those of the Liberal Catholic Church, and represent a Reformed response to the heritage of the Liberal Catholic movement.