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Mother of Hope

Mary of Nazareth in the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue

Abstract

A difficult topic in the dialogue with Anglicans is the issue of Mary and the various forms of liturgical and non-liturgical Marian devotion, which belong at the same to the Anglican and the Catholic tradition. However, the influence of the Reformation has also had an impact on this topic. Hence, paradoxically, Mariology links and -at the same time- constitutes an element of polemics between Anglicans and Catholics. The Anglican doctrine about Mary of Nazareth mentions the term *complexion oppositorium*, and the ecumenical Dialogue has shown us its present situation, as we can read in these pages. The authors, after presenting a historical introduction, made a presentation of some existing ecumenical documents of the Roman-Catholic/Anglican dialogue in which there was any mention of the *Theotokos*. Here are presented the documents at international level as well as those that proceeding from national dialogues, in particular from the USA and Canada.

Keywords: *Theotokos*, Assumption, Immaculate Conception, Mother of the Church, ecumenism.

Matka Nadziei

Maryja z Nazaretu w dialogu anglikańsko-katolickim

Abstrakt

Naszą nadzieją jest Chrystus, ale Jego Matka jest także naszą Matką. Trudnym tematem w dialogu z anglikanami jest kwestia mariologii. Maryja oraz różne formy liturgicznego i nieliturgicznego kultu maryjnego zostały odziedziczone przez anglikanów z tradycji katolickiej. Jednakże należy pamiętać, że reformacja wywarła wpływ na tę kwestię. Stąd, paradoksalnie, mariologia łączy i jednocześnie stanowi element polemiki między anglikanami i katolikami. Doktryna anglikańska o Maryi z Nazaretu może być określona jako *complexion oppositorium*. Dialog ekumeniczny pokazał nam swoją obecną sytuację, o czym

czytamy na tych stronach. Autorzy, po zaprezentowaniu historycznego wstępu, dokonali prezentacji wszystkich dotychczasowych dokumentów ekumenicznych będących owocem dialogu katolicko-anglikańskiego, w których znalazła się jakakolwiek wzmianka o Matce Bożej. Analizie poddano zarówno dokumenty na poziomie międzynarodowym, jak i dokumenty z dialogów krajowych, zwłaszcza z USA i Kanady.

Słowa kluczowe: *Theotokos*, Wniebowzięcie, Niepokalane Poczęcie, Matka Kościoła, ekumenizm.

The Anglicanism has an historical devotion to Mary. Although it has not an absolute authority, the second of the XXXIX Articles says that the Son of God assumed the human nature in the womb of the Holy Virgin, i.e. from her substance. At the same time, the *Book of Common Prayer* contains several Marian feasts, texts and references. In the *Doctrine of the Church of England*¹, it is said that the faith on the virgin birth of Jesus must be understood in the unity of the person and the mission of Christ. But there is no mention about Mary in the biblical part and the text makes no exception when it speaks about the original sin, so it is easy to understand that some later theologians and clerks (Jenkins, Spong) have denied this assertion. We can then say that there is not a broad development on this topic in the recent Anglican theology². On the other hand, when the declarations, documents and reports from conversations with the Anglican Communion (in the international as well as in the local dialogue) are analysed, we can conclude that the person of Mary appears very frequently. It is clear that a special attention is paid to Mary, as evidenced by the ecumenical document devoted entirely to “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ”.

The Beginning

1. The issue of Mariology was mentioned for the first time already in the joint document “A Vision for Unity”³, most often named “The Malta Report” (2 January 1968)⁴. After the meeting of Pope Paul VI with the Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey in 1966, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Com-

¹ Church of England. Doctrine Commission. 1962. *Doctrine in the Church of England: The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine Appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 81ss.

² Cf. Eric L. Mascall. 1963. Theotokos. The place of Mary in the work of salvation. In *The Blessed Virgin Mary: Essays by Anglicans*. Ed. Eric L. Mascall, Hubert S. Box, 12–26. London: Darton, Longmans & Todd.

³ Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission. 1974. The Malta Report. In *Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue. The Work of the Preparatory Commission*. Ed. Alan C. Clark, Colin Davey, 107–115. London: Oxford University Press.

⁴ Minna Hietamäki. 2010. *Agreeable Agreement. An Examination of the Quest for Consensus in Ecumenical Dialogue*. London: T&T Clark, 91–92.

mission was established. Its work ended with the publication of that report, which prepared a common base for further ecumenical conversations. In the No. 20 we could read:

20. In addition, a serious theological examination should be jointly undertaken on the nature of authority with particular reference to its bearing on the interpretation of the historic faith to which both our Communion are committed. Real or apparent differences between us come to the surface in such matters as the unity and indefectibility of the Church and its teaching authority, the Petrine primacy, infallibility, and Mariological definitions.

It was immediately noted that there are serious problems between Anglicans and Catholics in the matter of dogmatic definitions about the Mother of God, hence it is necessary to undertake joint research and discussions on this matter. As can be seen, the above quotes inform and introduce topics which the joint Catholic-Anglican commission should analyse.

2. After the Malta Report, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was formed in 1969, which undertook an ecumenical dialogue. At the same time, there were also dialogues at the local level, above all in the United States with the local Episcopal Church. From the point of view of Mariology, it is quite important, because three documents from this dialogue in the USA present references to Mary.

- a) The first document is the “Agreed Statement on the Purpose of the Church” (31 October 1975). Talking about the mission and purpose of the Church, both denominations have used Mass texts, thanks to which the Church’s faith is visible (*lex orandi – lex credendi*). In connection with this method, in the quoted passages of Catholic liturgical texts, the Mother of God was mentioned three times⁵.
- b) The second document, with Marian references, is “Statement on the Ordination of Woman” (released on 7 November 1975). In the chapter 5 “Issues To Be Faced”, we read: “The question of ordination of women presents problems within both the Roman Catholic and the Anglican communions; as do the Marian dogmas. Both of these issues are relevant to a deep concern for womanhood in the life of the world and the economy of salvation. In both our churches there is a growing realization that women should have a more effective voice in all areas of church life, befitting their dignity as human persons made in the image and likeness

⁵ Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in USA. 1975. Agreed Statement on the Purpose of the Church (30.12.2019). <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/anglican/purpose-of-church.cfm>.

of God”. The inclusion of the Mariological theme could be seen then in the discussion on the place of women in the Church.

- c) The third document, in which Mary was mentioned twice, is “Where We Are: A Challenge for the Future. A Twelve-Year Report” (12 August 1977). The first time we talk about it in the first chapter (“A. Responding together in the Spirit through Christ to the Father”), where we read: “many of the faithful in our two Churches have found inspiration in countless holy men and women, among whom are the apostles and the martyrs, and chiefly the Virgin Mary, saints already sharing the divine glory in the Risen Christ”. As we can see, the Virgin Mary is an example of faith for both Churches.

Mary is also mentioned in the second chapter (“B. Conclusion: Pastoral Recommendation”, in the part “Areas for Further Investigations ARC’s Proposals for Future Agenda”): “A careful study of the role of Mary, of other female saints, of sexual imagery for God, the Church and its ministries, and the soul, may provide important theological and spiritual guidance for our Churches today as we wrestle with the common perplexities raised by these issues of human wholeness (holiness), what it means to be a woman and a man, and how men and women image God in their being and their callings in the Church and the world”⁶. Mary, therefore, once again appears in the context of feminism.

The first phase of this dialogue took place in 1970–1981 (ARCIC I) and resulted in several statements in which the individual issues discussed were presented. The Mother of God was mentioned in two of them, related to the issue of the authority in the Church. After this session, which took place in Venice on 24 August – 2 September 1976, was published an agreed statement named the “Authority in the Church I”⁷. In the sixth chapter of this document (“VI. Problems and Prospects”), we find the again a reference in the context of the problems encountered:

24. (...)

- c) Anglicans find grave difficulty in the affirmation that the pope can be infallible in his teaching. It must, however, be borne in mind that the doctrine of infallibility is hedged round by very rigorous conditions laid down at the First Vatican Council. (...) Even so, special dif-

⁶ Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in USA. 1986. *Where We Are: A Challenge for the Future. A Twelve-Year Report*. In *Called to Full Unity: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations 1966–1983*. Ed. Joseph W. Witmer, John R. Wright, 160–174. Washington: United States Catholic Conference.

⁷ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission I. 1976. “Authority in the Church”. *Information Service* 32 (3): 1–6.

ficulties are created by the recent Marian dogmas, because Anglicans doubt the appropriateness, or even the possibility, of defining them as essential to the faith of believers.

The dogma of Papal Infallibility turns out to be extremely difficult for Anglicans to accept. It is true that they are aware of the strict conditions in which infallible teaching can be used. However, the practice (specifically, the announcement of the last two Marian dogmas) seems to convince Anglicans that as a dogma were announced which do not seem to them absolutely necessary for faith. It is interesting, however, that Anglicans do not criticize the Marian teaching as such, but rather the rank which the Catholic Church attributes to it.

3. During the further work of ARCIC I, another document appeared: "Authority in the Church II"⁸, published 3 September 1981. In the part about the infallibility, one of the points is devoted to the question of Marian dogmas:

30. This approach is illustrated by the reaction of many Anglicans to the Marian definitions, which are the only examples of such dogmas promulgated by the bishop of Rome apart from a synod since the separation of our two communions. Anglicans and Roman Catholics can agree in much of the truth that these two dogmas are designed to affirm. We agree that there can be but one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, and reject any interpretation of the role of Mary which obscures this affirmation.

We agree in recognizing that Christian understanding of Mary is inseparably linked with the doctrines of Christ and of the Church. We agree in recognizing the grace and unique vocation of Mary, Mother of God Incarnate (*Theotokos*), in observing her festivals, and in according her honour in the communion of saints. We agree that she was prepared by divine grace to be the mother of our Redeemer, by whom she herself was redeemed and received into glory. We further agree in recognizing in Mary a model of holiness, obedience and faith for all Christians.

We accept that it is possible to regard her as a prophetic figure of the Church of God before as well as after the Incarnation. Nevertheless, the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption raise a special problem for those Anglicans who do not consider that the precise definitions given by these dogmas are sufficiently supported by Scripture. For many Anglicans the teaching authority of the bishop of Rome, independent of a council, is not recommended by the fact that through it these Marian doctrines were proclaimed as dogmas binding on all the faithful. Anglicans would also ask whether, in any future union between our two Churches, they would be required to subscribe to such dogmatic statements. One consequence of our separation has been a tendency for Anglicans and Roman

⁸ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission I. 1982. "Authority in the Church II. The Statement (1981)". *Information Service* 49 (2-3): 98-105.

Catholics alike to exaggerate the importance of the Marian dogmas in themselves at the expense of other truths more closely related to the foundation of the Christian faith.

The above passage (together with a footnote explaining the Catholic position) is important from the point of view of the Mariological dialogue between both confessions. For the first time in the relations with Anglicans, the situation of Mariology was presented so clearly. Firstly, it was mentioned in which both doctrines agree (1. The mediation of Mary does not diminish mediation of Christ, 2. Mariology is closely connected with ecclesiology, 3. Consent to Marian devotion, 4. Preparing Mary for the mission of the Mother of Christ, 5. Mary as a model of holiness, 6. Mary as figure of the Church). On the other hand, many doubts among Anglicans arose a weak (according to them) foundation of biblical dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, as well as the rank of the dogma which was given to them.

The significance of the above passage also rests on the fact that it has become the starting point in the further developing dialogue over Mariological issues. Therefore, in later documents, it will be quoted as an important reference. It is worth giving some examples from important documents about the ecumenical value, which quote or discuss the fragment devoted to Mariology in the “Authority in Church II”:

- a) In the text of the statement of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith⁹, it was emphasized that the failure of Anglicans to accept the last Marian dogmas is in fact a lack of agreement on the key questions of the doctrine of faith. In addition, according to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), it is connected with the misunderstanding by Anglicans of the truth regarding papal infallibility. For this reason, CDF dampens the enthusiasm of those who exaggerate the international commission, saying that the document “does not yet constitute a substantial and explicit agreement”.
- b) An Anglican sub-committee of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada (Canadian ARC) referred to the reserved and stern opinion of CDF. In its commentary, “Remarks on the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s” Observations on the ‘Final Report’ of ARCIC (8 April 1983), members of the Canadian commission have judged the criticism of the Congregation. They emphasized many positive aspects of the Final Report and important affirmations showing the similarity in the doctrines

⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1982. “Observations on the Final Report of ARCIC”. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 74: 1062–1074.

of both denominations. It was also hoped that ARCIC II would develop the Mariology¹⁰.

- c) A few years later, the CDF again referred to the document in Response to ARCIC I. Again, it was emphasized that “the Commission has not been able to record any real consensus on the Marian dogmas”. For while A II 30 indicates that “Catholics and Anglicans can agree on much that the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption are designed to affirm”, under the same heading it is stated, that the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption raise a special problem for those Anglicans¹¹.
- d) Finally, the most important document of the Catholic-Anglican international dialogue, “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ”, quotes large passages of the No. 30 in its Introduction.

4. Then came a long silence. We have to wait almost twenty years for the next document from the international dialogue in which Mary was mentioned. We will find many Mariological references in other local dimensions.

- a) Particularly noteworthy is the document from the Catholic-Anglican dialogue with the USA entitled “Images of God: Reflections on Christian Anthropology”¹². In the third chapter of the report (“III. The Image of God in the Ecclesial Communion”), almost all the subsection on the communion of saints was dedicated to Mary (No. 70–76). In addition, it was mentioned several times in other parts of the document (No. 1, 9, 28, conclusion).
- b) Mother of God mentioned the Cardinal Willebrands in his reply (17 June 1986) to the Archbishop of Canterbury’s letter on the ordination to the priesthood: “Mary, the Mother of God, is in a word of the Church”¹³.
- c) The CDF also commented on another document being the fruit of dialogue with the Anglicans (“Salvation and the Church”). In her opinion (published on 18 November 1988) it mentioned Mary in the context of freedom and merit: “to say that Christians cannot ‘put God in their debt’ (No. 24) is to limit oneself to an overly extrinsic affirmation with respect to inward co-

¹⁰ Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission (Canada). 1984. “Canadian ARC: Remarks on the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s ‘Observations on the final report of ARCIC’”. *One in Christ* 20 (3): 257–286.

¹¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. 1993. “Catholic Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I”. *Information Service* 82 (1): 47–45.

¹² Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in USA. 1984. “Images of God: Reflections on Christian Anthropology”. *Origins* 13: 505–512.

¹³ Johannes G.M. Willebrands. 1986. “Reply to Archbishop Runcie”. *Information Service* 61 (1–2): 110–111.

operation with grace, such as the church eminently contemplates it in the cooperation of Mary in the work of salvation”¹⁴.

During ARCIC II, parallel conversations IARCCUM (International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission) were also started with Anglicans. At the end of the meeting between Anglican and Catholic bishops (Mississauga 14–20 May 2000) an “Action Plan to Implement *Communion in Mission*” was published (19 May 2000)¹⁵. In part “C. Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission” IARCCUM calls ARCIC II to deliberate especially on the topic of Mariology:

“ARCIC is invited to consider the following possible agenda items:

- the drafting of a document to link all the agreed statements produced by ARCIC (...)
- a study of the place of Mary in the life and doctrine of the Church”.

It can be concluded then that the bishops gathered in Mississauga considered a deeper analysis of the Mariological issue to be very important in the perspective of building unity between both confessions. Although the above-mentioned document did not bring anything to the development of doctrinal dialogue, it nevertheless emphasized the importance of the issue of Mariology in ecumenical relations.

A Milestone

5. The desire expressed by the bishops at the inaugural meeting of IARCCUM coincided with the intention of the work of ARCIC II. And indeed, at the same time (from 1999) the commission began to discuss the “Marian issues”. In total, six sessions were devoted to this issue¹⁶. The fruit of this dialogue time (almost 4 years and a half) was a joint statement of the commission. This document is entitled “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ”, but because of the place where it was published (on February 2, 2004), it is also called “The Seattle Statement”¹⁷. It is

¹⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. 1988. “Observations on ARCIC II’s ‘Salvation and the Church’”. *Origins* 18: 429–434.

¹⁵ International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. 2000. “Action Plan to Implement: *Communion in Mission*”. *Information Service* 104 (3): 139–140.

¹⁶ 30th: 26 August–2 September 1999 (Mississauga, Ontario) *Preliminary Discussion of Marian Issues*; 31st: 26 August – 4 September 2000 (Paris) *Marian issues*; 32nd: 27 August – 4 September 2001 (Dublin) *Marian issues*; 33rd: 10–18 July 2002 (Vienna) *The Place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life and Doctrine of the Church*; 34th: 10–18 July 2003 (West Palm Beach, Florida) *Marian issues*; 35th: 28 January – 3 February 2004 (Seattle, Washington) *Marian Issues and Final Document*.

¹⁷ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission II. 2005. “‘Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ’”. Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, 2005”. *Information*

the largest and the most important ecumenical document in dialogue with Anglicans as well as other Churches and Christian communities (at least until 2019). Due to the large volume, as well as the multiplicity of Mariology topics, it is impossible to quote the entire document or attempt to comment on any issue raised in the statement. Therefore, our goal will be to present the document, discussing its structure in a synthetic way, listing the most important topics discussed and drawing attention to issues that (despite deep conversations) remain problematic issues.

The Seattle Statement was prefaced by the Co-Chairmen and information on the statute of the document, which says that the statement “is not an authoritative declaration” of Anglicans and Catholics, but it is published for wide discussion. Next, this text begins with an introduction in which reference was made to previous ecumenical documents, as well as to joint statements and reports from the anterior work of ARCIC. The document “Authority in the Church II” (1981) was treated in a special way (already discussed above), quoting the extensive passages concerning the Mother of God. The proper text of the document is divided into four chapters (A–D), each of which consists of subsections (the titles of which are given in italics in brackets).

The first chapter (“Mary according to the Scriptures”) deals with biblical data on Mary. At the beginning, it was emphasized that the Holy Scriptures always presented the history of God (who gave grace to people) and people, who had hope for the coming of the Saviour (*The Witness of Scripture: A Trajectory of Grace and Hope*). Then a look at the person of Mary presented by St Matthew was examined (*Mary in Matthew’s Birth Narrative*) and in the Gospel of Childhood at St Luke also (*Mary in Luke’s Birth Narrative*). A separate point was devoted to the truth that Jesus was conceived through the action of the Holy Spirit (*The Virginal Conception*). The issue of family relations in the house of Mary and Joseph was also discussed (*Mary and the True Family of Jesus*). The writings of St John the Apostle were also analysed: Mary’s presence in the Fourth Gospel (*Mary in John’s Gospel*) and the apocalyptic image (*The Woman in Revelation 12*). The entire biblical chapter ended with a summary (*Scriptural Reflection*).

The second chapter deals with how Christianity developed the Marian doctrine (“Mary in the Christian Tradition”). The analysis began with the presentation of a close relationship between Mary and the Christological doctrine until the end of the Nestorian controversy (*Christ and Mary in the Ancient Common Tradition*). In addition to the doctrine, the issue of the practice of faith in the first millennium, above all in the liturgy was also addressed (*The Celebration of Mary in the Ancient Common Traditions*). Next, the development of Mariology and

Marian devotion during the Middle Ages was taken up (*The Growth of Marian Doctrine and Devotion in the Middle Ages*). Finally, the issue of Mariology in theology has been analysed in recent centuries, since the Reformation (*From the Reformation to the Present Day*).

The third chapter is a synthesis of Mary's life and role in terms of the grace and hope that Christians have ("Mary in the Pattern of Grace and Hope"). Two issues were raised in this part of the statement. Firstly, the experience of grace in Mary's life was examined (*Mary in the Economy of Grace*). Secondly, the dogmatic teaching of popes was raised, which seeks to extract from the example of Mary the teaching which is important for the faith of all the faithful (*The Papal Definitions*).

The fourth chapter deals with the role of Mary in the life of the Church community ("D. Mary in the Life of the Church"). Two topics have been discussed with particular attention. The first was the prayer through the intercession of Mary (*Intercession and Mediation in the Communion of Saints*). The second was to understand what role Mary plays in relation to the Church, as well as to check whether the titles attributed to her actually correspond to this role (*The Distinctive Ministry of Mary*).

Two goals were accomplished at the end of the document: firstly, the previous findings in the Mariology dialogue were synthetically summarized (*Conclusion*), and the reconciliations that were achieved in the dialogue (*Advances in Agreement*) were also collected. It is worth paying special attention to the last points of the document which present the results as fruits of dialogue (especially No. 77–79). No. 77 lists the conclusions that both sides have drawn from a thorough analysis of the Scriptures and Traditions. First of all, it is impossible to be fully faithful to the Holy Scriptures without paying due attention to the person of Mary. Secondly, the issue of *Theotokos* is of central importance in Christology and Mariology. Thirdly, it must be admitted that abuse in medieval piety was one of the causes of the break between Christians and influenced many animosities in the area of Mariology. Fourthly, it should be noted that especially in the 19th and 20th centuries many events took place which stimulated re-thinking on Mariology. Finally, the fifth observation is about the fruitfulness of dialogue due to the new approach to the Marian issues in recent times.

The above-mentioned conclusions are an attempt to look at the current history of the split and seek reconciliation. However, it is necessary to emphasize the determination with which both sides of the dialogue have decided to rise above stereotypes and historical reductions, and the courage to stand in truth, with the perception of mistakes, and also of the actions of Providence. This attitude of honesty and rectitude was a stable foundation for re-discussing the Marian issues, as well as analysing them from a different point of view. No. 78 and

79 tried to list achievements in seeking a Marian agreement. These fragments are particularly important, so it is worth quoting them literally:

78. As a result of our study, the Commission offers the following agreements, which we believe significantly advance our consensus regarding Mary. We affirm together

- the teaching that God has taken the Blessed Virgin Mary in the fullness of her person into his glory as consonant with Scripture, and only to be understood in the light of Scripture (paragraph 58);
- that in view of her vocation to be the mother of the Holy One, Christ's redeeming work reached 'back' in Mary to the depths of her being and to her earliest beginnings (paragraph 59);
- that the teaching about Mary in the two definitions of the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception, understood within the biblical pattern of the economy of hope and grace, can be said to be consonant with the teaching of the Scriptures and the ancient common traditions (paragraph 60);
- that this agreement, when accepted by our two Communion, would place the questions about authority which arise from the two definitions of 1854 and 1950 in a new ecumenical context (paragraphs 61–63);
- that Mary has a continuing ministry which serves the ministry of Christ, our unique mediator, that Mary and the saints pray for the whole Church and that the practice of asking Mary and the saints to pray for us is not communion-dividing (paragraphs 64–75).

79. We agree that doctrines and devotions which are contrary to Scripture cannot be said to be revealed by God nor to be the teaching of the Church. We agree that doctrine and devotion which focuses on Mary, including claims to 'private revelations', must be moderated by carefully expressed norms which ensure the unique and central place of Jesus Christ in the life of the Church, and that Christ alone, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is to be worshipped in the Church.

Both confessions came to an agreement on the last two Marian dogmas and the question of the mediation of Mary. First of all, it is very important that, after thoroughly examining the biblical data and the explanations provided by the teaching of the first centuries of the Church, the Anglicans have admitted that the last two dogmas do not conflict with the Bible or with Tradition; moreover, the doctrine of the Assumption can only be understood through the Bible. This conclusion is particularly important and, as we can see, it was possible after a re-reading of the data given in the Holy Scriptures. Of course, the consequence of admitting the sense of both dogmas would also entail the reevaluation of the doctrine about papal authority. The second matter worth emphasizing is the acknowledgement that Mary's mission to Christ and his Church did not end with

her earthly life, but it continues for all times. Therefore, asking Mary for prayer (expressed also by normalized practices of Marian devotion) can no longer divide Catholics and Anglicans.

In this way, the title of the document – “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ” truly reflects not only Christian hope, but also the awakening of hope for further fruitful ecumenical meetings. The agreement on the issue of Mariology not only enabled further talks, but also allowed them to look at other issues in a new, previously covered way. It is therefore no wonder that after the publication of the statement, it was not only accepted with appreciation, but also met with a vivid response in the space of ecumenism and all theology. This document was commented on by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the Christian Unity¹⁸, by local ecumenical dialogues¹⁹ and ecumenical institutions, both Catholic and Anglican, which focused on the achievements of the statement. Many of the mariologists and other theologians also commented on the Seattle Statement.

6. The next document in which Mary was mentioned is the Common Declaration of Pope Benedict XVI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, His Grace Rowan Williams, signed in the Vatican on 23 November 2006²⁰. Mary was not the main topic of the declaration, but a joint statement signed on the occasion of the visit to Rome of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the declaration, both hierarchs men-

¹⁸ Firstly, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) published the official commentary by Jared Wicks in its bulletin (cf. 2005: 61–69). PCPCU also published the press communiqué, in which it reported the issue of the document “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ” and set the next stages of committee work (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. 2005. “Recent Developments in Relations with the Anglican Communion”: 37–38). Also Cardinal Walter Kasper, the president of PCPCU, in his address at the Lambeth Conference (30 July 2008), appreciated the fruitfulness of the Seattle Statement: “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ” (2005) took important and unexpected strides towards a common understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary” (Walter Kasper. 2008: 144). In the same year (24 September 2008) he expressed a similar opinion in Lourdes (cf. Walter Kasper. 2008. “Discourse of Cardinal on the Occasion of the First Catholic-Anglican Pilgrimage to Lourdes”. Information Service 129 (3): 157).

¹⁹ Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in USA took care of the analysis of the Seattle Statement. It was held in 2006 and 2007 during four meetings above the issued document. At the same time, appropriate reports were published: cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Ecumenical Documents and News Releases (30.12.2019). http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical-documents-and-news-releases.cfm#CP_JUMP-106433. Finally, the official response of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in USA to the Seattle Statement was published on 20 October 2007 (Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in USA. 2007. Response to “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ” (30.12.2019). <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/anglican/response-mary.cfm>). A little later than Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in USA, also Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada (2008) devoted to the analysis of “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ” (cf. Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission (Canada). 2008. Canadian ecumenists promote new joint study of Mary in God’s plan (30.12.2019). https://ecumenism.net/archive/dialogues_ca/2008_arc_february.pdf). ARC-Canada also published (25 October 2008) an official response (cf. Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada. 2009. “A Response to ‘Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ’”. *One in Christ* 43 (2): 167–182).

²⁰ Benedict XVI, Rowan Williams. 2006. “Common Declaration of the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and Pope Benedict XVI”. Information Service 123 (3–4): 86–87.

tioned the publication of *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*, expressing gratitude to the ecumenists who worked on the document:

In the ten years since the most recent Common Declaration was signed by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the second phase of ARCIC has completed its mandate, with the publication of the documents *The Gift of Authority* (1999) and *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (2005). We are grateful to the theologians who have prayed and worked together in the preparation of these texts, which await further study and reflection.

At the end of the document, the Mother of God was mentioned as a special witness common to both traditions:

Mindful of our forty years of dialogue, and of the witness of the holy men and women common to our traditions, including Mary the *Theotokos*, (...) we pledge ourselves to more fervent prayer and a more dedicated endeavour to welcome and live by that truth into which the Spirit of the Lord wishes to lead his disciples.

The above declaration brings nothing new to the Mariological discussion, but again emphasized the importance of the Seattle Statement as a key document in the ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Anglicans.

The Mission Again

7. The next document from the official ecumenical dialogue with Anglicans at the international level is an agreed statement issued on 4 February 2007. It is entitled: “Growing Together in Unity and Mission. Building on 40 years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue” and is the result of IARCCUM’s work²¹. Mary appears several times in the statement. For the first time already in the introduction (“Commitment to unity and mission”):

2. (...) The second phase of ARCIC continued the search for further agreement in faith, addressing salvation and justification, ecclesiology, morals, authority and the place of Mary in the life of the Church.

²¹ International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. 2007. *Growing Together in Unity and Mission. An Agreed Statement by the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

The most attention was devoted to Mary in the first part of the document. It began with a mention of her in the Apostles' Creed cited in the chapter "The Faith We Hold in Common" in a Christological context ("He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary" – No. 12). Later, the entire chapter was dedicated to Mary ("9. The Blessed Virgin Mary").

88. All generations of Anglicans and Roman Catholics have called the Virgin Mary 'blessed'. Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that it is impossible to be faithful to Scripture without giving due attention to the person of Mary. (...)

89. Anglicans and Catholics agree that there can be but one mediator between God and humanity, Jesus Christ, and reject any interpretation of the role of Mary which obscures this affirmation. We agree in recognising that Christian understanding of Mary is inseparably linked with the doctrines of Christ and of the Church. Catholics and Anglicans recognise the grace and unique vocation of Mary, Mother of God Incarnate (*Theotokos*), observe her festivals, and accord her honour in the communion of saints. (...)

90. Anglicans and Roman Catholics share the ancient tradition of praying with and praising Mary. In the past, when Anglicans feared that devotional practices were presenting Mary as a mediator *in place of* Christ, direct invocation of Mary was avoided. (...)

91. Through dialogue Anglicans and Roman Catholics have deepened their common understanding of Mary in the plan of salvation and the life of the Church. (...)

92. The practice of devotion to Mary and the invocation of the saints is a normal part of Catholic devotional life, but it remains for many Anglicans unfamiliar, or even alien. Further dialogue and mutual understanding is needed.

The last time Mary was mentioned in the second part of the statement ("Towards Unity and Common Mission") in chapter "2. Joint study of our faith":

105. In reflecting on our faith together it is vital that all bishops ensure that the Agreed Statements of ARCIC are widely studied in both Communion. In addition to ARCIC I's *Final Report* (1982), we invite joint study of the work of the second phase of ARCIC. (...) We encourage the setting up of discussion groups on the recent Agreed Statement, *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*, with a view to gaining a greater appreciation of our common Mariological heritage and to reflecting upon the practical implications of the Commission's findings.

Reading the above statement allows one to conclude that it is not a continuation of the Mariological dialogue. Rather, it aims to summarize the forty years of ecumenical relations between Anglicans and Catholics, and present the most important conclusions and arrangements for dialogue. There are, again, issues of acceptance of Mary's mediation in the one and irreplaceable mediation of Christ (No. 89), of Mary's intercession (No. 90), of the last two Marian dog-

mas (No. 91) or of the problem of Marian devotion (No. 92). The encouragement to continue studying the Seattle Statement (No. 105) should also be appreciated in order to deepen the Mariological dialogue.

The Catholic bishop B. Longley wrote in the commentary on the agreed statement: “ARCIC has followed a similar pattern of presentation in its Agreed Statement ‘Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ’ (= MGHC) where it ‘proposes a fuller statement of our shared belief in the Blessed Virgin Mary’ but can ‘also take up differences of practice, including the explicit invocation of Mary’. Although it does not claim to have fully achieved this, MGHC nevertheless ‘points to the possibility of further reconciliation, in which issues concerning doctrine and devotion to Mary need no longer be seen as communion-dividing, or an obstacle in a new stage of our growth into visible *koinonia*’. (...) In the last of the nine doctrinal sections in Part One IARCCUM is principally concerned with ARCIC’s most recent Agreed Statement ‘Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ’, concluded in 2004 and presented in 2005, some four years after IARCCUM was itself established. GTUM acknowledges that ‘Christian understanding of Mary is inseparably linked with the doctrines of Christ and of the Church’ (§89). Mary can be seen by Anglicans and Catholics as ‘paramount in the Communion of Saints’ (§90) so that the Scriptures’ reflection on her life may be studied for what it reveals of the activity of the Holy Spirit translating her own experience of communion with God and within the Body of Christ into the Church’s earliest missionary and evangelical activity and so offering us a model of discipleship”²².

8. At the international level of dialogue with Anglicans, one more document was published (20 October 2016) in which the person of Mary was mentioned. It is an appeal from the IARCCUM bishops to the bishops and the people of the Anglican and Catholic communities. It has been titled “Walking Together: Common Service to the World and Witness to the Gospel”²³:

We recognize each other as brothers and sisters in Christ through baptism into this faith. We have found significant agreement about Eucharistic doctrine, ministry and salvation, and reached important convergence on authority, the Church as communion, moral principles, Mary and the saints, and episcopacy.

Although Mary has been mentioned in this last text maybe just for information purposes, it expresses the importance of the dialogue about Mary.

²² Bernard Longley. 2007. A Commentary on ‘Growing Together in Unity And Mission’: An Agreed Statement by the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (2007). (30.12.2019). http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20070615_bishop-longley_en.html.

²³ International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. 2016. “Walking Together: Common Service to the World and Witness to the Gospel” (30.12.2019). <https://iarccum.org/doc/?d=1250>.

Conclusions

After having read the above documents in which Mary is being mentioned, we can clearly see that no dialogue at official level between different Christian Confessions has devoted so much place and attention to the Mother of God as does the Anglican-Catholic one. As we can see, the first important document was “Authority in the Church II” (1981), which was the starting point for further discussions, and then, the Mariological conversations deepened until they reached the summit in “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ” (2004). The third important document which tried to summarize the progress made so far in the dialogue was “Growing Together in Unity and Mission” (2007), which enriches it with a missionary prospective.

In this sense, the ecumenical dialogue – including the local dialogues – somehow ranged between these three important documents. In addition to the significant number of documents in which the Mariology issue was raised, particular attention should be paid to openness to dialogue on both sides and an extraordinary determination in seeking both the truth that is the basis of Christian doctrine and in seeking a consensus between Anglicans and Catholics. It may be said that in a certain sense it has succeeded: joint conclusions regarding the biblical basics of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary inspire optimism that further dialogue will deepen the understanding of these truths and bring Anglicans and Catholics closer together. At the same time the doctrine of the hierarchy of truths contained in Vatican II (UR 12) would give us the hermeneutical means for understanding correctly the Marian Dogmas.

Also the ecumenical dialogue has given important steps. In 1981’s text the situation of Mariology was presented so clearly for the first time in the relations with Anglicans, and the agreement was expressed in these terms: firstly, it was mentioned in which both doctrines the mediation of Mary does not diminish mediation of Christ; that the Mariology is closely connected not only with Christology but also with ecclesiology. There was in both confessions a long liturgical and devotional tradition that consents to Marian devotion. So Mary is a model of holiness for all the Church. On the other hand, in that time many doubts among Anglicans aroused about the foundations of biblical dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, as well as the rank of the dogma which was given to them.

But in the text of 2005, we can find interesting conclusions received by both confessions. First of all, it was said that it is impossible to be fully faithful to the Holy Scriptures without paying due attention to the person of Mary. Secondly, in the same line and according to the biblical groundings, the title of *Theotokos* was used by both confessions as do also the orthodox Christians. It was at the same time admitted that abuse in medieval piety was one of the causes of the break between catholic and protestant Christians. At last, it was noted that especially in the 19th

and 20th centuries many events took place which stimulated re-thinking on Mariology. Feminism and the role of women in the Church are not the last ones. As we can see, the contents of both documents were similar but a better biblical approach has helped to shorten the distances. So we can say now that Mary is prospected now as an ecumenical meeting point, as the Mother of Christ and all Christians.

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