

A Living Sign of Covenant

THE RIGHT REVEREND FRANK T. GRISWOLD, III

The Episcopal diocese of Chicago entered into a covenant with the Roman Catholic archdiocese in 1985, shortly after I was ordained bishop. In the covenant we agreed to share resources and to collaborate wherever possible in areas of ministry, evangelization and service to the poor and needy. In a wonderful way, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has become one of the most important things we share, and therefore it is a very concrete and living sign of that covenant.

I wish to begin these reflections by thanking Dottoressa Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi for the wonderful gift they have given not only to the Roman Catholic community but to the Anglican and Lutheran communities as well, a gift not only for our children and the adults involved in the work of the Good Shepherd, but a gift which, because of its deep roots in the fundamental experience of being baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, is a true source and sign of the unity we pray for so fervently.

While, to be sure, the work of reuniting the body of Christ needs to be carried out at the highest levels—and here I speak as the co-chairman of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the United States—I also passionately believe that it is through such vehicles as the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd that we discover more profoundly the things we share in terms of faith, tradition and the presence and transforming power of the risen Christ who is the Good

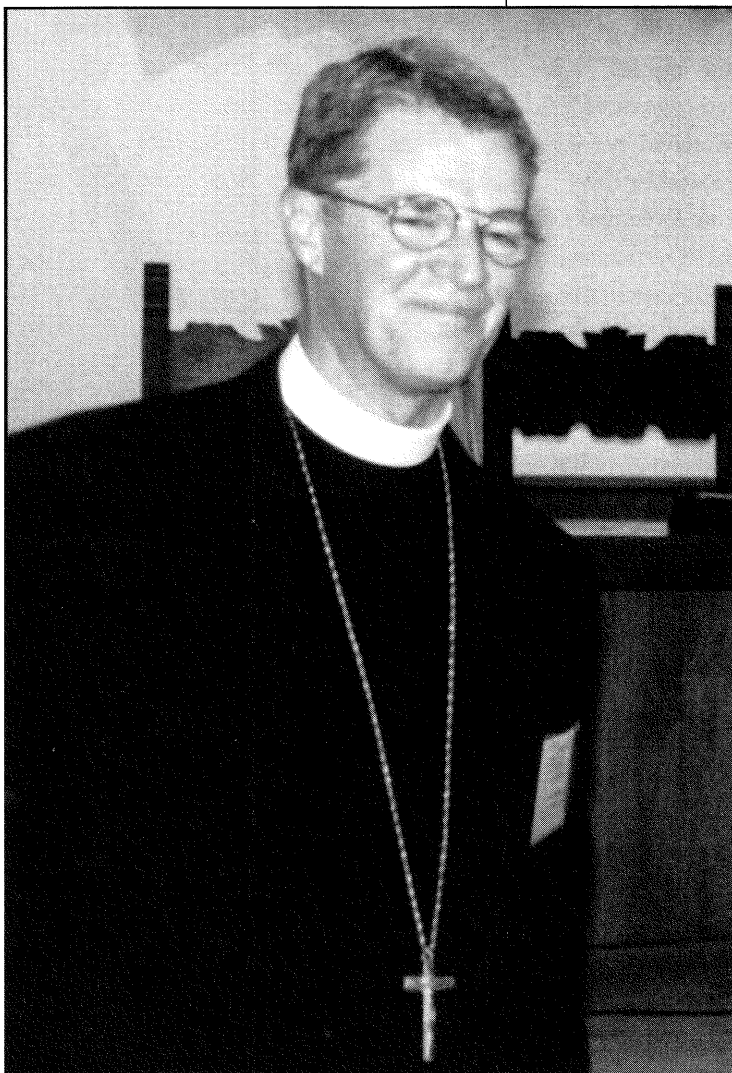


Photo by Elizabeth Piper

Shepherd of us all—a presence mediated to us in a special and powerful way through the sacraments.

What a joy it is therefore to come together here in Assisi, the city of Francis and Clare, to be instructed by their spirit which is so present in this place, and to be renewed by their witness to God's joy expressed in love and compassion for

the whole of creation, a witness which transcends the unhappy divisions which have, since their day, developed in Western Christianity.

It is my hope that the time we are spending here together will help us to deepen the bonds of faith and love which already exist among us in the name and work of the Good Shepherd, and also

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strengthen us as ministers of the one who said, "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice" (John 10:16).

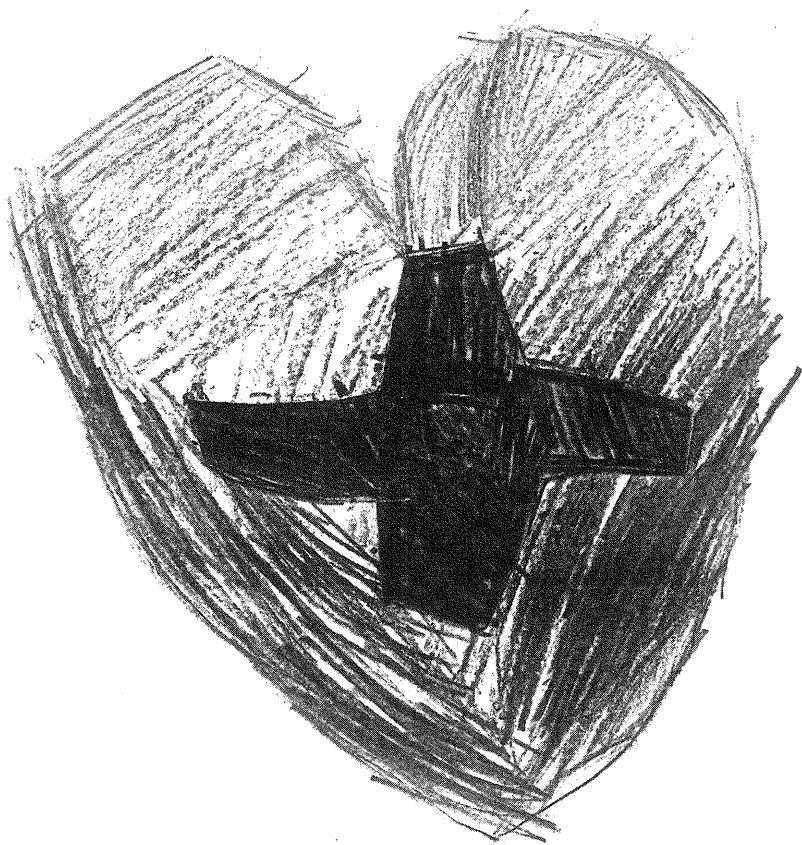
This brings me to the painful reality of our divisions. The Episcopal church in the United States is a daughter of the Church of England and as such is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, which is made up of national churches who look to the See of Canterbury and the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury as the sign of the faith and communion we share.

We are a church deeply affected by the Reformation in its desire to recover the primacy of scripture in establishing doctrine, while at the same time honoring tradition, and our ability, with God's grace, to find truth through the exercise of human reason and reflection upon the concrete realities of our life in the world. Scripture, reason and tradition are three sources that are always in dialogue and tension with one another. Unlike many of the churches of the Reformation, we have preserved the historical ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, the ancient creeds and the sacramental life and liturgical forms which identify those

ecclesial bodies which belong to the Catholic tradition.

In the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the churches of the Anglican Communion are described as occupying a special place because they have preserved many aspects of the Catholic faith and practice.

The liturgical and biblical renewal that came to birth in the Roman Catholic Church in the early part of this century has profoundly affected the Episcopal Church and the other churches of the Anglican Communion. Liturgical reform and making sacred scripture more accessible and alive in the hearts and minds



Lauren, age 5

Our Guardian Angels' Atrium
Midland, Ontario, Canada

"This is what my heart looks like when we sing
'Jesus, Jesus loves Lauren, yes he does.'"

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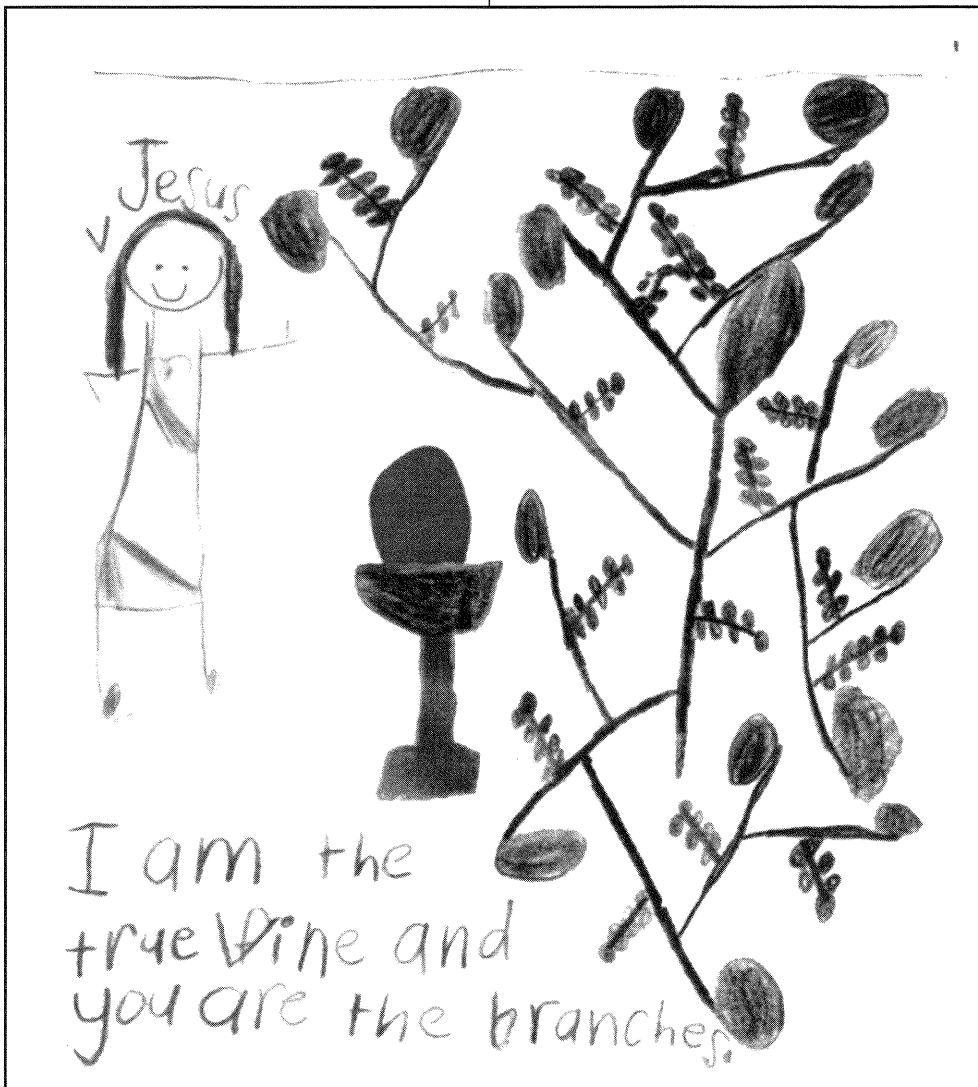
of our people have been ongoing tasks, which are far from complete. At their center, they are about helping the community of faith encounter the risen Christ in word and sacrament and in the life of the community itself. Reverence for the word and its capacity to break us open, to shape and to form us, and recognition of the power of signs and symbols such as water, light, bread, wine, oil and gestures, to speak of Christ to us, are part of a process of recovery and rediscovery in which we are all deeply engaged, and

which the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, in its subtle yet spacious and exacting way, so wonderfully and profoundly fosters in both our churches.

In the area of ecumenical dialogues, the present day conversations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics are focused upon how more of our common heritage might be recovered and affirmed in ways that transcend past controversies. The ordination of women in many parts of the Anglican Communion has introduced a new difficulty in our conver-

sations with the Holy See, but it has not kept them from going forward and continuing to bear fruit.

All this touches upon something that is close to us all, namely the matter of sharing the eucharist. Here there are two schools of thought: one that believes that eucharistic sharing is a means to the unity we seek, and the other that eucharistic sharing is the goal or end which signifies the resolution of those things which divide us. These two perspectives are present among us both within our



Rose, age 7
St. Frances Cabrini
Minneapolis, Minnesota
(This is the cover of Rose's missal work.)

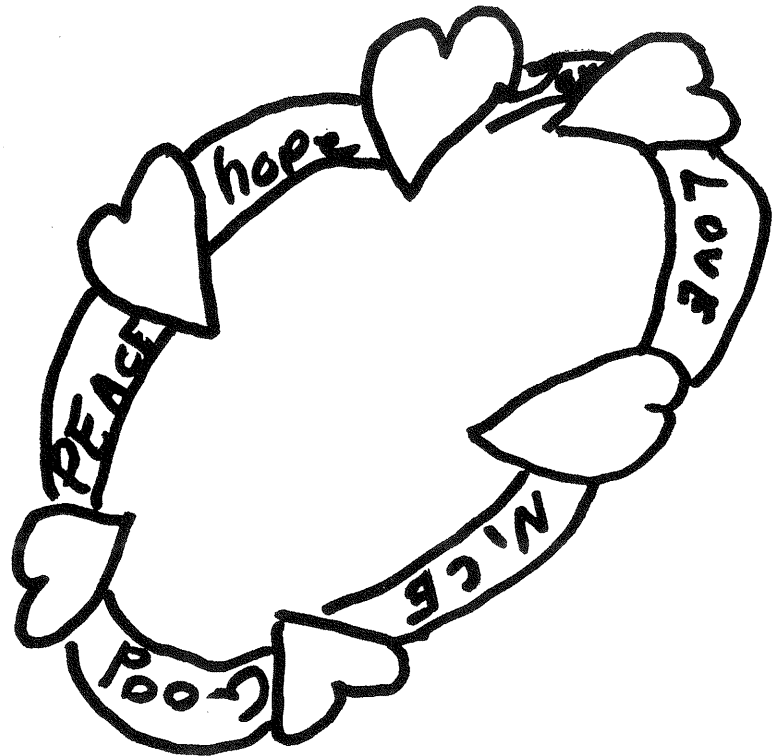
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several ecclesial communities and in the official relationships between our communities, and because we are here not only as participants in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, but also as members of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran churches, we are encountering these perspectives in tension with one another and, therefore, experiencing sadness and frustration.

Since the largest numbers of participants are either Roman Catholic or Anglican, the eucharistic liturgies of those two churches will be celebrated on alternate days. It is very painful not to share one another's eucharist, particularly given the bonds of love and faith and ministry in the name of the Good Shepherd which have brought us together in this holy place in the communion of Francis and Clare. Therefore, it is important during this time of retreat, not to be oppressed by the burden of those things which still divide us, but to give thanks to God for all the wonderful ways—the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd being not the least—in which God is drawing us together and revealing the depths and deeper meaning of the baptismal reality and faith we share.

In this spirit and infused with this hope we cry out with Francis our brother in "Il cantico di Frate Sole":

Most High, omnipotent, good Lord
To you alone belong praise and glory
Honor and blessing. Amen.



Caleigh, age 7

Pax Christi Community

Eden Prairie, Minnesota

(This picture was drawn after the True Vine I presentation in response to the question, "What is the sap?")

"The mustard seed is like when the priest adds a drop of water to the wine and it all grows, because we are all together in the chalice to celebrate the Last Supper."

—Lindsey, age 8

Our Guardian Angels' Atrium

St. Margaret's Church

Midland, Ontario, Canada