

# THE ANGLO-LUTHERAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is the Anglo-Lutheran Catholic Church (ALCC?)**

The ALCC is a Church in the Lutheran Evangelical Catholic tradition.

### **What is an Evangelical Catholic Lutheran?**

An Evangelical Catholic Lutheran is first of all a Christian. An Evangelical Catholic Lutheran also believes that Lutheranism is not at all Protestant. Evangelical Catholic Lutherans believe that Lutherans are Western Catholics who were involuntarily expelled from the Catholic Church and are conscience-bound to return to the Catholic Church as soon as circumstances permit. Evangelical Catholic Lutherans consider Lutheranism to be "Protestant" only to the degree that it has accepted Calvinist (Presbyterian) influence through the centuries. Evangelical Catholics reject the doctrines and principles of Calvinism. This is nothing new. Whether they have been known as Gnesio-Lutherans, Old Lutherans, Romanizing Lutherans, or Evangelical Catholic Lutherans, they have been an integral part of Lutheranism since the time of Martin Luther.

### **Why is the word "Anglo" in your name?**

Unlike other Lutheran churches, the ALCC has roots in Anglicanism as well as Evangelical Catholic Lutheranism. This is reflected in our Church's name and in its coat of arms (the Church of England's St. George's Cross and the Luther Rose.)

### **Most Lutheran Churches only have two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion. Is this true for the ALCC?**

No. In union with the Catholic and Anglican churches, the ALCC recognizes seven sacraments and celebrates them using the rites of the Catholic Church.

### **But don't the Lutheran confessional documents in the Book of Concord say that there are only two sacraments?**

Yes. But the ALCC does not consider the Lutheran confessional documents in the Book of Concord binding when they conflict with authentic Catholic faith, tradition, order, and spirituality as defined by the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the other documents of the Magisterium.

### **What does the ALCC teach about Baptism?**

The ALCC's teachings about Baptism is the same as that of the Catholic Church as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Baptism is regenerative, removes original sin, actual sin, and causes a profound ontological change in the baptized person--changing him into a "child of God." It is not a rite through which a person joins a congregation or a denomination. It is how a person becomes a Christian: It is how a person is "born again."

### **What does the ALCC teach about Holy Communion?**

The ALCC agrees with the Catholic Church's teachings about Holy Communion (the Holy Eucharist or the Mass.) When consecrated by a priest, the bread and wine actually become the Body and Blood of Christ while retaining the outward appearance of bread and wine. This is called "the Miracle of the Mass." The technical term for this miracle is Transubstantiation. The ALCC rejects all Protestant Eucharistic theologies.

### **How is the ALCC different from other Lutheran Churches?**

**1. Unlike other Lutheran Churches,** the ALCC accepts the Anglican 39 Articles of Religion from The Book of Common Prayer as reconciled with Catholic theology by John Henry Cardinal Newman in Tracts for the Times (only,) and even then only insofar as they agree with authentic Catholic faith, tradition, and spirituality as defined by the Magisterium.

**2. Unlike other Lutheran Churches,** the ALCC accepts the Catechism of the Catholic Church and all other documents of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church as its ultimate standard of Faith, Order, Tradition, and Spirituality. It believes and teaches nothing contrary to the Magisterium. All clergy and postulants for ordination are required to sign the Catholic Mandatum, and may not preach, teach, write, or publish anything contrary to the Magisterium.

**3. Unlike other Lutheran Churches,** the ALCC has accepted Papal Primacy and Papal Infallibility. Though it is not legally under Papal control at this time, it acts as if it were, and is actively working toward visible, corporate reunion with the Catholic Church. The ALCC also operates under Catholic Canon Law to the greatest extent practical in matters not covered by its own Canon Law Code.

**4. Unlike other Lutheran Churches,** the ALCC teaches that Bishops ordained in the historic Apostolic Succession are of the essence (*esse*) of the Church. The ALCC's clergymen are ordained into a sacerdotal (sacrificing) Priesthood consisting of the three Sacred Orders of Deacons, Priests, and Bishops, in the historic Apostolic Succession in lineages recognized as valid by the Catholic Church, using the Ordination rites of the Catholic Church within the setting of the Mass of Pope Paul VI (Novus Ordo,) or the Mass from the Catholic Church's Anglican Use Book of Divine Worship exclusively. The ALCC's primary apostolic lineage is the Duarte-Costa branch of the Rebiban (Vatican) Succession, though it also holds the apostolic lineage of the Dutch Old Catholic Church among many others which have been ruled technically valid by various Popes.

**5. Unlike other Lutheran Churches,** the ALCC accepts the Catholic Church's teachings about "the Last Things," the Saints, and the Blessed Virgin Mary. It encourages prayers and other devotions to Mary and the Saints, along with all of the other aids to devotion used in Catholicism.

**6. Unlike other Lutheran Churches,** the ALCC has the same ecclesiology (teachings about the nature of the Church, and how the Church is organized and governed) as the Catholic Church. It worships using the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church exclusively. It observes the Seasons, Holy Days, and Saints' Days of the Catholic Church's Calendar. The ALCC accepts the same books of the Bible recognized by the Catholic Church. The Pontifical Biblical Commission's magisterial document, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church" has been officially adopted as the ALCC's official statement of the nature and authority of Scripture, the principles and methods to be used to interpret the Bible, and the rules, boundaries, and limitations of those methods.

**How is the ALCC different from the Old Catholics and Independent Catholics?**

Unlike Old Catholics, the ALCC accepts and enthusiastically proclaims the doctrines of Papal Primacy, Papal Infallibility, and the teachings about the Blessed Virgin Mary proclaimed by the First Vatican Council. The ALCC's Apostolate is working (from within Lutheranism) for the return of large numbers of Lutherans (and those from other Communion as well) to visible, corporate reunion with the Catholic Church. This is the "bottom line."

**Then why doesn't the ALCC simply join the Catholic Church?**

The ALCC is actively working on just that, and is making excellent progress toward that goal. But such things take time. In the meantime, we have been blessed by God with the unique task of being a bridge for those who understand Christ's prayer and call that we "all may be one," but do not want to "swim the Tiber" alone. We feel particularly called to assist those who feel lost or cast aside as a result of recent problems in the mainline denominations of Protestantism. Visible, corporate union with the Roman Catholic Church in whatever form is deemed appropriate by the Vatican, bringing along as many Lutherans and those from other Communion who want to be fully Catholic along with it, is the ALCC's apostolate and goal.