Catholic Principles of Ecumenism

1. **The unity of the Church has not been lost, but subsists in the Catholic Church** (LG8, UR4c, UUS 10 & 11)
   [We shouldn’t imagine:
   “that Christ’s Church is nothing more than a collection of churches and ecclesial communities (divided, but still possessing a certain unity)”
   nor:
   “that Christ’s Church nowhere really exists today and that it is to be considered only as an end which all churches and ecclesial communities must strive to reach”](SCDF Mysterium Ecclesiae 1973)

2. **There exists an imperfect communion between all Christians and all churches/ecclesial communities** (LG 15, UR 3b)
   Others possess “many elements of sanctification and of truth” (UR8, UUS10)
   “significance and value in the mystery of salvation” (UR3, UUS 8)

3. **There exist impediments to full ecclesial communion**

4. **The purpose of the ecumenical movement is to overcome these impediments and re-establish full ecclesial communion** (UR4c)

5. **This requires change of heart and prayer – “spiritual ecumenism”** (UR7, UUS21)

6. **We must renew our own Church**
   We must reform sometimes our way of presenting our own doctrine and the way we speak about doctrines others hold. We must remove hostile attitudes and what offends others.

7. **We should enter dialogue** (UUS 28-39)
   “in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed, and at the same time tending towards that fullness with which our Lord wants His body to be endowed in the course of time” (UR 24)

8. **We should move from cooperation to commitment** (Card. Hume at Swanwick 1987)
   On every agenda the first question should be “is this a priority?” and the second “how can we do this together?”
   Swanwick singles out:
   - young people
   - social action
   - training of leaders
   - speaking together on moral issues

LG – *Lumen Gentium* The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vatican II 1964
UR – *Unitatis Redintegratio* The Decree on Ecumenism, Vatican II 1964
SCDF - The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (in the Vatican)
UUS - *Ut Unum Sint* Encyclical Letter on Commitment to Ecumenism,

John Paul II 1995
Ecumenism and grassroots

Concern for unity pertains to the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone, according to the potential of each, whether it be exercised in daily Christian living or in theological and historical studies. (UR 5)

There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from newness of attitudes (cf Eph. 4:233), from self-denial and unstinted love, that yearnings for unity take their rise and grow toward maturity. (UR 12)

The Swanwick declaration…requires a shift in the thinking, feeling and action of our churches from ecumenism as an extra, which absorbs energy, to ecumenism as a dimension of all that we do, which releases energy through the sharing resources. This shift needs to be effective at all levels and in all places in order to establish a radically new style of working which builds on the creative ecumenical relationships of the many rather than the ecumenical activities of the few. It is vital that this shift takes place locally. (Churches Together in Pilgrimage – p3)

There is also a need to enable ecumenical nurture and training of both lay and ordained… This would help those who have pastoral responsibility confidently to encourage ecumenical contacts between the congregations they serve. Local clergy, ministers and lay-leaders have an influential role for promoting or hindering Christian unity. (Ibid. p14)

Room to advance? Bl. John Paul II on the style of exercising the Petrine ministry.

I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility in this regard [ie ecumenism] above all in acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian Communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation. [Papal encyclical Ut Unim Sint (1995) n.95]

Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade Church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church [Ibid. n.96]
Ecumenism: the British Scene

ARCIC = Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission

ARCIC I (1970 – 81)
Eucharistic Doctrine, *Windsor 1971*
Ministry and Ordination, *Canterbury 1973*
Authority in the Church I, *Venice 1976*  
*In general*
Authority in the Church II, *Windsor 1981*  
*Mainly the Pope*

ARCIC II (1982 - 2007)
Salvation and the Church, *Llandaff 1986*
Church as Communion, *Dublin 1990*
Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church, *Venice 1993*
Authority in the Church III: The Gift of Authority, *Palazzola 1998*  
*Mainly teaching authority*

Mary: *Hope and Grace in Christ, Seattle 2005*
Growing Together in Unity and Mission 2007

ARCIC III (2011 -)
First Conference May 17–27, 2011 at the ecumenical *Monastery of Bose* in N Italy

1989 Swanwick Agreement

1990 Roman Catholic Church joins: Churches Together in England  
Action of Churches Together in Scotland  
Churches Together in Wales

2000 Anglicans and Lutherans in full communion

1/11/2003 Anglican and Methodist Covenant signed

2004 Hind Report on sharing training resources (Church of England in consultation with Methodists, URC & others)

2006 Conference at Ushaw College, Durham on “Receptive Ecumenism”  
  = not anticipating issues of discussion, but “living with one another” and appreciating whatever a living Tradition has to teach.