

Swiss reformer who debated Luther on Christ's real presence in the Sacrament of the Altar



ULRICH (HULDRYCH) ZWINGLI

Born: Jan. 1, 1484 | Wildhaus, Switzerland

Died: Oct. 11, 1531 | Kappel, Switzerland

ULRICH ZWINGLI IS A COMPLICATED CHARACTER IN THE STORY OF THE

REFORMATION. He begins his career as a happy political instrument in service to the pope and ends it dying at the hands of Catholic forces. He is a reformer — like Martin Luther — but unfortunately believes that Luther has not gone far enough in his reforms. Zwingli's theology becomes shaped not only by the Bible but also by the rationalist philosophies of humanists such as Erasmus.

Zwingli begins to write in opposition to Luther and his teachings of the real presence. In 1529, both Luther and Zwingli attend a meeting in Marburg, Germany, and agree on 14 points of doctrine. However, even after heated discussions, they cannot agree on how to understand Christ's Words of Institution. Luther will not budge in his belief that Jesus is bodily present in the Holy Supper, writing "This is my body" on the table where the two were holding their debate. Luther showed that it was up to Zwingli to prove that "is" must mean "signifies" or "merely represents." This he could not do. Therefore, an alliance between the two reformers could not be realized.



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