

Letter from Father Ian Gray, Vicar General

Dear Fathers,

I want to deal with the attached letter from our Archbishop regarding the detail and schedule of subjects to be discussed in Rome in the near future.

The Archbishop is perfectly right when he says that “provisional synods cannot question the doctrine of TAC as decided by our Bishops” and further we must also remember that we unanimously endorsed the offer made to us by the Holy Father as contained within the document *Anglicanorum Coetibus* at our October Synod in Lincoln. The Archbishop's forthcoming visit to Rome is a continuation of the process that we all agreed to at Synod, and only by such meetings can we come to a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the complexities that such an historic offer in practice actually means.

With reference to the petition as submitted by Bishop Moyer and Bishop Mercer to the Holy See as contained within their letter dated the 16th May 2010, it must be said that the Archbishop did set out quite clearly his schedule at Synod and the Petition forms part of that same process.

I am aware, that there are those within Forward in Faith that have a completely different stance on the whole question of the establishment of an Ordinariate in the United Kingdom. They are quite within their rights to pursue their own agenda regarding this matter, but equally so are we.

This is not a competition as to who succeeds in concluding the detailed and complex issues with the Holy See regarding of such an establishment, but the genuine desire of many Christians who cherish and aspire to see a satisfactory outcome to the historic offer made by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

I am also extremely aware as your Vicar General, of the real and genuine concerns of many of our Clergy and Laity about this process. My recent questionnaire to you on the subject did in fact demonstrate beyond any doubt, that we still have a very long way to go before the majority who responded will be able fully to endorse and accept *Anglicanorum Coetibus*.

The seventeen responses were listed as follows:- Yes to a “corporate response” 8, Possibly but still not certain 5, No to any link or move 4. A further point is that 4 of our clergy stated that they would go to Rome in the event that our actions came to nothing in the end, or if the process was too drawn out.

I am satisfied that as a direct result of the Questionnaire, that a sufficient majority exists in support of the Petition. I also want to make it very clear, that those who have expressed real and profound reservations will not be coerced into a body that they do not wish to join. Archbishop Hepworth has given assurances, that there will continue to be safe and secure pastoral oversight for those who cannot in conscience join the Ordinariate. However, it would not be right or even a Christian or Charitable act to prevent the majority from making progress.

Yours In Christ Jesus

Father Ian Gray+

Vicar General.

Email from Archbishop Hepworth

To the clergy of the Traditional Anglican Communion in England.

My Dear Fathers,

When Cardinal Levada wrote to each of the Traditional Anglican Communion bishops last December, forwarding the documents which he described as “the definitive answer to your petition”, he went on to say that he was aware that the publication of the Apostolic Constitution on “The Gathering of the Anglicans” would pose difficult issues of discernment for the clergy and laity of our Communion. It could not be otherwise. This is the most significant issue to face the churches the churches whose communion with Rome was broken by the Reformation since those now far off days.

May I make some things clear.

1. We are in a process of discernment. Each individual, and each group, should be now endeavouring, in the deepest possible prayerfulness, the mind of God for the Church, and should also be studying the Constitution and those things that are being published by those actually involved in the discussions that led to it. I have published the text of the petition of the TAC bishops and a substantial Pastoral letter in order to facilitate this process. At the same time, I must warn you against the vitriolic publications of those who reject the Constitution.
2. Both Bishop Moyer and I are happy to receive questions. I will be in Rome in the next few weeks, and already have a substantial list of questions that I cannot answer, and have referred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I must say that each of my approaches have been met with great courtesy and an eagerness to solve problems.
3. There will be at least one Ordinariate in England. I know we are very small, and the Church of England appears very large, but this is about truth, not brute force I have indicated to the Holy See that I wish to discuss the situation in England at my current visit.
4. It would be unwise at this stage to worry about issues such as re-ordination and re-confirmation. Please note what I say in the Pastoral letter about this.
5. It would be very wise to become familiar with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It is the official doctrinal statement of our College of Bishops, and therefore of our Communion. We are not a Communion in which Synods vote on doctrine. The Church of England does quite enough of that.
6. I stress that what we are doing is “Corporate Reunion” – not “individual reception”. We come as an ecclesial body whose petition made certain ecclesial statements, and an ecclesial request. The statements have been accepted, and the request granted. We are talking about “Anglican Catholics” – clearly differentiated in Personal Ordinariates with their own episcopate and diocesan structure. The Constitution and Norms explain how the bishop of the Anglicans relates to local Roman Catholic bishops, and how their ministries complement each other. Neither is superior to the other.
7. Many details are absent from the published texts, and need to be designed. That is a significant part of our current work.
8. In the meantime, we should be expending our energy on growing our communities.
9. I will be reporting to you after our Rome meetings. You will be pleased to know that I have asked Bishop Mercer to accompany me.

Exciting and historic times are always challenging. Please read again the prayer that Jesus prayed to His Father about unity, in the Gospel of Saint John. It is that prayer that has driven and sustained me for the past eight years as your Primate. I pray it sustains each of you and your people.

+John Hepworth

Included in the email: **Letter signed by Bishops David Moyer and Robert Mercer**

The Traditional Anglican Church

Rt Revd David Moyer

Episcopal Visitor

C/O: Church of the Good Shepherd

1116 Lancaster Avenue

Rosemont, PA 19010

USA

His Eminence William Cardinal Levada

Congregazione per la Dottrina Della Fede

Palazzo del S. Uffizio

00120 Vatican City

Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension, 16th May 2010

Your Eminence,

The people of the Traditional Anglican Church in the United Kingdom (a province of the Traditional Anglican Communion) express their profound gratitude to you for your positive response of December 16th 2009 to our Letter to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of October 5th 2007 in which we expressed our desire to “*seek a communal and ecclesial way of being Anglican Catholics in communion with the Holy See, at once treasuring the full expression of catholic faith and treasuring our tradition within which we have come to this moment.*”

We have read and studied with care the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* with the Complementary Norms and the accompanying Commentary, as well as the initial statement from your Dicastery at the time of your press conference with Archbishop DiNoia.

And now, in response to your invitation to contact your Dicastery to begin the process you outline, and in accordance with our unanimous synod vote of October 2009: which reads thus:-

“That this Assembly, representing the Traditional Anglican Communion in Great Britain, offers its joyful thanks to Pope Benedict XVI for his forthcoming Apostolic Constitution allowing the corporate reunion of Anglicans with the Holy See, and requests the Primate and College of Bishops of the Traditional Anglican Communion to take the steps necessary to implement this Constitution.”

We therefore request that:

1. That the Apostolic Constitution be implemented in the United Kingdom and a Personal Ordinariate be erected.
2. That we may establish an interim Governing Council.
3. That this interim Council be directed by the Holy Father to propose a terna of names for the appointment of an Ordinary in a UK Ordinariate.

While we cannot speak for other groups of Anglicans in the United Kingdom, we shall be delighted if others apply for acceptance under the terms of *Anglicanorum coetibus*.

With continued expressions of appreciation for the generosity of the Holy Father in gathering the Anglicans into the fullness of Eucharistic communion, we await your instructions,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+David L. Moyer, Episcopal Visitor

+Robert Mercer CR, retired, assistant to the Visitor