

Traditional Anglican Communion Pastoral Statement From the Primate

The creation of the first Ordinariate for Anglicans under the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Benedict XVI has been announced. As anticipated, for a host of symbolic and historical reasons, the first Ordinariate will be in England.

A second Ordinariate has this week been announced for Australia.

This must surely rejoice the generous heart of the Holy Father. *Anglicanorum Coetibus* is a response to many overtures from Anglicans (including our own Petition) in the years when the hopes of ARCIC (the Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission) for unity faded. It is also a response to the disintegration of the Anglican Communion over the past thirty years. And it is above all a recognition that many Anglican communities have come, in the ecumenical journey of the past hundred years, to a faith and a sacramental life that is fully Catholic. In the beautiful phrase of the Holy Father, they were ready *to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church in a corporate manner*.

This is a moment to reflect on the prophetic wisdom of Pope Benedict. It is a moment to thank him for his daring trust that Anglicans would respond. It is a time to intensify our prayers for him. *May the Lord protect him, and give him strength!*

It is also a time to remember in our prayers the Archbishop of Canterbury, who acknowledged recently in Rome the prophetic witness of this initiative.

It is expected that announcements about the other two countries initially involved in preparations for the Anglican Ordinariates (Canada and the United States) will soon be forthcoming. It is also important that the rest of the Anglican world is quickly reassured that the Apostolic Constitution has a global reach. In our own Communion, four further Provinces have already passed resolutions seeking the formation of an Ordinariate.

There have been exquisite difficulties this year. The implementation of the Apostolic Constitution has posed difficulties including the way in which the text of the Apostolic Constitution should be interpreted. We have discovered how little detailed knowledge we have of the way the Catholic Church does things, and Catholic officials have discovered, I believe, their need to acquire a better and more profound knowledge of contemporary Anglicanism. There have been times when we have felt excluded. We have not been able to see clearly how the Ordinariate will be initiated, or what the processes for clergy and laity will be. That uncertainty led to feelings of insecurity. As and when my duty as Primate required it, I raised a number of serious issues with Catholic authorities to assist the implementation process.

I am now able to say that I am much more at ease with the implementation processes.

In England, Bishop Mercer has had a very productive meeting with the Episcopal Delegate for the Ordinariate (representing both the Bishops' Conference and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith). Twenty-four TAC clergy have indicated their firm intention to seek ordination and membership of the English Ordinariate. Bishop Mercer (a hero of the darkest days of Rhodesian terrorism when he was Anglican bishop of Matabeleland) becomes the sixth Anglican bishop to seek membership of that Ordinariate.

In the United States, the creation of a community of Ordinariate-bound Anglicans from many backgrounds was greatly boosted by the gathering at the Anglican Use parish in San Antonio two weeks ago. The Episcopal Delegate through his hard working (and former Anglican) secretary is gathering information needed for a formal announcement of the timetable. I have created a structure for TAC groups wishing to enter the Ordinariate in the United States to be gathered so that they can pray and plan and wait in harmony. Archbishop Falk, Bishop Moyer and Bishop Campese are involved in that work. They, with other retired TAC bishops in the United States (Bishops Hudson and Stewart), will be entering the Ordinariate. Fifty-one priests of the TAC in the United States have so far indicated that they are seeking admission.

Bishop Garcia of Puerto Rico and Bishop Rodriguez of Central America, with the unanimous consent of their Synods, have petitioned for separate Ordinariates in their respective Provinces.

The Canadian TAC Bishops (Bishops Wilkinson, Reid and Botterill) have petitioned for an Ordinate. Forty-three of their clergy have so far announced their intention of seeking admission to the Ordinate with their bishops.

In Australia, the Episcopal Delegate and I are calling all those clergy and laity intending to join the Australian Ordinate together for a “San Antonio of the South” from 1st – 3rd February. (Canada will no doubt be having a similar gathering, to be called “San Antonio in the Snow”.) The Church of Torres Strait and the Nippon Kristus Sei Ko Kai (The TAC in Japan) are involved in the implementation of the Apostolic Constitution in Australia. My two suffragan bishops (Bishops Entwistle and Robarts), along with the former Anglican bishop of Yokohama (Bishop Kajiwarra) and the Bishop of the Torres Strait (Bishop Nona) and one retired bishop of the Anglican Church of Australia all intend to enter the Ordinate. In line with its historic autonomy, the Church of Torres Strait is seeking an Ordinate for its own people, who are now spread throughout Australia. Twenty-eight TAC priests (not yet including the Torres Strait) have so far indicated their firm intention to seek membership of the Ordinate.

I have been assured that Episcopal Delegates for a number of further regions will be named. I have planned visits to Japan and Latin America in February, and am planning major visits to India and Africa, prior to the naming of Delegates.

I now wish to raise with each member of the Traditional Anglican Communion several very important matters.

1. The “Gathering” of the Anglicans is bringing diverse groups together:

As we come to this moment of creating Ordinariates, we are bringing together groups of people who share the twin vision of achieving unity and of bringing the treasure of Anglicanism into the fullness of Catholic Communion. Some groups have been hostile to others. Some come from positions of power, others from persecution and dispossession. The intensity of the Anglican disputes and the sudden ability to “defame without blame” on the internet have driven many beyond breaking point to the fracturing of the Anglican Communion. Similarly, the fracturing of Anglican groups of people outside the Anglican Communion (whether by conscience or expulsion) is rightly seen as a scandal. Now, we must form a single community in Christ. It is not easy. It will not be easy for some time. Disputes about the elements of our common life, our prayer and liturgy and instruments of governance, could easily at this time overwhelm the initial fragility of our emerging communities.

2. The “Patrimony” of the Anglicans:

The unique pathway into “the fullness of Catholic Communion” provided by the Ordinariates demands a special reverence and continuity with our past. We must avoid the temptation to discard or belittle the treasures of the Patrimony. Each of us, in our application to become a member of an Ordinate, will be seeking to be Catholics of the Western Church, but with unique ecclesial structures that “gather” us. Aboriginal Australians in ancient times carried the precious glowing embers of fire on their great nomadic journeys, ready to make the campfire around which they would gather. So it must be with us. Burning embers carried by many tribes to make one great fire around which we find warmth and light and community! The *Anglican Use* in the United States has proudly carried the name *Anglican* within the Catholic Church for the past thirty years. And soon, so shall we.

3. The example of the United States Anglicans:

For that reason, the gathering of those bound for the United States Ordinate last week in Texas was of such significance. It was a majestic moment of creating Christian community. It is an example that should be quickly followed.

4. The temptations posed by Anglican ways:

The open governance of Anglican communities, both parish and diocese, recognised and supported by the Apostolic Constitution, is a vital part of the Patrimony. It can also be an occasion of sin, if we resort to power plays. Even in parish vestry meetings, this is not unknown!

5. Our common life in this moment of transition:

There are some Anglican clergy and people who are ready and impatient for their entry into the Ordinariate. Others, the great majority of Anglicans, cannot yet see the possibility. A few have been scornful and hostile. For the Traditional Anglican Communion, “coming into the fullness of Catholic Communion” is a matter of policy of the College of Bishops, as is the acceptance of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as the “authoritative expression of the Catholic faith”. “Never” is not an option for any of us. It is of the utmost importance that those who are ready now should hold those who are not yet ready in the deepest bonds of prayer and Christian closeness. And vice versa.

6. The need for fairness and integrity:

We must commit ourselves in every part of our Communion to scrupulous fairness in any role we might have in the creation of the Ordinariates. All those on the Anglo-catholic side of Anglican Synods over the past thirty years will be aware that fairness has too often been lost. We have experienced marginalization, forced expulsion, argument by ridicule, and many other techniques that were needed to win those crucial votes. The diversity of Anglican groups now preparing to join Ordinariates is a miracle of grace. Charity and forgiveness are to be the hallmarks of the gathering of Anglican groups. Every group that approaches this with integrity has an equal right to involvement in the formation and development of Ordinariates. None of us owns an Ordinariate. We are each its servant.

7. The future of the Traditional Anglican Communion:

The Traditional Anglican Communion is committed to maintaining its corporate life, its witness to the fullness of Catholic faith, and its pastoral ministry to Anglicans hurt in the debilitating debates and in the violence of the past thirty years, **for as long as such a ministry is needed on the way to Catholic and Anglican unity**. Decisions on the ways in which this ministry and corporate life should now be structured, and on the formal relationships between those within and those outside the Anglican Ordinariates, are properly made by the TAC bishops. **I am accordingly acting on the petitions of those TAC bishops who have sought a Plenary Meeting of the College of Bishops, and on my own desire to confer with my brother bishops, by calling for such a meeting from the 2nd – 6th May 2011**, either in Italy or Australia, depending on some negotiations still taking place. I will confirm the country and city of the meeting before the end of January.

In the midst of the joy and the apprehension, the uncertainty and the longing, we come to the season of Advent. We join in spirit with the great throng of people waiting for the Coming of the Messiah. *A people that waited in darkness have seen a great light!* We wait, and with the Blessed Newman make our Advent prayer that wonderful first verse of his:

Lead, kindly Light, amid th’encircling gloom, lead Thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home; lead Thou me on! !

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see!

The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I attach two statements that I believe capture the mood and spirit of the moment. With the assurance of my prayers for each of you,

+John Hepworth, Primate

Cardinal Levada to the College of Cardinals in Rome last week:

In his second report Cardinal Levada explained the nature and origins of the Apostolic Constitution on the institution of an Ordinariate for Anglican faithful who wish to enter "corporately" into full communion with the Catholic Church. He explained the ecumenical context and the current situation concerning the constitution of Ordinariates, the first of which will be established in Great Britain as announced today in a statement from the Episcopal Conference of England and Wales.

Father Louis Berry (TAC-US) to the recent meeting of Ordinariate-bound Anglicans in Texas:

"Be witnesses to the beauty of holiness, the splendor of the truth, and the joy and freedom born of a relationship with Christ." Spoken in Westminster Cathedral, these words of Pope Benedict XVI summon us all to our true vocations as Catholic Christians. In speaking of the relations between Anglicans and Catholics he stated: "It helps us to set our sights on the ultimate goal of all ecumenical activity: the restoration of full ecclesial communion in the context of which the mutual exchange of gifts from our respective spiritual patrimonies serves as an enrichment to us all."

Whether raised in the Anglican tradition or having come to love and treasure the beauty and rich spirituality of that tradition as adults, we hear and respond to the Holy Father's summons. Both for those who recognize that they are still imperfectly incorporated into Christ's body, the Church, and for those who already reside safely in its bosom, the Holy Father has crafted a unique means by which we can provide the witness he speaks of and by which we can most fully and efficaciously bring to the Church, and thus lay at our Lord's feet, the treasures of our Anglican patrimony. That means is the implementation of the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* and the erection of the Ordinariates for which it makes provision. The process for erecting an Ordinariate for the United States of America has commenced. We pledge ourselves to the support of that process and to the Ordinariate which will issue from it. We likewise pledge our faithful support to our Pope and to the Ordinary whom he chooses to shepherd us.

Rare indeed is the opportunity now given to us, especially to those of us who are yet only within the penumbra of the Catholic Church. We are allowed a role not only in better securing our own redemption by securely engrafting ourselves into Christ's body, we can as well participate in the redemption of a tradition, a culture, a heritage, an ethos; indeed of a multiplicity of national and ethnic memories and histories.

We have knocked at the doors of Holy Mother Church and those doors have been flung wide for us; a spiritual feast awaits; we hear the choirs of angels from within; the Holy Spirit calls to each of us: "Enter and discover your true meaning and purpose; enter and find true life; enter and find true peace." How can we respond other than with: Yes Lord! Yes Lord! and then again, Yes Lord!