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ANGLICAN USE ORDINARIATES AND ECUMENISM

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Will establishing Anglican Use Ordinariates in Communion with Rome harm Anglican-Catholic ecumenical relations? This is a speculative question, because it involves the future, but it is important to suggest some answers.

I would argue that the Ordinariates may well improve and stabilize ecumenical relations between Anglicans and Catholics. Notwithstanding the spirit of Christian charity, abiding friendships and common cause that brings us together tonight, there is no use pretending that ecumenical relations between our respective communities have not already suffered harm in recent years. That situation has occasioned the papal offer to some Anglicans, that they might find a special place within the Catholic Church. In that perspective, permit me to begin with a somewhat painful personal memory that may at least help elucidate my opinion.

Forty years ago, my tutor at Oxford was Fr Ted Yarnold, a notable Jesuit Patristics scholar. He later became one of the key theologians in developing closer Anglican-Catholic relations. As one of the master minds in the projects of ARCIC, he devoted the last decades of his life to the cause of working to develop closer ecumenical relations between Anglicans and Catholics, a task he embraced with enthusiasm and joy.

The last time I met Fr. Ted was a few years after the 1992 General Synod decision to ordain women in England. Back in Oxford for a short visit, I bumped into him in St Giles, near Pusey House. There had not been much contact between us since he had visited Melbourne to lead a most enjoyable Ecumenical Conference in 1982, at which Archbishop Frank Woods shone. But now I encountered a man who was deeply hurt, even angry. As I recall our somewhat disturbing conversation, Fr. Ted asserted that it was the Anglicans who had broken ecumenical relations by a *unilateral* act, that is, by approving the ordination of women to priesthood. What was the use of all the hard work he had put into ARCIC? For him, Anglican-Catholic relations had reached a stalemate.

Fr. Ted did not live to see *Anglicanorum coetibus*, the Apostolic Constitution whereby Pope Benedict has ended that stalemate and we might hope even opened a way to develop better relations. It is necessary to set out the context for the papal offer, familiar as this may be to some here present.

The Context of *Anglicanorum Coetibus*

After the 1992 decision in England, traditional Anglicans who objected in conscience to the ordination of women requested and were given pastoral provisions in the two Provinces in England. This took the form of the independent Episcopal oversight of "flying bishops" directly subject to the Archbishop of Canterbury. These bishops

minister in the parishes where women clergy are not accepted, usually under the umbrella of Forward in Faith. There has also been a proposal to set up a Third Province for these parishes. This seems to have been set aside.

However, in Australia nothing was done for these people. They were and are expected to accept what is legislated or find their own solutions. Here the ordination of women had already moved further ahead and has now entered its final phase with the ordination of two women as bishops, in Perth and Melbourne. Soon that step will be possible in the United Kingdom.

These events have encouraged various Anglican clergy and laity to become Catholics of the Roman Rite, or to enter Eastern Orthodox Churches. Some traditional Anglicans have entered the small breakaway Anglican bodies that had already been established at the time of the first American ordinations of women. Others have held on within the Anglican Communion, waiting to see what would happen next, organising themselves under "Forward in Faith". These latter groups have become dejected when frank and consistent official cautions from Rome were set aside in favour of the ordination of women to the episcopate. Other matters have also exacerbated their concerns, particularly what they see as a breakdown in moral teaching and sacramental discipline.

Across this spectrum, groups of Anglicans ("Anglicanorum coetus") from within the Anglican Communion and from a separate body, the Traditional Anglican Communion, appealed to the Pope for help. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was entrusted with the matter. After much consultation, Pope Benedict responded with the practical provisions of the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, published with Complementary Norms on November 4th 2009.

The context of the papal document shows that the Holy Father's offer is not an aggressive initiative, absurdly described as "parking a panzer tank on the lawn of Lambeth Palace". He only exercised his pastoral prerogative, which, whether it is recognised by others or not, does have direct historical relevance in this particular situation. Until the acts of Henry VIII and the Settlement of Elizabeth I determined otherwise, the Church in England was in communion with Rome. All Popes ever since have regarded Anglicans with pastoral solicitude.

Therefore Anglicans should not have been surprised when Pope Benedict XVI reached out to those Anglicans who formally appealed to him, Anglicans who have always looked to Rome. In recent years, these men and women have suffered much and received little, finding themselves isolated in what they see as an unbearable situation with no place for them in the future. As they have told me, they believe that the current trends within Anglicanism are not Anglican, at least, as they understand Anglicanism within the apostolic and patristic traditions of the Oxford Movement and its high church pre-history.

In such a complex situation we all need to respect the religious conscience of others, the right to freedom of conscience, its need to be informed when making choices and decisions. At the same time we also need to beware of triumphalism into which all of us can fall. Some Catholics and traditional Anglicans have been offended by the blithe way some Anglicans in responsible positions have dismissed those intending to enter

the Ordinariate as trouble makers, the “disaffected”, or even cranks whose departure across the new Tiber bridge will be no loss to Anglicanism. On the other hand, some Anglicans have been offended by media stunts, or enthusiastic outbursts and exaggerations on the part of a few commentators, implying that vast numbers are about to march across this bridge. Current indications in this country are modest. Some have also made it clear that they would prefer not to enter an Ordinariate, at least at this stage. The transition will be more significant in the United Kingdom and in some regions in Africa and India.

At the same time we are all aware that the Anglican Communion faces another more significant challenge. A large body of classical Evangelical Anglicans in conscience cannot accept the prevailing trends of the wider Anglican Communion, particularly what they see as a shift away from biblical morality and due Church order. They are well organised, as we saw before the last Lambeth Conference. They are making their own plans and they will take steps in their own time. I cannot speak for them and I do not know if anyone here tonight can speak for them. I hope that they will also be accorded the respect for conscience that should be given to those traditional Anglicans who choose to return to full communion with Rome within the personal Ordinariates.

What is an “Ordinariate”?

At this point it is important to clarify what this personal Ordinariate is. The Pope is not setting up some new independent Anglican Church under Rome. The Ordinariates will not constitute a kind of Uniate Anglican Church. The Orthodox use that term, “uniate”, and I notice that some Anglicans have taken it up, but it is offensive to Catholics, especially Eastern Rite Catholics. Yet the Eastern Catholics may help us understand the new structure offered to Anglicans.

Within the Catholic Church and in full accord with all her teachings, the Eastern Catholic Churches enjoy autonomy, their own code of canon law, their own cultural, spiritual and liturgical traditions. Their full communion with Rome in practices protects their autonomy and assures them of stability. Outside their own national territories they are organised in the form of special dioceses, which may be known as “Eparchies”. This is how they maintain their distinctive spiritual and liturgical traditions when they provide pastoral care for members who emigrate to other lands. These Eastern Rite dioceses cover a nation, province or region, coterminous with the existing dioceses of the Roman Rite, and even other Eastern Rite structures.

In Australia four Eastern Rites exercise ordinary jurisdiction over their own subjects within the Catholic Church: Ukrainian Greek Catholics (Byzantine Rite), Melchite Catholics (Middle Eastern Byzantine Rite), Chaldean Catholics (Iraq, Chaldean Rite) and Maronites (Lebanese) Catholics of Syrian Rite). Their bishops are members of the Episcopal Conference alongside the bishops of the Roman Rite. They would remind anyone of ecumenical sensitivity that they must not be described as “Roman Catholics”, a term which may only be applied to Catholics who are members of the Roman Rite, the majority of Catholics.

I have compared the Ordinariate envisaged for former Anglicans to the Eparchy, but only in an effort to explain to interested Anglicans what kind of structure and community is set out in *Anglicanorum Coetibus*. Cardinal Levada, Prefect of the

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has recently warned that this comparison should not be taken too far. An Ordinariate is not a Rite, as are the Eastern Catholic Churches. It will be a part of the Roman Rite, like a Military Ordinariate where a bishop has jurisdiction over members of the Armed Forces and their families. Yet the kind of Ordinariate envisaged for former Anglicans will have a much clearer identity and distinctive ethos than a Military Ordinariate.

We should therefore avoid referring to an Anglican *Rite* Ordinariate and speak rather of a Personal Ordinariate within the Roman Rite with the liturgical privilege of an "Anglican Use". This refers to distinctive liturgical privileges, a variation of the two forms of the Roman Rite. Such an "Anglican Use" will no doubt incorporate elements from the Pre-Reformation Sarum Use and the various editions of the Book of Common Prayer. But it is also envisaged that the very "ethos" of these communities will be their Anglican heritage of theology, culture, spirituality etc. In this sense there is another interesting parallel within the Roman Rite, the Personal Prelature of the Holy Cross, Opus Dei. Here associated clergy and laity in many countries come under the spiritual jurisdiction of their own bishop, the prelate, yet at the same time remaining members of the dioceses and parishes of the wider Church.

How this new and unique structure will work out is yet to be seen. But the practical planning is under way. The formal requests of groups of Anglicans for Ordinariates are being received in Rome. From time to time you will see these requests announced in the Press. They are being made by groups of bishops in the Traditional Anglican Communion, some of whom have signed the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as a sign of their assent to the magisterium. But the Forward in Faith groups are also involved and their role will be axiomatic in the United Kingdom and Australia. In due course a process of sacramental reconciliation will be established and then the structures will take shape.

At the same time there is another set of groups and individuals who are not openly associated with these circles. These men and women are revealing great interest in the Ordinariate, but they often request strict confidentiality. I regret to say that some isolated clergy are obliged to act with great discretion because they feel intimidated by church authorities. This will change once the Ordinariates are in place, with their own churches, councils and pastoral works. The doors will remain open for any Anglican who in conscience chooses to become a Catholic, while maintaining a distinctive Anglican heritage. Of course all other Catholics will be free to worship and receive the sacraments in Ordinariate churches, as is the case across the variety of Rites within the Church.

An Ecumenical Question

The papal project raises a question about the nature and future of Ecumenism. By the papal offer to Anglicans, has the Catholic Church defined ecumenical relations with other Churches and ecclesial communities in terms of a "Return Ecumenism"? By Return Ecumenism we mean that the goal of ecumenical relations is envisaged as the final return of all Christians to communion with Rome. Return Ecumenism is contrasted with "Convergence Ecumenism", a vision or dream many Christians have of an emerging "Great Church of the Future", a Church that will be formed by way of the gradual convergence of all traditions.

Let me suggest that the possibility of Convergence Ecumenism and a Great Church of the Future is more remote now, not because of this papal project, rather because of the very factors that have brought about that project. The convergence for a future Great Church is now being defined by those same factors, determined by what might be described as a kind of broadly inclusive liberal Protestant Christianity. But, it could be argued that, far from being wide, the ground for convergence is now narrowed. It is restricted only to those who understand Christianity basically in terms of Twentieth Century liberal theologies or at least those with a commitment to Enlightenment modernity, reflected for example in what is called "Affirming Catholicism". But can this be the means of synthesising and uniting deeper Western and Eastern Catholic and Reformation traditions of theology, worship, spirituality etc.?

However, while I raise that question, it is not for me to speculate on the feasibility of such a way of convergence. It has nothing in common with the Church of which I am a bishop. Its dream may still have some adherents within the Catholic Church, but only within the Roman Rite and only in some countries. These people are vocal, but their numbers dwindle because they are ageing. They do not play a significant role in the Church of today. So let me indicate current trends in the Catholic Church.

World Youth Day in Sydney 2008 was not some future indication. It marks what is happening now, the rise of what is being called "evangelical Catholicism", traditional and orthodox in content yet complex, lively and flexible in its range of spiritualities and movements. Nor is this a shift away into spiritualised religion. The global multi-ethnic Church is engaged with the world, actively sharing in Christ's work of Redemption as the Second Vatican Council mandated. This Church is animated by the vision and call of John Paul II for a New Evangelisation in a new Millennium. This is being carried forward by the creative genius of his successor, Benedict XVI.

To grasp what motivates the Pope I would recommend *Ratzinger's Faith, the Theology of Benedict XVI* by Tracey Rowland (Oxford University Press 2008). This book is also a key to how he understands Anglicans and why he wishes to provide a special place for some of them within the Church he leads.

Let me return to that delicate question. *By the papal offer to Anglicans, has the Catholic Church defined ecumenical relations with other Churches and ecclesial communities in terms of a "Return Ecumenism"*? If we go back to the authoritative source of Catholic ecumenism, the Second Vatican Council, we can see that this was always there. Read the second paragraph of the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, of the Second Vatican Council, and you see that the Papacy is a non-negotiable factor in the basis of Catholic Ecumenism. Fidelity to apostolic ecclesiology remains the norm. In that context, the ordination of women has jettisoned any possibility of resolving the issue of Anglican Orders, as many had hoped.

Questions are now raised as to how Anglicans really understand Orders, priesthood, episcopate. In what perspective do they understand and interpret apostolic order and ministry: is it that of the continuous tradition of East and West, or that of the Reformation, or even through some Twentieth Century ideology of gender equity?

The Catholic commitment to traditional apostolic ecclesiology means that unfortunately the beautiful expression “Sister Church”, that was so full of hope, can hardly be applied to the Anglican Communion today.¹ This is why there is a certain honesty about the more recent document authorized by Pope John Paul II *Dominus Jesus*. Nor should it be forgotten that these unfortunate developments come at a time when the urgent ecumenical project is to develop closer relations between the Sisters Churches of the Orthodox East and the See of Peter.

However, there are many aspects and dimensions in the process of Ecumenism, and we should never define Ecumenism as “either this or that”. There is always the need to maintain the Ecumenism of good relations, scholarly dialogue and common action that has grown up over the past fifty years. Ecumenical dialogue will continue but the characteristics of that dialogue will alter.² It will at least be more multi-faceted. In that changed context the theology of communion will remain axiomatic in still seeking a common understanding of the mission and nature of the Church in the world. It is in terms of communion that the Ordinariate project can best be understood, not in terms of being absorbed into some monolithic structure.

However, the multi-faceted approach to ecumenical relations between us will be enriched by the knowledge that within the Catholic Church there will be worshipping communities of men and women who still cherish what Anglicans cherish. They may interpret that culture and tradition differently to other Anglicans, but the Settlement of 1559 is open to a range of interpretations and theirs happens to be the one that can find a place within Catholicism.

We are preparing to welcome these good people. We know that they will bring much with them, that they will enrich a Church already made up of different Rites and a variety of traditions. We hope and pray that, in words dear to Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey, that these brothers and sisters in Christ may be “United but not absorbed”.

¹ Also described at Vatican II as Anglicanism’s “special place” among churches and ecclesial communities of the West. But see Address of Cardinal Kasper to the Bishops of the Church of England,, June 2006.

² See Address of Cardinal Kasper to the Lambeth Conference, 2008.