

Establishment of Personal Ordinariate



More information on the establishment in England and Wales of a Personal Ordinariate for groups of faithful and their clergy from the Anglican Communion entering into full Communion with the Catholic Church.

Introduction

On or before 15 January 2011, it is expected that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith will publish a Decree which will formally establish a 'Personal Ordinariate' in England and Wales (from here on referred to as 'the Ordinariate') for groups of Anglican faithful and their clergy who wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

The establishment of this Ordinariate will be the first fruit of the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus*, issued by Pope Benedict XVI on 4 November 2009. The Constitution and the Complementary Norms published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith provide the essential norms which will enable members of the Ordinariate to preserve within the Catholic Church those elements of Anglican ecclesial prayer, liturgy and pastoral practice (patrimony) that are concordant with Catholic teaching and which have nurtured and nourished their Christian faith and life.

In time, it is expected that further Ordinariates will be established in other parts of the world to meet the desire of those Anglican communities who in a similar way seek to be united in communion with the Successor of St Peter. As a new structure within the Catholic Church, there will be many 'frequently asked questions' about the Ordinariate. Some of these are:

Why did Pope Benedict XVI publish *Anglicanorum coetibus*?

As the Holy Father stated when he published *Anglicanorum coetibus*, he was responding to petitions received "repeatedly and insistently" by him from groups of Anglicans wishing "to be received into full communion individually as well as corporately" with the Catholic Church.

During his address to the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales at Oscott last September, Pope Benedict was therefore keen to stress that the Apostolic Constitution "should be seen as a prophetic gesture that can contribute positively to

the developing relations between Anglicans and Catholics. 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."

In this way, the establishment of the Ordinariate is clearly intended to serve the wider and unchanging aim of the full visible unity between the Catholic Church and the members of the Anglican Communion.

Will members of the Ordinariate still be Anglicans?

No. Members of the Ordinariate will be Catholics. Their decision is to leave the Anglican Communion and come into the Catholic Church, in full communion with the Pope.

The central purpose of *Anglicanorum coetibus* is "to maintain the liturgical, spiritual and pastoral traditions of the Anglican Communion within the Catholic Church, as a precious gift nourishing the faith of the members of the Ordinariate and as a treasure to be shared". Members of the Ordinariate will bring with them, into full communion with the Catholic Church in all its diversity and richness of liturgical rites and traditions, some aspects their own Anglican patrimony and culture. It is recognised that the term Anglican patrimony is difficult to define but it would include many of the spiritual writings, prayers, hymnody, and pastoral practices distinctive to the Anglican tradition which have sustained the faith and longing of many Anglican faithful for that very unity for which Christ prayed.

The Ordinariate will then bring a mutual enrichment and exchange of gifts, in an authentic and visible form of full communion, between those baptised and nurtured in Anglicanism and the Catholic Church.

Do all Anglicans who wish to become Catholics now have to be members of the Ordinariate?

No. Any individual former Anglican who wishes to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church, may do so without becoming a registered member of the Ordinariate.

As stated above, the Ordinariate is being established essentially for groups of former Anglican faithful and their clergy who wish to maintain as members of the Catholic Church, within the canonically approved and structured ecclesial life of the Ordinariate, those aspects of their Anglican spiritual, liturgical and pastoral tradition which are recognised as authentic by the Catholic Church.

What is the ‘Ordinariate’ then?

The Ordinariate will be a specific ecclesiastical jurisdiction which is similar to a diocese and will be led by its own ‘Ordinary’ (see below) who will be a bishop or priest. However, unlike a diocese its membership will be on a ‘personal’ rather than a ‘territorial’ basis; that is, no matter where a member of the Ordinariate lives within

England and Wales they will, in the first instance, be under the ordinary ecclesial jurisdiction of the Ordinariate and not the diocese where they are resident.

The Ordinariate will be made up of laity, clergy and religious who were formerly members of the Anglican Communion. Following reception into full communion with the Catholic Church, the laity and religious will become members of the Ordinariate by enrolment in a register; with ordination as priests and deacons, the clergy will be directly incardinated into (placed under the jurisdiction of) the Ordinariate.

Will the Ordinary of the Ordinariate be like a diocesan bishop?

Each diocesan bishop is the Ordinary for his diocese (this does not mean ‘ordinary’ in the sense of common or normal but is an ecclesiastical term which means someone who exercises power and has jurisdiction by virtue of the office they hold). The power which the diocesan bishop exercises is ordinary (related to his office as a diocesan bishop), proper (exercised in his own name, not vicariously) and immediate (directed toward all in the territory of his diocese).

The power exercised by the Ordinary of the Ordinariate will be ordinary (related to the specific office entrusted to him), vicarious (exercised in the name of the Roman Pontiff) and personal authority (directed to all who belong to the Ordinariate).

As the Ordinary of the Ordinariate (from here on referred to simply as ‘the Ordinary’) has similar authority and responsibilities in Canon Law to a diocesan bishop he will therefore be an ex officio member of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. As a member of the Conference, the Ordinary will, like a diocesan bishop, take a full part in its discussions and decisions. The Ordinary will exercise collegiate responsibility for implementing the resolutions taken by the Conference within the life of the Ordinariate in the same way that a diocesan bishop does so within his diocese.

Like diocesan bishops, the Ordinary will be also be required to make a visit to Rome every five years (traditionally called the ad limina Apostolorum – to the threshold of the Apostles) and present a report on the status of the Ordinariate to the Pope through the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and in consultation with the Congregation for Bishops.

Who will be the Ordinary of the Ordinariate?

The Ordinary of the Ordinariate must be a bishop or a priest and he will be appointed directly by Pope Benedict XVI. All subsequent Ordinaries will be appointed by the Roman Pontiff from a terna (list of three names) presented by the Governing Council of the Ordinariate (See below).

A married former Anglican bishop or priest who has been subsequently ordained as a Catholic priest cannot however be ordained as a Catholic bishop whilst their spouse is still living.

How will the Ordinariate be governed?

The Ordinariate will have a Governing Council of at least six priests, presided over by the Ordinary. Half of the membership is elected by the priests of the Ordinariate. The Ordinariate must also have a Pastoral Council for consultation with the laity and a Finance Council.

The Governing Council will have the same rights and responsibilities in Canon Law that the College of Consultors and the Council of Priests have in the governance of a Diocese. Unlike a diocesan bishop though, and out of respect for the synodal tradition of Anglicanism, the Ordinary will need the consent of the Ordinariate's Governing Council to: admit a candidate to Holy Orders; erect or suppress a personal parish; erect or suppress a house of formation; approve a program of formation.

The Ordinary must also consult the Governing Council concerning the pastoral activities of the Ordinariate and the principles governing the formation of clergy.

The Governing Council will also have a deliberative vote when: choosing a terna of names to submit to the Holy See for the appointment of the Ordinary; proposing changes to the Complementary Norms of the Ordinariate to present to the Holy See; when formulating the Statutes of the Governing Council, the Statutes of the Pastoral Council, and the Rule for houses of formation.

Will the Ordinariate have parishes and deaneries?

The Ordinariate will have parishes within the dioceses where it has groups of members but they will be 'personal' parishes and not 'territorial' like a diocesan parish. Membership of a diocesan parish comes from living within the defined territorial boundaries of that parish; to be a member of a 'personal' parish in the Ordinariate a person must be a member of the group for which that parish was established, i.e. a former Anglican who is a member of, or has joined, a specific group within the Ordinariate.

After consulting with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and obtaining the consent of the Governing Council, the Ordinary may erect territorial deaneries for a number of personal parishes which will be supervised by a delegate of the Ordinary.

Who will look after the Ordinariate parishes?

The Ordinariate parishes will be served by priests of the Ordinariate, appointed by the Ordinary. They may be assisted by a parochial vicar (assistant priest) and/or a deacon. Pastoral and finance councils will also be established in the parishes. Diocesan clergy and religious, with the consent of their diocesan bishop or religious superior, may also assist in the pastoral care of the Ordinariate under the supervision

of the Ordinary when and where it is deemed suitable. Similarly, clergy incardinated into the Ordinariate should also be available to assist in the pastoral care of the faithful in the local diocese.

What liturgy will the members of the Ordinariate celebrate?

The Ordinariate will not be a Ritual Church; that is, the Ordinariate will not be principally defined by the liturgical rites it uses. In addition to the Roman Rite, some of the liturgical rites of the Anglican tradition which have been adapted and approved by the Holy See may be used by the members of the Ordinariate.

It is expected that in due course, suitable rituals (Sacramentary, Divine Office, etc.) will be promulgated for Ordinariates across the world. However, as it will be fully a part of the Latin Catholic Church (as distinct from the Byzantine, Maronite, Chaldean Catholic Church, etc.) the Ordinariate will always be able to use the Roman Rite.

What churches will the Ordinariate use?

Because the previous places of worship used by the clergy and groups who will form the Ordinariate were in the ownership of the Church of England, it is unlikely that it will be possible for them to continue to be used by the Ordinariate members. In most cases therefore, Ordinariate congregations will probably use their local diocesan Catholic church for the celebration of Mass and other liturgies. In some places there may be a diocesan church which is no longer needed to serve the needs of the local parish community; these could prove suitable for use by the Ordinariate. Essentially, the needs of each Ordinariate group will be carefully assessed by the Ordinary and the most suitable pastoral arrangements will be made by him in collaboration with the local diocesan bishop.

Will any Catholic be able to attend a Mass celebrated within an Ordinariate parish or by an Ordinariate priest?

Yes. Any Catholic, whether a member of the Ordinariate or a member of a diocese, will be able to attend Mass, receive Holy Communion and participate in the liturgies of an Ordinariate parish or celebrated by an Ordinariate priest. However, they would not be registered members of the Ordinariate and would remain under the ordinary jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop where they are resident.

Similarly, registered members of the Ordinariate are free to attend Mass, receive Holy Communion and participate in the liturgies of any diocesan parish but they would remain under the ordinary jurisdiction of the Ordinariate.

How will the Ordinariate be funded?

The Ordinariate, like every diocese, is expected to support financially its own clergy both when they are in ministry and when they have stepped down from public ministry. It will, like a diocese, need to make plans to ensure that it is financially secure and that its pastoral needs can be met. Just as every diocese in England and Wales depends upon the contributions that each parish receives from Sunday

collections to finance not only the running and maintenance of the parishes but also its central services, so too the Ordinariate will need similar support. Just as some dioceses have good financial reserves, investments and endowments, so too a fund has already been established to enable the Ordinariate to begin its work from the day it is erected. The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have already contributed a quarter of a million pounds to the fund and other charities are being asked to assist.

In those areas where groups are likely to be established, local Catholic dioceses are helping to find housing for the clergy who will serve in the Ordinariate and are providing whatever other practical support they can, e.g. provision or use of churches, use of diocesan curial services, assisting with the identification of salaried chaplaincy roles, etc.

When will all this take place?

The formal erection of the Ordinariate will take place with the publication of a Decree by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and the announcement of the name of the first Ordinary appointed by the Holy Father.

Already, three former Anglican Bishops have been received, together with some members of their families and three former Anglican women religious, into full communion with the Catholic Church on 1 January 2011. With the permission of the Holy See, they will also be ordained as Catholic Priests on 15 January 2011. A further two retired former Anglican Bishops will be received into full communion with the Catholic Church and proceed to Ordination as Catholic Priests in due course.

At the beginning of this Lent (Ash Wednesday falls on 9 March in 2011), a number of groups of former Anglican faithful together with their clergy will be enrolled as candidates for the Ordinariate. Then, at a date to be agreed between the Ordinary and the local diocesan Bishop, they will be received into the Catholic Church and confirmed. This will probably take place either during Holy Week, at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday or during the Easter Vigil. The period of formation for the faithful and their pastors will continue to Pentecost.

Around Pentecost, those former Anglican clergy whose petitions for ordination have been accepted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome will be ordained to the Catholic Priesthood. Ordination to the Diaconate will precede this at some point during Eastertide. The formation of these clergy in Catholic theology and pastoral practice will continue for an appropriate amount of time after their ordination.

Why are priests for the Ordinariate being ordained so quickly and without the normal length of preparation being observed?

A key aspect of the establishment of the Ordinariate by Pope Benedict is that it enables groups of former Anglicans and their clergy to stay together. This is quite new as previously former Anglican clergy seeking ordination in the Catholic Church were separated from their communities, even if some members of those communities also became Catholics. A different timetable is required if this new

aspect is to be achieved. For this reason, the ordinations of the first priests for the Ordinariate will take place while their formation is still in process so as to enable them to minister to their communities within the full communion of the Catholic Church. The ordinations of the former Anglican bishops are taking place at this time with the expressed permission of the Holy Father so that they can play a role in the very first stages of the development of the Ordinariate.

Conclusion

The decisions taken by those Anglican clergy and faithful to leave the Church of England and seek full communion with the Catholic Church have been the fruit of much prayer and a long reflection on their personal and communal spiritual pilgrimage. Pain will be felt by those leaving the Anglican Communion and by those with whom they have shared an ecclesial life. Our resolve to continue to work and pray for the unity of Christians therefore must not diminish.

The establishment of the Ordinariate is something new, not just in the life of the Catholic Church in England and Wales but in the universal Church as well. As such there will doubtless be more questions that will arise and challenges to be met as Ordinariates are established and grow. It is important therefore, particularly for those who will form the first groups within the Ordinariate in England and Wales, that our welcome is warm and our support is strong.

Please pray for all those who are trying to discern what path the Lord is calling them to follow, for those who are preparing to be received in to the Catholic Church and for those who are preparing to begin their ministry of service to the Lord as Catholic priests, deacons and religious.

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