

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF *ANGLICANORUM COETIBUS* IN CANADA

Part I: Anglicanorum Coetibus

For many years, groups of Anglicans repeatedly asked the Pope if it would be possible for them to become Catholics, while at the same time being allowed to keep their liturgical, musical, spiritual, and pastoral traditions, which had developed over the 500 year history of Anglicanism, and which they greatly valued. In November of 2009, in response to these requests, the Holy See, through the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* (“Groups of Anglicans”) and its accompanying norms, established a new structure within the Catholic Church to allow Anglicans who become Catholics to do just that. Working through the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and in consultation with the local Conference of Bishops, the Holy See would create a kind of specialized type of diocese called an ordinariate, for persons who had come to the Catholic Church from the Anglican tradition. It is important to note that *Anglicanorum Coetibus* is not an initiative of the Holy See; it is a response by the Holy See to initiatives by groups of Anglicans over the course of many years.

As we are all aware, especially as we have recently celebrated the beatification of John Henry Newman, many Anglicans over the years have individually entered the Catholic Church, and have become individual members of a regular Catholic parish and diocese; they have had to leave behind the Anglican patrimony which they loved. They have not had the ability to continue to experience that Anglican patrimony in a corporate way, in a community within the Catholic Church.

A distinctive new feature of the arrangement outlined in *Anglicanorum Coetibus* is its corporate dimension. Through *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, building upon the foundations established by the Anglican Use parishes in the United States which foreshadowed it, Anglicans who become Catholics will be able to find a Catholic home in a parish within a diocesan community – a personal ordinariate - in which many aspects of the Anglican patrimony have been retained, for their benefit and for the enrichment of the universal Church. “Without excluding liturgical celebrations according to the Roman Rite, the Ordinariate has the faculty to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and the other Sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours and other liturgical celebrations according to the liturgical books proper to the Anglican tradition, which have been approved by the Holy See, so as 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.” (*Anglicanorum Coetibus* III)

The way an ordinariate is established is this: when groups of Anglicans (or individual Anglicans who wish to be part of an ordinariate) have expressed to the Holy See their desire to become Catholics within an ordinariate, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith names a local bishop as its Delegate in a country to see what can be done to form an ordinariate, and he works with a small committee of bishops of the Bishops’ Conference of the country. In Canada, I have been appointed as the Delegate, and the committee also includes Archbishop Miller of Vancouver and Bishop Harris of Saint John. Parish groups or individuals who wish to join in an ordinariate contact the Delegate, who keeps the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith informed of the situation in his country, and of the groups who wish to be part of an ordinariate, so that the Holy See may be in a position to establish what is needed.

Personal ordinariates, originally created for the pastoral care of members of the armed forces, are specific ecclesiastical jurisdictions similar to dioceses created to deal with specific circumstances. A personal ordinariate is entrusted to the pastoral care of an Ordinary appointed by the Pope, as are the diocesan Bishops within the Catholic Church. The term Ordinary means, apart from the Pope, diocesan bishops and others who, even if only temporarily, are placed over some particular church or a community equivalent to a diocese. Though the Ordinary of a diocese is almost always a Bishop, in Canada we are familiar with a priest being an Ordinary: for many years the priest who was Abbot-Ordinary of the Abbey of Muenster in Saskatchewan was in charge of a small diocese attached to the monastery, and as such was a member of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Most dioceses are defined by the territory they occupy; but an ordinariate is personal, not territorial. The Military Ordinariate of Canada is a personal structure, i.e. one becomes a member of it not because one lives within a certain territory (as is the case with regular territorial dioceses), but rather by simply being a member of the Canadian military, anywhere in the world. Since all members of the military ordinariate also live within some territorial diocese, they may well also participate in the life of the territorial diocese, and *Anglicanorum Coetibus* and its norms deal with that kind of “dual citizenship”, especially when it comes to the co-operation between the clergy of the ordinariate and the clergy of the various territorial dioceses in which ordinariate parishes are located.

Necessarily, an ordinariate is very closely related to the territorial dioceses

within which it functions. In Great Britain, the United States, Australia, and Canada, the Holy See has consulted the national Conference of Bishops, as it prepares to establish these structures. The new ordinariates will be an integral part of the Catholic Church in each country, and work in harmony with the other Catholic dioceses. This close co-operation with the territorial dioceses is essential, as the parishes of the ordinariate will be scattered all across the country, and will need to function not only within the ordinariate, but also in collaboration with the local diocese. In fact *Anglicanorum Coetibus* and its norms describe how the two types of diocese can work together. For example, a priest of an ordinariate can be a member of the Council of Priests of the local diocese.

In the United States there exists already a kind of early foreshadowing of the parishes of an ordinariate: several decades ago the Holy See allowed groups of Anglicans to come into the Catholic Church there, where they formed what is known as “Anglican Use” parishes; this allowed them as Catholics to retain their Anglican traditions of worship. The parishioners are Catholics who are former Anglicans, and their pastor is usually their former Anglican pastor, now ordained as a Catholic priest. They follow a liturgical tradition, approved by the Holy See, based upon the Anglican liturgy. But their Ordinary is the local territorial Catholic Bishop. An Anglican Use parish is simply one of the many parishes of the local territorial diocese, though of a specialized type. Most territorial dioceses have specialized parishes, such as ones for different language groups, or for those who prefer the extraordinary form of the Roman rite. In an ordinariate, however, parishes like the Anglican Use parishes are gathered into their own diocese, with their own Ordinary.

Because of the special liturgical and spiritual traditions, one might be tempted to think that a special Rite is constituted with these personal ordinariates. However they cannot be considered as particular *ritual* Churches since the Anglican liturgical, spiritual and pastoral tradition is a particular reality within the Latin Church and indeed an offspring of the Roman rite itself. While ordinariates for former Anglicans are more than a parish, they are less than a Church, or a rite: they are dioceses within the Western or Latin Church, but of a specialized kind, with their distinctive liturgical tradition. In this sense, an ordinariate will be in some ways similar to the Archdiocese of Milan, a diocese of the Western Church, but which uses its own ancient Ambrosian form of the Western Liturgy.

Part II: A Few Practical Points

Because this is a new structure in the Church, and because the situation in

each country is quite different, it will take some time to establish ordinariates, but the process is underway and the various unresolved issues are being identified. There are some challenges when the number of potential members of an ordinariate is likely to be very small, at least in the beginning, as is the case in Canada; we can, however, accommodate relatively small numbers. Even the largest ordinariate will be small by the standards of a regular Catholic diocese. Further challenges are found in implementing a program for the reception into the Catholic Church of people in potential ordinariate parishes scattered across vast geographical distances, as is the case in Canada, but these can be met with the help of priests of the local Catholic territorial dioceses.

Having discussed this project with the bishops of Canada at their recent annual meeting in Cornwall, which was the first occasion they had to consider the issue since the promulgation of *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, I am now receiving inquiries from groups of Anglicans interested in becoming Catholics in an ordinariate in Canada. From March 24th to March 26th there will be a conference in Mississauga for those who are interested in an ordinariate, and that will provide the occasion for further information, and for the opportunity to come together in prayer and fellowship. I have already met with several groups, and it might be helpful if, for the benefit of inquirers, I outline some of the questions that have arisen.

What is the basic unit that forms an ordinariate?

The ordinariate, like any diocese, will be formed out of parishes, and so a group of Anglicans that could form such a parish should discuss whether they wish to do so, and contact me. It is good for an existing group to discuss this at length, and to seek information, in order to understand exactly what is involved in the ordinariate. I refer them to the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* and its accompanying norms, which are available on the Vatican website.

Is opposition to recent trends in sacramental and moral teaching in Anglicanism reason enough to join an ordinariate?

No, that is not a reason in itself for joining an ordinariate, though concern about recent decisions within Canterbury Anglicanism regarding the sacraments and moral teaching may be the catalyst that leads an Anglican, or a group of Anglicans, to want to join the Catholic Church. Becoming a Catholic in an ordinariate, while retaining the noble Anglican patrimony is, however, a positive step, never merely a reaction to something in current Anglicanism. By joining an ordinariate, one becomes a Catholic Christian, who fully accepts the whole faith of

the Catholic Church as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, though retaining liturgical, pastoral, cultural, and spiritual traditions of Anglicanism which are in harmony with that faith. For those who disagree with recent trends in Anglicanism, but who do not want to become Catholics, in communion with the Pope and accepting the whole faith presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, there are various other options; they clearly would not want to join an ordinariate established according to *Anglicanorum Coetibus*.

Is the decision to join an ordinariate made by a group, or by an individual?

The corporate dimension of *Anglicanorum Coetibus* does not mean that whole communities of Anglicans will enter the Catholic Church in a way that sweeps along individuals who may not want to do so. Freedom of conscience must be respected. Although an ordinariate parish is a corporate community (and in the Anglican Use parishes in the United States, we have for several decades had a model of what an ordinariate parish will be like) each member of the new congregation must freely and individually choose to become a Roman Catholic, who will then become a member of a parish within an Anglican Use Ordinariate within the Catholic Church. Although many other members of the group of Anglicans may also at the same time be in the process of reception into the Catholic Church, and will together form an ordinariate parish within the Catholic Church, each person enters the Catholic Church individually, after an appropriate process of instruction, as will Anglican clergy, who must also individually go through a process of discernment and formation in preparation for possible ordination to the Catholic priesthood, in accordance with the pastoral needs of the ordinariate and the Church's requirements for ordination as Catholic priests of the ordinariate.

What are the next steps to take?

Groups of Anglicans interested in being part of an ordinariate should study *Anglicanorum Coetibus* and its accompanying norms, and also the Catechism of the Catholic Church. There may also be individual Catholics who were Anglican and are interested in being Catholics in an Anglican Use Ordinariate (as in the United States there are, of course, Catholics who were Anglican and already form an Anglican Use Catholic parish.)

If interested, they should contact the Delegate appointed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (My contact information:

archbishop@archtoronto.org, or by mail: 1155 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1W2.)

It would be helpful to attend the conference in Mississauga in March.

I will keep the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith informed of the interest in an ordinariate in Canada, and the Holy See will then decide how best to proceed in order to make it possible for Canadians to become part of an ordinariate.

As we proceed with the implementation of *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, those who wish to form an ordinariate parish will work together with a Catholic priest of the local territorial diocese, who can help them as they go through the process of instruction leading to reception into the Catholic Church according to the plan established by the Holy See. “Both the lay faithful as well as members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, originally part of the Anglican Communion, who wish to enter the Personal Ordinariate, must manifest this desire in writing” (*Anglicanorum Coetibus*, IX). “The lay faithful originally of the Anglican tradition who wish to belong to the Ordinariate, after having made their Profession of Faith and received the Sacraments of Initiation, with due regard for Canon 845, are to be entered in the apposite register of the Ordinariate. Those baptized previously as Catholics outside the Ordinariate are not ordinarily eligible for membership, unless they are members of a family belonging to the Ordinariate.” (Complementary Norms, Article 5)

It will be important to discuss with the local Catholic priest any marriage issues, and to address in particular the situation of persons who have been divorced and remarried. In due time, each person will individually be received into the Catholic Church. This will involve a Profession of Faith and Confirmation, and the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Clergy will follow the plan established by the Holy See, and the actual way of carrying out the process of discernment and formation will vary somewhat from place to place and from case to case.

The main task now is to determine what groups of Anglicans in Canada are interested in being part of an ordinariate established according to *Anglicanorum Coetibus*. Those who wish to do so are invited to contact me.

Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto

