



*Women & Holy Orders 7. 4*

# ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

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1574

31st December, 1975.

To: The Primates  
The Anglican Communion

*Dear Archbishop,*

Below is a memorandum concerning women priests, and the view of Cardinal Willebrands which he wished made clear.

Yours sincerely,

*John*

MEMORANDUM

I was in Rome at the Secretariat for Christian Unity last November and we discussed, among other things, the ordination of women to the priesthood. My notes contain the following:

"There was a message from Cardinal Willebrands that he had been reported by some Anglicans as saying that if women were appointed to the priesthood that meant an end to the Anglican/Roman Catholic joint striving for unity. The Cardinal wished it to be understood that he had never said this and did not believe it."

Later in the month, in Nairobi, I reported this statement to a gathering of several Anglican Primates. Some asked if this could be repeated in their Provinces. I said I would first check its accuracy with Rome, and wrote to Monsignor Purdy at the Secretariat for Christian Unity on 22nd November.

In his reply on 11th December, Monsignor Purdy said: "Thank you for your letter of November 22. I showed it to the Cardinal and he agreed that the statement as you quoted it was correct, but felt that it should be balanced by what he has also said more than once, that if Anglicans proceeded to ordain women to the priesthood this would constitute a new and serious difficulty and obstacle in our joint search for unity."

JH/PB