

A substantial majority in each Anglican church accepts the possibility of ordaining women to the presbyterate; some churches have already proceeded to such ordinations; at this time no Anglican church has affirmatively stated that such ordinations are impossible, though some churches have not yet considered the question officially. The Roman Catholic Church believes that she has not the right to change a tradition unbroken throughout the history of the church, universal in the East and in the West, and considered to conform to God's plan for his Church.

In face of these two positions the question must be: is it still possible for our two churches to re-establish full communion between them and if so how, since full communion pre-supposes the mutual recognition of ministry. In other words, can the Roman Catholic Church, which judges it impossible, for theological reasons, to ordain women, recognise the legitimacy of such ordinations in the Anglican Communion. How can she think that such an ordination would be impossible for her and yet possible for the Anglican Communion?

In the context of our continuing discovery of new hopes for unity as seen in the ARCIC Statements and in the sharing and collaboration which are growing everywhere between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, it has seemed to us necessary to pose the problem in its clearest form. // If there is to be continuing mutual respect, neither church can make a lesser demand of the other than it would make of itself.

For an Anglican church which authentically considers itself to have been guided by the Holy Spirit to ordain women to the presbyterate and in doing so not to have departed from the

understanding of ministry as expounded in the Canterbury Statement, its own conviction on the one hand and the fact that the recent Roman Declaration does not affirm explicitly that this matter is de jure divino on the other, leaves open the possibility, even if remote, of future developments.

Despite the difficulty in this particular matter, both Anglicans and Roman Catholics feel themselves committed to continue in exploration of the new shapes of ministry to which the Holy Spirit may be calling them.

While we do not underrate the present reality of this obstacle, we are convinced that the way ahead in this particular matter lies in continuing and intensifying co-operation and dialogue in all the aspects of our growing together towards full unity in Christ.