

1. 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 and others have for various reasons decided not to ordain women at least for the present.

The Roman Catholic Church believes that she has not the right to change ^{the} 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.

3 a) On the other hand the ordination of women priests within certain provinces of the Anglican Communion reveals again both the unity and diversity of the Anglican Communion. The Provinces of the Anglican Communion remain clearly autonomous in many fundamental areas. Thus no Province, in matters such as this, would regard itself as bound by the decision of another. Also in this context it must be noted that no Anglican Province has declared that the ordination of women is for ever impossible.

b) Yet in consequence of the ordination of women real tensions will and do already exist both in and between certain Provinces.

c) However the real sense of unity and identity which constitutes the Anglican Communion is not seen to be under grave or enduring threat by the ordination of women where this has occurred.

d) For this reason, Anglicans find it difficult to understand or to accept the Roman Catholic position that the ministry of the Church cannot be open to new developments and manifestations, which, while faithful to tradition yet may express that legitimate diversity into which the Holy Spirit may direct the Church.

2.

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 ^{consistently} ~~think~~ that such an ordination would be impossible for her and yet possible for the Anglican Communion?

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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. ^{Recall this mutual esteem...} Neither communion can take lightly the fact that the other seems either to do something not warranted by the will of Christ for His Church or to be lacking in sensitivity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

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Two factors ^{are} may be seen as ^{grounded in} suggestive of hope. In the first place there is the conviction that those Anglican churches which, having taken authentic measures to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have ^{also} proceeded to ordain women to the presbyterate considering that in doing so they have not departed from the ^{the canon} traditional understanding of Apostolic ministry (expressed for example in the Canterbury Statement). In the second place there is the fact that the recent Roman Declaration does not affirm explicitly that this matter is de jure divino. [There would seem to be here the possibility of future developments.]

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6. Simultaneously,

Despite the difficulty in this issue both Anglicans and Roman Catholics feel themselves committed to continue exploration of the new shapes of ministry to which the Holy Spirit may be calling them and to a new sense of unity with one another. The rapidity of change in our times, ~~and~~ the great diversities of culture and circumstance in which the churches must minister, demand ~~an~~ openness ~~to~~ flexibility and a readiness to accept and affirm differences in form and style. *lit section X*

7.

Each of our churches is blessed by the warm experiences it already possesses within itself, of a genuine diversity cohering in an effective unity. Some would assert, indeed, that such an amalgam is of the essence of creativity, of growth and of a faithful following of the Spirit's guiding. It would be in such a conviction and with a deep trust in each other, that our churches could offer to one another and to the whole Catholic Church, their peculiar gifts of the Spirit.

8.

Holy Scripture and the theological traditions teach us that the final unity of the Church of Christ will be a gift of the Holy Spirit which will not be totally and perfectly realized until the coming of the Kingdom. We believe, therefore, that the commitment to unity which is made in our baptism and which is even now expressed in the Eucharist requires us to learn anew what it is to live "between the times" as we await the gift of unity which will be given us in the Parousia. The question which each of our communities of faith must ask, therefore, is the degree ^{can} to which legitimate diversity in our understanding of the Apostolic ministry ~~can~~ enable us to express more completely our unity in Christ and our common commitment to his Apostolate.

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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 aspects of our growing together towards full unity in Christ.