

CJH/AFT

2nd February 1978

6

On behalf of the Anglican Consultative Council I write as Anglican Secretary of a small Anglican/Roman Catholic Consultation on the ordination of women. This Consultation has been set up by the Anglican Consultative Council and the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and has as its brief the question "To what extent and in what ways churches with women priests and churches without can be reconciled in sacramental fellowship." You will see that such a positive setting of the question could have an important bearing on future Anglican/Roman Catholic discussion in spite of the Holy Office's Declaration against the ordination of women last year.

As a matter of some urgency, I should be most grateful if you could let me know something of the thinking of the Synod of the Province of Central Africa when it met in 1976. In particular I should be glad to have the background to the request to the Episcopal Synod of the Church of the Province of Canada not to act in the matter of the ordination of women until after the Lambeth Conference, and its simultaneous agreement that it should remain in full communion with any province which canonically ordained women. You will see that the Consultation will be interested in the ecclesiological dimension of the juxtaposition of those two motions.

The first meeting of the Consultation takes place in Paris on the 27th of this month. I quite realise therefore that you would be unable to give a long and documented reply, but some initial response before then would still be very valuable. My own view of the matter is that churches of the Anglican Communion, whichever way they react on the practical question of the ordination of women, do not regard the ordination of women as such as intrinsically impossible or a fundamental break with christian tradition.

With my respectful best wishes,

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