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The Society
in the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales

COMMUNION & CATHOLICITY

A Study Course



Foreword

In September 2015 The Council of Bishops of The Society published a teaching document entitled 'Communion and Catholicity in the Church of England: A Statement of Principles'. It appeared in the September issue of New Directions and is also available on the Society website www.sswsh.com

The statement explains

- ✦ the nature of communion;
- ✦ The Society's aspiration to be an expression of full, visible communion;
- ✦ the communion that the parishes and people of The Society continue to share with other members of the Church of England.

It reflects on the vocation of catholic Christians in the Church of England.

The document is our contribution to shaping understanding and custom that will engender greater trust in our position. We believe, humbly and with hope and trust for the future, that the tradition of Anglican identity exemplified by The Society has a distinctive contribution to make to our common life in the Church of England and to its mission."

This study course explores some of the themes of that statement. I am very grateful to Tom Carpenter, Fr. Ian McCormack and Fr. Paul Cartwright who have worked on this over the past few weeks.

We offer it as one way possible way of engaging our congregations in these important issues.

Bishop Tony Robinson

Bishop of Wakefield



The Bishops' statement begins with the following introduction:

It is not organisation but the eucharist which is always creating the church to be the Body of Christ; to do His will, and work His works, and adore His Father 'in His Name', and in Him to be made one, and by Him in them to be made one with God. That is the consummation of human living and the end of man.

Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy

Following the Church of England's decision to ordain women as well as men to the episcopate, we are, together, now seeking to shape understanding and custom that will engender trust within our household of faith. The House of Bishops' Declaration, and the Five Guiding Principles within it, indicate a commitment to sustaining the breadth of the Church of England's theological inheritance.

We believe, humbly and with hope and trust for the future, that the tradition of Anglican identity exemplified by The Society has a distinctive contribution to make to our common life in the Church of England and to its mission. We venture to maintain that this mission would be diminished in its resourcing by the erosion of our contribution. We also recognize that we ourselves would be diminished by withdrawal from engagement with the life, work and witness of the Church of England, ensuring that our participation enriches others and that it also enriches us.

The context in which the Council of Bishops of The Society makes this statement is one that challenges us all, irrespective of our theological viewpoint. We are confronted by conflicting developments that seem on the one hand to urge for the consignment of all religion to oblivion, but on the other hand seem to be caught in the grip of religious fundamentalism that places faith firmly on the global agenda.

In many parts of the world Christians are now facing persecution on a scale that is unprecedented in modern times. Solidarity with the persecuted Church brings to us a new and urgent sense of the universal Church. Not only within the Anglican Communion, but also in our ecumenical bonds with the ancient churches of East and West, we live out our faith and witness in the bright light of those who do so through the shedding of their blood. Communion with them is not theoretical; it is vocational, going to the heart of our baptismal calling to die to self and live in Christ.

This statement and the accompanying statement of policy and pastoral guidance seek to articulate our focus on the ways in which this sense of communion expresses itself in sacramental life and practice. We commit ourselves to this discipline because we find within it a mark of Christian life that enriches the local with the suffering and glory of the universal, and is intrinsic to the seed planted in the soil of faith in this land.

The Eucharist is not an end in itself, determined by who ministers and serves at the altar where it is celebrated. Rather, as Dix observes in the passage quoted above, it is the means we have been given for doing the Father's will and giving glory to him. Therein lies our complete fulfilment.

We hope that these statements will contribute to the care, imagination and understanding with which we live this eucharistic life and thereby become instrumental in bringing to reality the coming kingdom of God.



Session 1: God is Love

The life of God the Holy Trinity is an eternal communion of love. All who are baptized in the name of the Trinity and profess the apostolic faith share in this communion. Because it is rooted in baptism, we can call it 'baptismal communion'.

The Church gives visible expression to this communion. 'Ecclesial communion' (the communion of the Church) involves confession of the one faith, celebration of one Eucharist and leadership by an apostolic ministry.

Because the communion of the Holy Trinity is a communion of love, the communion of the Church must be marked by charity (love).

Communion and Catholicity in the Church of England,
section 1 – summary

THEME

Everyone wants to be loved, and to love back. The Church teaches us that God is Love. When Scripture says, 'God is Love',¹ it is not talking about romantic love, but about something more than romance: the giving of the self.

ACTIVITY

This activity is meant to remind us of the difference between the world's understanding of love, and the Church's teaching. This might be done best by a simple comparison, of clips from a romantic comedy with a scene from a film about the life of Christ, say, or, as below, of the lyrics of a pop-song with an account from the life of a saint.

Compare the two accounts of human love below. What are they saying about love?

Michael Bublé, 'To be Loved'

Michael Bublé (b. 1975) is a Canadian singer, many of whose songs express the popular idea of love.

*But you'll be truly
Truly truly love
But there's more
one of these things
You want
Someone to kiss
Someone to miss
When you're away
To here from each day
To be loved
To be loved
Oooh
Whatta feelin
To be loved
Oooh*

¹ John 4.8.



About a saint of the Church, Maximilian Kolbe

Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941) was a Franciscan, who died in a stranger's place at Auschwitz.

In order to discourage escapes, Auschwitz had a rule that if a man escaped, ten men would be killed in retaliation. In July 1941 a man from Kolbe's bunker escaped. The dreadful irony of the story is that the escaped prisoner was later found drowned in a camp latrine, so the terrible reprisals had been exercised without cause. But the remaining men of the bunker were led out.

'The fugitive has not been found!' the commandant Karl Fritsch screamed. 'You will all pay for this. Ten of you will be locked in the starvation bunker without food or water until they die.' The prisoners trembled in terror. A few days in this bunker without food and water, and a man's intestines dried up and his brain turned to fire.

The ten were selected, including Franciszek Gajowniczek,² imprisoned for helping the Polish Resistance. He couldn't help a cry of anguish. 'My poor wife!' he sobbed. 'My poor children! What will they do?' When he uttered this cry of dismay, Maximilian stepped silently forward, took off his cap, and stood before the commandant and said, 'I am a Catholic priest. Let me take his place. I am old. He has a wife and children.'

Astounded, the icy-faced Nazi commandant asked, 'What does this Polish pig want?'

Father Kolbe pointed with his hand to the condemned Franciszek Gajowniczek and repeated 'I am a Catholic priest from Poland; I would like to take his place, because he has a wife and children.'

Observers believed in horror that the commandant would be angered and would refuse the request, or would order the death of both men. The commandant remained silent for a moment. What his thoughts were on being confronted by this brave priest we have no idea. Amazingly, however, he acceded to the request. Apparently the Nazis had more use for a young worker than for an old one, and was happy to make the exchange.

Franciszek Gajowniczek was returned to the ranks, and the priest took his place ...³

REFLECTION

Lots of things distinguish these accounts, but the main difference is that the film or song talks about love in a selfish way, whereas in the life of Christ and his saints we see love that is selfless, that involves giving away the self in a dramatic way.

²Pronounced 'Ga-y-ov-nichek.'

³Available from <http://www.fatherkolbe.com/content3.html>



TEACHING

1. *God's Love: The Trinity and Christ*

- ✦ Love is not what God is like; love is what God is. The love that He is is this pure self-giving love. The doctrine of the Trinity shows us how.
- ✦ God the Father loves the Son. Because the Father loves the Son, the Father gives the Son everything he has.
- ✦ What the Father has is what He is (God), so, because the Father loves the Son, he gives the Son his life, his divinity. The Son is equally God because the Father gives him everything the Father is.
- ✦ God the Son in turn gives himself totally to the Father. They love each other, which is to say that they give themselves wholly to each other.
- ✦ Since the love the Father and Son give one other is themselves, that love is equal to them, that love is the Spirit.
- ✦ Human beings are created in the image of this God of self-giving love. Because He holds nothing back from us, He gives us a share in His freedom, which involves the freedom to reject Him. This we have done. Instead of being self-giving, sin has made us selfish. In the Fall, human beings used the freedom that God gave them not to give themselves totally to Him in return, but for their own sake.
- ✦ In creation God gives us everything He has as God. In the Incarnation, God gives us everything He has as a man. Christ lives the life of God as a man. In His human life we see the love that God the Son gives to the Father in the world.
- ✦ Christ offers the Father everything He has, as He does as God the Son. This offering is made for us all on the Cross.
- ✦ Our task as part of Christ's Body, the Church, is given to us by Jesus in His great summary of the Law: 'Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your might, and with all your strength, and love your neighbour as yourself.'⁴
- ✦ This may be pictured as a triangle, with Love in the middle and 'God', 'Neighbour', and 'Self' on the three points.

⁴ Mark 12. 30



2. Human Love: Charity

- ✦ The English words 'love' and 'charity' both come from the same Latin word, *caritas*. So the real meaning of charity is love.
- ✦ Charity is the foundation of the Christian life. For the world, charity means giving money away; for Christians it means giving everything away. We are to give our lives to God, and to others for Him. St Paul writes that 'faith, hope, charity abide, these three. But the greatest of these is charity.'⁵
- ✦ If we love God, we give ourselves totally to Him. This is only right. Since God made us, we are His, and He has a right to us. Because God created other men, women, and children in his image, we must love them for His sake. The crucified Jesus is the foundation of all this. He gave His life to the Father for the sake of His fellow human beings.
- ✦ Our lives should look like the cross. They should go in two directions: the main direction of our lives (the main beam of wood) should be our offering to God, but we should also offer ourselves to our fellow men and women (the cross-beam).

QUESTIONS

These questions are meant to provoke thinking about the theme of the session, and what God might want from those who attended it.

1. *Can I give more of myself to God? Can I make time to pray every day? Can I get to Mass more frequently than I do? Do I go to confession?*
2. *Who is my neighbour? How would God want me to love my neighbor, and how should I respond to that?*
3. *Can I give more of myself to others? Are there acts of charity that I could be doing, but aren't? Are there people whom I could help in my local area?*

PRAYER

This could be said together, or be taken away for private recitation.

O LORD, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth: Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

⁵ *Corinthians 13.13.*



Session 2: Communion

The Society seeks to be an expression of full, visible communion. It is a communion of communities that celebrate the Eucharist, with teaching and ministry that can be recognized as catholic and apostolic. Its parishes enjoy full communion not just with the Society bishop who has oversight over them (because they can receive the ministry of all whom he ordains) but also with the other Bishops of The Society and all parishes of The Society.

The House of Bishops' Declaration and The Society, which builds on its provisions, enable us to live a catholic life in the Church of England.

*Communion and Catholicity in the Church of England,
section 2 – summary*

THEME

The purpose of this session is to teach that salvation is communion with God, and that this communion is found in the Church.

BASIS

We are familiar with the word 'communion' in church. It refers to our reception of Body and Blood of Christ in the Mass. This session will talk about another meaning of communion, about joining something, and union with it. Just as in the Mass we are united to Christ, so 'communion' refers to being united to the Church.

BIBLE STUDY

There are two passages that are to be studied. This can be done in different ways, but it may be best for the passage to be read aloud, and for the leader of the group then to explain the text with reference to the points listed below. Slow reading in the style of Lectio Divina might also be profitable.

1. John 1-4

- ✠ John the Apostle is writing in the first century to churches that have been exposed to false preaching, denying the true Incarnation that John wrote about in the first chapter of his gospel.
- ✠ For the purposes of this session, attention should be drawn to v.3. we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.
- ✠ The word fellowship (**κοινωνία**) means communion.



- ✦ We might expect the goal of proclaiming the 'word of life' to be isolated conversions, but it is not; the point of preaching is to bring people into the communion of believers (the communion of the Church). This is the same communion that exists between Christ and the Church. And that's not all!

John 17.20-end

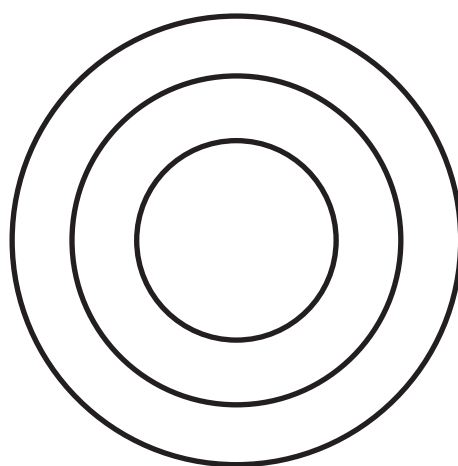
- ✦ The first two 'levels' of the Church's communion have already been spoken about. They are: (1) the communion of members of the Church with each other, and (2) the communion of the Church with Christ. Here we meet the third 'level.' This was referred to in 1 John when he said that our fellowship (communion) is also 'with his Son Jesus Christ.'
- ✦ In verse 21 Jesus prays that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
- ✦ By becoming a member of the Church, I take part in the relationship of God the Father to God the Son. By being a member of the Church I am taking part in the life of God Himself.

TEACHING

The Church's communion has three elements:

- ✦ the communion of the members of the Church with each other,
- ✦ the communion of the Church with Christ, and
- ✦ the communion between Christ and the God the Father.

It might help to think of these elements as three concentric circles, as long as the absurdity of doing so is borne in mind.



In the central circle is the communion of God the Father with Christ (God the Son). The second circle is the communion of the Church with Christ. The third circle is the communion of members of the Church. The three circles are not sealed: members of the Church share communion with each other, but they also share communion with Christ, and the communion of Christ with the Father. Both the outer circles are participations in the central circle.

QUESTIONS

1. *Am I as grateful as I should be for the communion of the Church? Do I show my membership of the Church in my life? Do my friends, my family, or my colleagues, know that I am a member of the Church, and what a difference this makes to my life?*
2. *Can I bring any of my family, or my friends (back) to the communion of the Church?*

PRAYER

Most gracious Father,
we pray to you for your holy catholic Church.
Fill it with all truth;
in all truth with all peace.
Where it is corrupt, purge it.
Where it is in error, direct it.
Where anything is amiss, reform it.
Where it is right, strengthen and defend it.
Where it is in want, provide for it.
Where it is divided, heal it and reunite it in your love;
for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. ⁶

⁶ *Celebrating Common Prayer: a version of the Daily Office SSF* (London: Mowbray, 1992), p. 249.



Session 3 Baptism: Font and Altar

Because we are unable to recognize some of those whom the Church of England has ordained as bishops and priests as standing within the historic succession of apostolic ministry, visible communion is diminished. But it is not non-existent: it is torn, not torn apart. Christians who are separated with regard to the Eucharist, apostolic succession and ordained ministry nonetheless share a high degree of communion by virtue of their common baptism and profession of the apostolic faith. This helps us to understand the sense in which we are in communion with those who ordain women as bishops and priests, the women so ordained, and those whom they will ordain – despite our differences of conviction.

Although ecclesial communion is diminished, we continue to share a common life with other members of the Church of England. We are inheritors of the same Anglican tradition and part of the same canonical structure, the same Christian family, sharing in mission to the communities we seek to serve. The fifth Guiding Principle implies that full communion is not possible, but it challenges us to identify the highest degree of communion that will be possible.

*Communion and Catholicity in the Church of England,
section 3 – summary*

THEME

This session is intended to teach the doctrine of Baptism. The activities could usefully happen at the font and altar respectively. If this is impossible, a picture of each could be shown.

ACTIVITY I

Compare the following texts. One is an advertisement for a humanist naming ceremony; the other from the baptismal liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer.

TEXT I

The arrival of a child is a truly life-changing event.

For many of us a religious service isn't appropriate but it is still important to bring our friends and family together to mark such a special occasion.

A humanist naming ceremony gives you the opportunity to reflect and acknowledge the joy, wonder and responsibility of bringing a child into the world in a way that is not religious.

They are relaxed, happy and personal occasions. And since every ceremony is written specifically for a particular family, each one is unique.



Naming ceremonies are child-centred and inclusive and often held at the start of a celebratory party, giving a real sense of purpose to the gathering.

They are held by all sorts of people who want to mark the arrival of their child but also want their child to be able to decide for themselves, as they get older, what they do or don't believe about religion.

And since namings have no legal standing, they can be held wherever suits you best: a village hall, in hotels, at home, in the garden, at the park, perhaps even at the zoo. ⁷

TEXT 2

DEARLY beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost: I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will grant to this Child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with Water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same.

REFLECTION

Hopefully, the comparison will reveal that Baptism is not a Christian naming ceremony; it is a rebirth. It is also about death, the death of the person born into the sin of human nature, and their new life in Christ and in the Church. It is this death at the font that is the victory over physical death.

TEACHING

The new life that the baptized person receives is the life of Christ, the life that is God Himself. We are made by adoption what Jesus was by nature: sons (and daughters) of the Father. We share Jesus' relationship with the Father so that we can call the Father, with Jesus' words, 'Our Father.'

ACTIVITY 2

Read the Baptismal 'Commission' which is suggested in Common Worship for those who are old enough to answer for themselves.⁸ In it, the candidates are asked this question:

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Why should this promise be made? What is the connection between membership of the Church (conferred in Baptism and Confirmation) and 'the breaking of bread'?

⁷ <https://humanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Namings-Leaflet.pdf>

⁸ *Common Worship, Initiation, pp72-3*



TEACHING

- ✦ The Mass completes initiation into the Church. The communion of the Church with Jesus Christ, on which our communion with God depends, happens in this sacrament. Without it the link spoken of in the last session between the communion of the Church and the life of God is broken.
- ✦ The communion of human beings with God is made possible by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Only when Christ 'had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins',⁹ could we have the same relationship with the Father that He had 'before the world began.'
- ✦ The sacrifice of the cross is the sacrifice of the Mass. Have you ever wondered why Christ be comes present in both His body and His blood? Surely the body contains blood, so for his blood to be present separately is unnecessary.
- ✦ The reason is that a sacrifice requires the separation of the flesh from the blood of the victim. The Mass is a sacrifice in that Christ is truly present under the signs of separated flesh and blood. It is not a new sacrifice, because the flesh and blood are not separated again, but is Christ's sacrifice represented through the signs of His flesh and blood, separated once and for all on the cross.

QUESTIONS

1. *Is it possible for me to travel to the font where I was baptized, so that I may pray there, and recommit myself to God and his Church?*
2. *Do I take the Mass seriously enough? Do I make sure that – if I am able - I have fasted from food for an hour before receiving Holy Communion? Do I pray before Mass, or sit chatting to my friends? Do I thank God afterwards?*

PRAYER

*God our Father,
whose Son our Lord Jesus Christ in a wonderful Sacrament
hath left unto us a memorial of his passion:
Grant us so to venerate the sacred mysteries of his
Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within ourselves
the fruit of his redemption; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

⁹ Hebrews 10.12.



Section 4: The Apostolic Ministry

A bishop is a successor of the Apostles and a father in God. His is a universal ministry of unity and oversight (episkope). He unites the parishes that are committed to his care in communion with each other and with the Church across the world and through the ages.

*From the leaflet 'Communion and Full Communion',
published by The Society*

THEME

The purpose of this session is to show that the Church is governed is not by human invention, but by the will of Christ.

ACTIVITY

This activity is intended to show the religious significance of Bishops. The beauty of episcopacy can perhaps be best illustrated with art, by listening to Elgar's setting of *Ecce Sacerdos Magnus* with the translation provided below, for example. Alternatively, a picture of a medieval bishop's tomb, or a reading from the ordinal could be used to make the same point.

'Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God. Therefore, by an oath, the Lord made him increase among his people. He gave him the blessing of all nations, and confirmed his covenant upon his head. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.'¹⁰

After listening to the music, or looking at the picture, or hearing the reading, ask if one could imagine these words, or this craftsmanship, or this music, being used to describe the regional director of a secular organisation. From this exercise, one can understand that a Bishop is not just a functional role, rather the office is a gift of Christ to His Church.

TEACHING

- ✦ Jesus gathered two groups around himself. The biggest group were the disciples, those who followed him. From the disciples, Jesus gathered a second group, the Apostles: twelve men through whom He would govern the Church after his Ascension.
- ✦ Jesus had given the disciples the Apostles so that they could have communion with Him through the Church, the same communion that, as we have seen, is the communion of God himself.

¹⁰ Translation available from: <http://www.paulayres.co.uk/catalogue/16.html>.



- ✦ The Church today is organised in the same way: there are Apostles (Bishops) and disciples (the faithful). As the Church grew, Bishops needed assistants, so they gave presbyters (priests), a share in their ministry. So, the priest is a stand-in for the Bishop, and for others whom the Bishop gives a share in his ministry.

BIBLE STUDY

Read Matthew 28. 16-20. The 'eleven disciples' are the Apostles (they remain disciples, just as a Bishop remains, as his first calling, a baptised Christian). Jesus is giving them the tasks of spreading the Gospel, and teaching. He promises to 'be with them always.'

TEACHING

- ✦ Christ wills that the Church is, and will be until the end of the age, both visible, and Apostolic. That is, it would be an institution that would last, with a history, and one that will keep throughout that history the Apostolic ministry 'to the end of the age.'
- ✦ The Western Church (the Roman Catholic Church – the Communion built on the Rock of Peter, the rock from which the Church of England was hewn, and from which it derives its apostolic ministry) and the Eastern (Orthodox) Church are the only bodies that have kept this apostolic ministry. Together, these bodies are the Church founded by Christ, and in our communion with which we can be sure of our communion with Him.
- ✦ It should be remembered that since membership of the Church comes with Baptism, everyone who has been baptised by anyone in the name of the Trinity is a part of the Church.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Do I pray regularly for my Bishop, and my parish priest?*
- 2. Do I accept their teaching as the teaching of the Lord?*
- 3. Is there more that I could do to help them in their ministry?*

PRAYER

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who by thy Holy Spirit hast appointed divers Orders of Ministers in thy Church: Mercifully replenish thy ministers so with the truth of thy doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that both by word and deed they may faithfully serve thee, to the glory of thy Name, and the edifying and well-governing of thy Church; through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen



Session 5 Living a Catholic life

After a time of disagreement and tension, the recovery of love involves a recollection of common identity and mutual belonging.

We are Anglicans because this is where God has placed us, but also because we rejoice in the catholic tradition that we have inherited as Anglicans. An important feature of that tradition is that the Church of England modestly claims only to be 'part' of the one Church. The third Guiding Principle acknowledges this.

The statement enumerates the contributions to the life of the Church of England that we can make. We also see ourselves as called to assist the Church of England in fulfilling its ecumenical commitment.

*Communion and Catholicity in the Church of England,
section 4 – summary*

PART I

Theme: This session applies what was learnt in the previous sessions about the Love of God, the communion of the Church, and the ministry that Jesus established to the practical concerns of living a Catholic life in the Church of England today.

ACTIVITY

Most people come to the matter with mistaken ideas about the traditional doctrine of a male-only priesthood. This activity tries to address them. One could read out the questions below, and then the answers. Or one could ask for contributions from those attending the session. Either way, the object is to tackle some of the myths and misrepresentations to which the Catholic case is subjected.

THEORY

1. Is it sexist to oppose women's ordination?

For it to be sexist, two things would have to be true. First, traditionalists would have to believe that Bishops and priests were superior to lay people, so that, by refusing to receive the ministry of women bishops and priests, they were relegating women to a lower place. Yet Catholics do not think that bishops and priests are superior to lay people. Rather, the Catholic faith is that the Church's ministry serves the faithful: that's what 'minister' means. It is entirely reasonable to believe in the absolute equality of men and women, but at the same time reserving this – subordinate - role to men.

The second thing that would have to be true for it to be sexist would be that traditionalists believed themselves to have a choice in the matter. But they don't. Traditionalists believe that this choice was made by Christ, and has been accepted by the Catholic Church throughout its existence.



Traditionalists do not think this is something they are free to accept since, as we have already seen, the apostolic ministry belongs to the whole Church, and not just a part of it such as the Church of England.

2. *The only reason Jesus did not choose male Apostles was that people in his day would not accept women in such a position.*

On the contrary, Jesus' world was full of female priests, and nothing could have been more natural than for a new religion to have both men and women in priestly roles. Indeed, even if it was true that it would have been counter-cultural, is it probable that the same Jesus who claimed to be God, and so threatened established religious ideas that he was crucified, was too timid to call women Apostles if he believed it was right to do so?

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

1. *The vast majority of Anglicans believe in the ordination of women. How can you claim to be Anglicans, and not accept it?*

Actually, many Anglicans worship in churches that do not ordain women priests and Bishops.¹¹ Even though the Church of England permits women's ordination, it acknowledges that the traditionalist position is within the spectrum of its teaching. Even though the Church of England permits women's ordination, it acknowledges that the traditionalist position is within the spectrum of its teaching.

2. *The issue of the ordination of women is over.*

The Five Guiding Principles which are at the heart of the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests make it clear that the Church of England is 'fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender' (#1), and that 'anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter' (#2). However, the Principles go on to acknowledge that since the Church of England shares 'the historic episcopate with other Churches', its own 'clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion [i.e. those provinces which have not reached this clear decision] and the whole Church of God' (#3). Furthermore, those who are 'unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion', and so the Church remains 'committed to enabling them to flourish' (#4), and to providing 'pastoral and sacramental provision' without limit of time and in a way that 'maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England' (#5).

In other words, Catholics in the Church of England must acknowledge (not necessarily agree with!) the clear decision that has been made. At the same time, the House of Bishops acknowledge that that decision must be set in the broader context of the whole Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The issue of the ordination of women is not closed!

¹¹ For example, the Anglican churches of Nigeria, and Tanzania, with 23 million members between them, do not ordain women. Ian Markham et al (eds), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).



PART 2

Theme: the policy and pastoral guidance of the Society

TEACHING

This is what previous sessions have covered

1. The Communion of God: God is the communion of self-giving love.
2. The Communion of the Church: God the Son became man in Christ to bring human beings into communion with God. It is through the Catholic Church that Christ does this.
3. Baptism: Baptism is the way we made part of the Church's communion.
4. The Apostolic Ministry: Christ founded His Church in the Apostles, and we can be sure that those Churches that have a line of Bishops going back to those first Apostles belong to 'the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.'
5. Living a Catholic life: since the first Apostles were men, and the Church has always believed itself bound by this choice, we cannot be sure that the ministry of women Bishops and Priests brings us into the communion with God that is the goal of the Christian life.

How can Traditional Anglicans live in the Church of England now?

- ✘ Where there is doubt about sacraments, Christians must take the safest course.
- ✘ For Traditional Anglicans, the ministry of women priests and bishops is not free from doubt.
- ✘ We need a ministry that is free from doubt, and that allows us to fully participate in the Communion of the Church, which is, as we learnt in earlier sessions, the Communion of God.
- ✘ Therefore, we require male priests, ordained by male Bishops in the succession of bishops going back the first Apostles.
- ✘ This is why the Bishops of the Society 'can only commend the sacramental ministry of male priests who have been ordained by a male bishop who stands in the historic apostolic succession of bishops at whose episcopal ordination a male bishop presided.'¹²
- ✘ Before 2015, all traditional Anglicans in England had to do to access this ministry was to seek male priests. Now, we need to seek the Bishops, priests, and parishes of the Society.
- ✘ Though traditionalists should normally receive the sacraments in parishes that are affiliated to the Society, and ministry from its priests and Bishops, 'there can be occasions when it is appropriate' to receive communion from Bishops and Priests who are not members of the Society, provided always that the minister concerned is a male priest ordained by a Bishop whose orders are not in doubt.¹³

¹² *Communion, Catholicity and a Catholic Life: statements by the Council of Bishops of the Society (London: Forward in Faith, 2015), p. 20.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.



CHARITY

We are traditionalists because only as such can we respond to Christ's invitation to Communion with Him through His Church. In this Communion we give ourselves to Christ, and to our brothers and sisters in Him. The same Christ whose will we believe to have been frustrated by the Church of England's decisions about its ministry calls us to love our fellow Christians. Though we pray for the time when the Church of England will return to the full communion that is Christ's will for it, it is out of charity that we do so, and we should act charitably towards those who believe themselves called to receive and exercise the sacramental ministry of women.

QUESTIONS

1. *What practical effect does the ordination of women Bishops have on my churchgoing? What sort of changes will be necessary in my life as a traditionalist in the Church of England because of it?*
2. *Do I behave charitably towards those of the other integrity? Are there any relationships I need to repair, or begin, with them?*

PRAYER

John Keble, along with Bl. John Henry Newman and Edward Bouverie Pusey, was responsible for the Church of England's recovery of its Catholicism in the nineteenth century. This prayer is given in Common Worship for 14 July.

*Father of the eternal Word,
in whose encompassing love
all things in peace and order move:
grant that, as your servant John Keble
adored you in all creation,
so we may have a humble heart of love
for the mysteries of your Church
and know your love to be new every morning,
in Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen*

