

New ordinariate and 1980 pastoral provision: An analysis

Jerry Filteau | Jan. 23, 2012

WASHINGTON -- How are the new U.S. Catholic ordinariate for former Anglican groups and the 1980 U.S. pastoral provision for Episcopal (Anglican) priests who become Catholics different? What do they have in common? What does the presence of Catholics in the new ordinariate mean for other Catholics?

The pastoral, canonical, ecclesiastical and other questions posed by the new developments are numerous and challenging, but here is an attempt to sort out a few of the bigger ones.

To take the third question first, other Catholics -- Eastern or Latin rite -- who were baptized or confirmed into the church as Latin or Eastern Catholics can legitimately participate in the life and worship of an Anglican-use Catholic community, but ordinarily, they may not become a formal member of that community.

An exception is marriage, for which church laws similar to those applying to Latin-Eastern rite Catholic marriages would come into play: An Eastern or Latin Catholic marrying a Catholic in the new Anglican-use ordinariate could become a member of that ordinariate if the couple agrees on that decision.

Going back to differences and similarities between the 1980 pastoral provision and the new ordinariate, the 1980 provision was aimed chiefly at meeting requests of individual Anglican clergy. It allowed exemptions from celibacy for those who were married and sought to enter into full Communion with the Catholic Church but also wanted to continue their life commitment to ordained ministry, only now as Catholic priests.

(On the exemption from the celibacy requirement, that provision paralleled similar exemptions for married clergy of Anglican or Protestant denominations dating back to some exceptions made by Pope Pius XII for married Lutheran clergy after World War II; married Presbyterian, Methodist and other clergy in the United States and elsewhere have been ordained Catholic priests in recent decades under more general church rules paralleling the 1980 U.S. pastoral provisions, even though those provisions specifically addressed only admission to Catholic ministry of former Episcopal priests.)

The 1980 provision allowed for married former U.S. Episcopal priests to lead parishes or other communities of fellow lay Episcopalians who followed them in their conversion, but that was not the primary focus of the provision.

Where a community of lay Anglicans/Episcopalians did follow a priest into the Catholic church under the 1980 provision, official, Vatican-approved liturgical adaptations were made for what is broadly called "Anglican use," namely use of the Book of Common Prayer, with some adaptations to Catholic teaching and practice, for their worship and devotional life.

The Book of Divine Worship, an official Catholic liturgical text developed in 1983 and updated in 2003, serves as the text for those existing Anglican-use Catholic communities and will also be the chief liturgical text for Anglican priests and communities entering the Catholic church under the new ordinariate.

Former Episcopal/Anglican priests who entered under the 1980 provision are incardinated as priests of a local Catholic diocese and are generally not allowed to be pastors unless they head a local Anglican-use community. They cannot use the Book of Divine Worship in celebrating Mass or other liturgical rites unless it is in a celebration with a local community of Anglican use.

By contrast, former Episcopal/Anglican priests entering the Catholic church under the provisions of the new ordinariate, based on Pope Benedict's 2010 document *Anglicanorum Coetibus* ("Groups of Anglicans"), are expected to be leaders of a group of converts that will join the ordinariate. Their ordinary form of worship will follow the 2003 edition of the Book of Divine Worship, and ordinarily, the priests of the ordinariate will lead congregations of people who entered the Catholic church through the provisions of the ordinariate.

If a priest (such as a former Episcopal diocesan official or seminary professor, rather than a pastor) does not have a group of lay converts following him into reconciliation with the Catholic church, the continuing use of the 1980 pastoral provision would be followed, church officials said. Such a priest would be asked to seek out a Catholic diocese that would accept him into its diocesan priesthood, exercising his ministry as a Catholic priest in local parishes or other ministries as a member of the local diocesan presbyterate.

What the 1980 and 2010 provisions have in common:

- Both allow former Anglican priests who reconcile with the Catholic church and are accepted under the provisions to be ordained Catholic priests after a period of appropriate formation, whether or not they are married.
- Neither allows a married former Anglican priest who is now a Catholic priest to remarry if he loses his wife.
- The exception for married priests extends only to those who were previously both married and engaged in ordained ministry as Anglicans. Neither set of provisions permits a lay Catholic who converted from Anglicanism or who was raised in Anglican-use Catholic community to enter a Catholic seminary or to be ordained to the priesthood unless he is unmarried and commits himself to lifelong celibacy.
- Both make provision for a former Anglican priest who has been ordained in the Catholic priesthood to serve as a pastor of an Anglican use community.

The main differences:

- Under the 1980 provision, former Episcopal priests seeking ordination for ministry as Catholic priests were required to find sponsorship by a local Catholic diocese and were then expected to exercise whatever ministry their local bishop assigned. Ordinarily, they were not made pastors, except in the few cases where a sufficient number of their former parish flock converted along with them to form a new Catholic community of Anglican use. Under the ordinariate protocol, the normal rule is that an Episcopal priest seeking membership in the ordinariate will be a leader of an Anglican-use Catholic community consisting (probably mainly) of lay U.S. Episcopalians who have followed him in his conversion to Catholicism. If an Episcopal priest is joining the Catholic church simply as an individual, he will ordinarily be expected to follow the 1980 pastoral provision instead, and seek sponsorship of a local Catholic bishop, rather than joining the presbyterate of the new ordinariate.
- Not only former Anglicans but other baptized Christians and nonbaptized persons who receive the sacraments of initiation through a parish or other formal community of the new ordinariate will be considered Catholics of the Anglican-use ordinariate. Until now, any new Catholics sacramentally initiated into the church through an Anglican-use community of a local diocese were simply considered Catholics of that diocese -- and later Catholics of any other local diocese where they might move.

For Anglican-use communities that seek successfully to transfer their jurisdiction from their current local diocese to the new ordinariate, transitional questions such as the canonical status of later converts accepted into those communities under the 1980 provisions -- members of the ordinariate or of the local diocese? -- are almost certain to arise, but one can hope they will be resolved with a pastoral priority for the care of souls.

In the Jan. 2 teleconference, several officials indicated that a number of such questions will have to be resolved with experience over the next few years.

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