

Commission Asks Rome To Reappraise Stand On Anglican Ordination

London (RNS) — The question of the recognition of the validity of Anglican orders by the Roman Catholic Church should not be affected by the ordination of women.

That's the thinking of an international group of Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians who have been talking for the last eight years on points that have divided the two Churches since the Reformation.

They recognize that ordination of women in the U.S. Episcopal Church and other branches of the Anglican communion has created "a new and grave obstacle to the reconciliation" between Anglicans and Roman Catholics; but, said the theologians who make up the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, "objections, however substantial, to the ordination of women are of a different kind from objections raised in the past against the validity of Anglican Orders in general."

The commission has petitioned the Holy See to "reappraise" non-recognition by the Roman Catholic Church of Anglican priestly orders.

The commission was established in 1971 by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Michael Ramsey (now Lord Ramsey), and the late Pope Paul VI.

Since the Reformation, Anglican orders have been regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as invalid.

They were formally condemned by Pope Leo XIII who stated in the bull, Apostolicae Curiae, published in 1896, that ordinations according to the Anglican rite were "absolutely null and void."

The request for reappraisal follows publication by the commission, two years ago, of a report claiming agreement on the nature of the Christian ministry.

Other reports by the commission have dealt with the nature of the Eucharist and the nature of Church authority.

The commission says recent ecumenical consensus makes a reappraisal of the question of Anglican orders timely.

Old arguments are no longer valid, says the document, "... a consensus has been reached that places the questions in a new context."

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is that

Anglican orders are invalid according to the Catholic Church's own concept of ministry.

They were condemned on the grounds of defective form (that is, the formula of the ordination rite did not sufficiently signify the bestowal of priestly power) and defective intention (that is, the absence of belief in a ministry involving eucharistic sacrifice.)

Some Catholics believe that a bull, or encyclical, is irreversible, coming within the realm of an infallible ex cathedra papal decree or definition, and is similarly protected from error.

Others hold that this is not so and that new evidence or circumstance could render such a document obsolete.

It has been argued that, on the question of form, "evidence" presented to Pope Leo XII included a tale that the first Elizabethan Primate, Matthew Parker, was consecrated in a public house in Cheapside.

Modern Catholic authorities accept that the "Nag's Head fable," as it is called, is spurious and argue with some force that it did not influence Pope Leo XIII in his findings.

It is possible that from the Roman Catholic viewpoint some Anglican clergy may be validly ordained and others

not. This view has been put by, among others, Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster.

The majority of Orthodox Churches recognize Anglican orders. Their own orders are regarded by the Vatican as valid but schismatic.

Anglican orders are also recognized by the Old Catholic Church, an organization of "continuing" Catholics which regards as heretical the 19th century proclamation of papal infallibility.

Some countries and dioceses are more flexible than others. An Australian Anglican bishop, visiting Italy, was invited to participate in the laying on of hands during the ordination of a priest.

A number of prominent Anglicans have offered compromise solutions to the dilemma.

Bishop Mervyn Stockwood of Southwark said that he understood Roman Catholic hesitations, but we cannot at the same time be expected to deny what is true and real to us.

He added: "Having said that, I should be prepared in the right circumstances, to receive from my Roman Catholic brethren whatever they believed to be necessary to extend my episcopate to make it acceptable to them."

St. Louis:

Lefebvre Mass Unlawful

St. Louis (RNS) — Catholics who worship at a Latin Mass in an established church here by the followers of dissident French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre will not be fulfilling their Sunday Mass obligation, according to an official of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of St. Louis.

Msgr. Joseph W. Baker, director of the archdiocesan office for ecumenical affairs, conceded that the liturgical celebration at Our Lady of the Rosary Church "is valid insofar as it really is a Mass with the Blessed Sacrament present, but it is unlawful because it has not been sanctioned" by Cardinal John J. Carberry of St. Louis. He acknowledged that the unlawfulness may be confusing to some Catholics because Archbishop Lefebvre has not been excommunicated despite his outspoken refusal to accept the decrees of Vatican II.

"It is not the style of liturgy or liturgical language which

lies at the heart of the present alienation, Msgr. Baker explained. "As a retired bishop, Archbishop Lefebvre does not possess the right to ordain priests, yet he has continued to do so. Churches can be erected only by the authority of the local bishop, yet Archbishop Lefebvre's group has established churches without any authorization."

Paul VI Doctor Also Dies Aug. 6

Rome (RNS) — Dr. Mario Fontana, longtime personal physician of Pope Paul VI, died at his home here Aug. 6, one year to the day after the pontiff's death. He was 75. He suffered a stroke Aug. 4.

Dr. Fontana and his assistant, Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, signed Pope Paul's death certificate when the pontiff died Aug. 6 of 1978.

Pope Presides At Rites for Ottaviani

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope John Paul II took a helicopter trip to Rome from his summer residence at Castelgandolfo to preside at the funeral of Cardinal Alfred Ottaviani who died Aug. 3 at the age of 88.

For years, Cardinal Ottaviani was head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican's watchdog agency over "orthodoxy" of Catholic belief and morals.

In a homily recalling the Italian cardinal, the Pope noted that "by singular coincidence, this rite is taking place at the same time during which, exactly one year ago, my loved predecessor, Paul VI, was about to leave this world."

Pope Paul VI died Aug. 6, 1978.

Pope John Paul also noted that it had been Cardinal Ottaviani who announced to the world the election of Paul VI after the June 1963 conclave.

Exhibition Oct. 5

The Rochester Press-Radio Club announced that tickets for the Friday, Oct. 5, 8 p.m., charity exhibition game between the host Boston Celtics and New York Knickerbockers have gone on sale at the Rochester War Memorial box office.

Mail orders may also be

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