



CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION & THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

September 2012

On September 16, 2012, 140 members of the former Anglican Cathedral of the Incarnation, in College Park, are being received into the Catholic Church as part of a new national structure called the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

What is the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter?

The Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter was established by the Vatican on January 1, 2012 in response to repeated requests by former Anglican groups and clergy seeking to become Catholic.

The ordinariate provides a way for Anglican parishes and groups to enter the Catholic Church in "corporate reunion"; that is, as a group and not simply as individuals. They retain their Anglican liturgical heritage and traditions while being fully Catholic.

The U.S. ordinariate includes the United States and Canada. It is equivalent to a diocese, but national in scope, and is led by Rev. Monsignor Jeffrey N. Steenson. A Catholic priest, he is the former Episcopal Bishop of Rio Grande; is based in Houston, Texas; and is a full member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

As of September 2012, 22 former Anglican or Episcopal priests had been ordained Catholic priests for the ordinariate, and 20 parishes or groups had been received into the Catholic Church. More are in the process of joining.

Background

In November 2009, in response to repeated and persistent inquiries from Anglican groups worldwide who were seeking to become Catholic, Pope Benedict XVI issued an apostolic constitution called *Anglicanorum coetibus* (pronounced Anglican-orum chay-tee-boose).

This document authorized the creation of "ordinariates." Churches in ordinariates are Catholic yet retain elements of Anglican heritage and liturgical practices. Ordinariates also have been established by the Vatican in England and Australia.

Is there precedent for this?

These ordinariates are new in that they provide a way for Anglicans to enter the Church in a corporate manner; that is, as a group or community, while also retaining some of their Anglican heritage and traditions. However, there are other Catholic ordinariates. One that many people are familiar with is the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, which has responsibility for Catholics serving in the U.S. armed services worldwide and which works in collaboration with local bishops.

Will the Church of the Incarnation be a new parish for the Diocese of Orlando?

No. Though within the geographic area of the diocese, Incarnation is part of the national Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. That said, ordinariate communities seek to have strong relationships with the local diocese in which they are located.

Will the clergy become Catholic priests?

Anglican clergy seeking to be ordained a Catholic priest must first complete an extensive process that includes background checks; an endorsement by the local Ordinary, approval by the head of the Ordinariate and by the Vatican; completion of an approved Ordinariate formation program and an examination.

Are parishioners automatically Catholic?

Members of Anglican parishes are required to undergo a period of preparation to be received into the Catholic Church, and to apply in writing to join the Ordinariate. The approved formation process includes study of the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*.

As with anyone seeking to become Catholic, issues such as irregular marriages (eg, someone has remarried after a divorce, but without first obtaining a declaration of nullity) must be resolved prior to reception.

What liturgy is used?

The liturgy will look very similar to a traditional Anglican liturgy. Parishes typically use the *Book of Divine Worship*, a liturgical text authorized by the Vatican that incorporates Anglican prayers and material. The Roman Missal also is authorized for use.

Have other parishes done this?

Over 20 communities are now part of the ordinariate in the U.S. and Canada, with more planning to enter. The larger communities include Our Lady of Walsingham, Houston, TX; St. Luke, Bladensburg, MD; Christ the King, Towson, MD; and St. Thomas More, Scranton, PA, as well as the Church of the Incarnation.

Can lifelong Catholics join the ordinariate?

The ordinariate was formed in response to repeated and persistent inquiries from Anglican groups who were seeking to become Catholic. The ordinariate provides a way for these groups to enter in "corporate reunion" and to retain their Anglican liturgical heritage and traditions.

While lifelong Catholics are welcome to attend Masses in an ordinariate parish, they would be members of a regular diocese and diocesan parish.

Does an Anglican who wants to become Catholic have to join the ordinariate?

No. An individual may seek to join the ordinariate, with the Anglican-use heritage, or a diocesan parish. In either case, the person must follow all of the usual requirements to become Catholic.

What can we do as Catholics?

Please join in praying for the members of Incarnation as they undertake this new journey of faith, and welcome them as brothers and sisters of our One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.