Anglican Uniatism: A Personal View

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I. Biographical introduction

The invitation to speak at the annual conference of the Anglican Use Society in Scranton, Pennsylvania, in spring 2005 was an opportunity to set in order my own thoughts, and recent experiences, on the important subject that engages them — important particularly in my own country, England, but not only there. I was myself christened as an Anglican and educated at a Broad Church Anglican school named after that alarmingly dynamic headmaster Thomas Arnold of Rugby. School religion, represented by compulsory monthly church service as well as daily morning assemblies, had no effect on me at all. My parents were only very occasional churchgoers, and my own religiosity as a boy was basically pagan in character, a feeling for God in nature, in the sea and the mountains, both of which were close to where I lived. Any dormant sense of Christianity was eventually awakened more by Eastern Orthodoxy than by Anglicanism – through a chance visit to the Russian church in Geneva where for the first time I saw an iconostasis and had an immediate intuition of the Incarnation. That prompted me, on my own, to start to visit churches in England, and I gravitated towards the Anglo-Catholic ones because, I suppose, they were the closest thing to the incarnationalism glimpsed in Geneva. But lacking any worthwhile religious education – the school curriculum included Bible study but it was quite non-doctrinal and anyway never seemed to get past the Old Testament, and even then not beyond the Book of Judges, I was ill-prepared to act as a pro-Anglican controversialist when challenged to debate by a very well-instructed fellow-student at our piano teacher's. His school put in all sixth formers for a diploma in Catholic apologetics. Eventually, the inevitable happened. I conceded defeat and knocked with considerable trepidation, never having met a Catholic priest and suffering from that residual religion of the English which is anti-Romanism, on a local presbytery door. My instruction took a year and a half – there was a degree of anxiety, I recall, because I was so young, but I was eventually received in the spring of 1966 when I was 17. In those days that involved conditional Baptism, in case the clergyman had failed to use the Trinitarian formula, or, as in the christenings of royal princes, one clergyman had pronounced the

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formula and another poured the water, neither of which was likely to have been my infant lot. It also entailed the profession of a lengthy counter-Reformation creed with much abjuration of errors most of which had passed me by. That did not prevent my reciting it with considerable gusto.

II. 'The Panther and the Hind'

My Anglican experience was, obviously, very limited, then. But it was still the church of my Baptism, and where I had learned, however vestigially, what I knew hitherto of the Scriptures and the sacraments. What I did know quite well, by the time I was a professed and ordained Dominican and sent to Rome to teach at the Roman college of the Order, the Angelicum, or — to give it its full name — the Pontifical University of St Thomas in the City, was the history of England. I had read Modern History when an undergraduate at Oxford, and in those days — perhaps even now — the syllabus had changed hardly at all since the late Victorian period when the School of Modern History was established. Though Oxford dated Modern History as beginning with the conversion of the emperor Constantine, the lion's share of the curriculum was devoted to English history, from the Anglo-Saxon invasion until the Second World War. So when I was asked by the founder of the Angelicum's 'ecumenical section' if I could contribute a course on Anglicanism, I at least felt able to offer some lectures offering an historical approach to the subject, and these became my book *The Panther and the Hind*, sub-titled *A Theological History of Anglicanism*. My feeling for the subject had been re-activated, to some extent, by my years of association with Christ Church, Oxford, my old College, which was also the cathedral of the Anglican diocese. While in Rome, I was able to use the library – excellent for these purposes – of the *Centro Anglicano*, set up after the Second Vatican Council in the Palazzo Doria-Pamphili, where the Anglican representative to the Holy See and his wife were very generous hosts to me. I have always felt slightly guilty at having exploited their hospitality to write a book which is in a sense a deconstruction of Anglican claims, or so at least some interpreted it to be, including Dr Graham Leonard, the last but one predecessor of the Bishop of London, who wrote a foreword for it before leaving the State Church to become a Roman Catholic. For those who are unfamiliar with the book, whose publication coincided quite by chance with the 1992 Act of Synod in England permitting the ordination of women to the presbyterate, the basic thesis is that, owing to the nature of its historical origins, the Church of England is really three churches rolled into one. It is at one and the same time a

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Church of a classically Protestant stripe, a Church of a recognisably Catholic stripe, and a Church of a Latitudinarian or what would later be called 'Liberal' stripe. My conclusion was that, while some Anglicans in the course of the twentieth century claimed to glory in such multiformity, this was making a virtue out of necessity, and a false virtue not least in the ecumenical arena where the Church of Rome, for instance, might establish a bilateral dialogue to some purpose with one or other of these parties, but hardly with all three at the same time. I ended by envisaging as feasible not the corporate reunion of Rome and Canterbury which is, surely, a chimera, but a selective union on a basis comparable to that of the Eastern Catholic Churches. Such a selective union could, I thought, include the Evangelical emphasis on the primacy of preaching the Atonement as the answer to human sin, and the historic Latitudinarian high respect for rationality as a candle in the house of the Lord, though, naturally, its predominant basis would lie in the Catholic elements of Anglicanism brought to the fore by the Caroline divines, the Restoration high churchmen and the founders of the Oxford Movement.[1]

The time when the book appeared was not only the period of the controversial Act of Synod, later confirmed by the British Parliament. It was also the epoch of the abortive attempt to arrange a corporate reconciliation for Anglo-Papalists or classical Anglo-Catholics which, as William Oddie's book *The Roman Option* shows, came to grief partly through the intransigence of the majority of the Latin-rite bishops in England but partly also owing to the ingenious 'solution' devised by the then Archbishop of York, John Hapgood, for the problem of those who refused to receive the Act of Synod, when they were declared a distinct and equal 'integrity' entitled to appeal, on a parish by parish basis, for the alternative episcopal oversight, as offered by the so-called 'flying bishops', *episcopi volantes* – more properly the 'Provincial Episcopal Visitors' in the Provinces of Canterbury and York – and enshrined in the 1993 Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod.[2]

III. The significance of new historical contributions

Since the time I wrote *The Panther and the Hind* there have been further relevant developments. The first of these I should like to mention is the revisionist historiography typical of the last fifteen years in England, historiography which has in one sense strengthened

[1] A. Nichols, O. P., *The Panther and the Hind. A Theological History of Anglicanism* (Edinburgh 1993), pp. 177–180.

[2] W. Oddie, *The Roman Option. Crisis and the Realignment of English-speaking Christianity* (London 1997).

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but in another sense seriously weakened the Anglo-Catholic case. The new history writing underlines the way the late mediaeval Church, on the eve of the Reformation, satisfied the spiritual needs of English men and women. Here the key figures are the Cambridge historian Eamon Duffy,[3] a Catholic, and his Oxford counterpart Christopher Haigh,[4] an Anglican, though these had a harbinger in the Warwick-based J. J. Scarisbrick,[5] also a Catholic. Their studies show that the Protestant aspect of the English Reformation, the dismantlement of the traditional Liturgy and its attendant devotions, as well as the furnishings and accoutrements of the parish church, was profoundly antithetical to the historic Christian sensibility of the English people, formed during a thousand years of Catholic influence. That is what modern Anglo-Catholics had always guessed. Such phenomena as, under Henry VIII, the Pilgrimage of Grace became more difficult to dismiss as politically motivated or otherwise unrepresentative against the rising tide of evidence from wills, churchwardens' accounts, devotional manuals, and commonplace books in the local archives now increasingly tapped. Introducing his book, *The Stripping of the Altars*, Duffy wrote:

> It is the contention of the . . . book that late mediaeval Catholicism exerted an enormously strong, diverse and vigorous hold over the imagination and the loyalty of the people up to the very moment of Reformation. Traditional religion had about it no particular marks of exhaustion or decay, and indeed in a whole host of ways, from the multiplication of vernacular religious books to adaptations within the national and regional cult of the saints was showing itself well able to meet new needs and new conditions.[6]

Of course, this was, for Anglo-Catholics, a two-edged weapon. If popular Catholicism was so serenely successful, what was the need for a break with Rome in the first place? What was left of the claim that the specifically *papal* Catholicism of the late Middle Ages was crying out – in England, at any rate – for purification?

This shadow hovering over Anglo-Catholic sensibilities – and Graham Leonard would cite (conversationally) Duffy's book, along with my own, as precipitants of his abandonment of the Canterbury communion, became even more ominous when the second movement

[3] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven and London 1992); idem., *The Voices of Morebath. Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven and London 2001). Through the generosity of the author, I briefly had access to the proofs of the first book when reading the proofs of my own – but the impact Duffy's book would make was of course at that juncture unknown.

[4] C. Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford 1993). See also idem. (ed)., *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge 1987).

[5] J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (London 1984).

[6] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, op.cit., p. 4.

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of revisionist historiography entered the scene. That second movement has as its theme the essentially Protestant nature of the later Reformation in England, and centres on the Oxford Reformation historian and biographer of Cranmer, Diarmaid MacCulloch – who was formerly an Evangelical Anglican though now describes himself as a sympathetic observer of Christianity.[7] This is less well known to the educated public, probably because it has no one to rival the television presentation skills of Professor Duffy. In any case, it conforms to the settled assumptions of non-Anglican Catholic Englishmen, unlike the first revisionist movement which challenges them. Professor MacCulloch speaks of the Church of England from at any rate the reign of Edward VI as manifestly a Reformed church on the model of the Continental Reformation. Claims otherwise, driven by a theological urge to emphasise Catholic continuity for the *ecclesia anglicana* across the Reformation divide, are overwhelmingly the creation of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. He asks, prudently:

> If . . . the debate on continuity is at root a theological one, should historians seek to enter it?

His reply is forthright.

> Certainly, since the case of continuity has always been argued around the historical facts of the English Reformation. Quite apart from the desirability of getting the facts right, one's understanding of the English Reformation should determine the theological conclusions drawn about the nature of Anglicanism; it should materially influence the decisions that Anglicanism makes about such important internal matters as moving toward the ordination of women and priorities in ecumenical ventures with other churches of the Christian West.[8]

What MacCulloch calls the 'Anglo-Catholic historiographical victory' in the English universities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was made possible by the anomalies and compromises of the Elizabethan Settlement but, as to Cranmer, the subject of MacCulloch's massive biography, 'there was nothing of the via media between Catholicism and Protestantism in Cranmer's plans'. In Cranmer's conflict with Bishop Hooper, the most radical of the Edwardine bishops, the:

> point at issue . . . was not whether or not the Church of England should retain a Catholic character, but whether or not remnants of the Catholic past could be redirected to Protestant ends, in order to preserve order, decency and hierarchy.

[7] D. MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547–1603* (Basingstoke 1990; 1992); idem., *Thomas Cranmer. A Life* (New Haven and London 1996); idem., *Tudor Church Militant. Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London 1999; 2001); idem., *Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley, CA, 2002).

[8] Idem., 'The Myth of the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies* 30 (1991), pp. 1–19, and here at p. 2.

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As MacCulloch says, 'On the issue of ideology versus decency, Cranmer won, and in the construction of a renewed framework for the Church's worship, his work remained permanent.'[9]

> Although the thinking behind the Prayer Book was consciously aligned with Swiss theology, it remained capable of being adapted in terms of outward symbolism in a startling variety of directions, as anyone who has done a Cook's tour of Anglican worship will know.[10]

Similar ambiguities continued in Elizabeth's reign, such as the contradiction between the moderate tone of the royal injunctions issued in 1559 and the 'almost simultaneous action of royal commissions of senior Protestant clergy that unleashed a ruthless campaign of systematic vandalism in Church furnishings'.[11] In an earlier generation the Tudor historian John Neale proposed that Elizabeth's government wanted little more than an outward break with Rome, but Protestant activists in the House of Commons forced through a much more thoroughgoing set of changes. Research from the 1980s suggests otherwise. The government got the settlement it desired. Hesitations came from the conservative aristocracy – and of course from the Marian bishops. As MacCulloch notes:

> Whatever the queen's own views, she quickly resigned herself to the inevitability of a thoroughgoing Protestant settlement in 1559, since the only senior clergy prepared to operate a national church for her were convinced Protestants.[12]

As Calvinist theology becomes more influential in the 1550s, Calvinist soteriology 'became the orthodoxy of the English church from the 1560s to the 1620s'. In MacCulloch's view, attempts to argue otherwise have not carried conviction. He points moreover to the anti-sacerdotalism of the Ordinal, the memorialist or at best receptionist Eucharistic doctrine and consequent dislike of theologies of Real Presence, sabbatarianism, and the iconoclasm which, he remarks, before the Civil War was 'murder not manslaughter', meaning:

> premeditated and carried out by lawfully constituted authority, such as churchwardens or the injunctions of senior clergy, rather than being the result of some sudden frenzy.[13]

MacCulloch's conclusion is that

> Catholic Anglicanism was [thus] at best waiting in the wings when Elizabeth died: a synthesis that had not yet been blended from a mixture of conformist *jure divino* arguments, the Catholic hankerings of a handful

[9] Ibid., p. 7.
[10] Ibid., pp. 7–8.
[11] Ibid., p. 9
[12] Ibid., p. 10.
[13] Ibid., p. 12.

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> of clergy, the rationalism and traditionalism of Hooker and a suspicion of systematic Calvinism.[14]

The situation only changed when under the early Stuarts a diplomatic revolution disposed of English support for Dutch Protestantism, and Laudian clergy gained the mind and heart of Charles I. The consequences were dramatic. As MacCulloch puts it:

> The reaction of the Englishmen who had been nurtured by the Elizabethan church was to overthrow the government which had allowed such a thing to happen; yet when a version of the 1559 religious settlement was restored in 1660, never again was the established church to prove comprehensive enough to contain the spectrum of Protestant belief that had been possible in the late sixteenth century. From this story of confusion and changing direction emerged a church that has never subsequently dared define its identity decisively as Protestant or Catholic and that has decided in the end that this is a virtue rather than a handicap.[15]

IV. Assessing the Catholic 'party' in Anglicanism

Whatever the fairest view of the English Reformation, then, even MacCulloch admits that a Catholic party emerged relatively early, certainly less than seventy-five years after Elizabeth's accession. He is inclined to date it to the moment when, on James I's death, the duke of Buckingham asked Archbishop Laud to run his finger down a list of senior clergy and set against their names the letters either P or O, meaning Puritan or Orthodox. By the 1830s, it was certainly impossible to say there was no such party – even if, as Dr Sheridan Gilley of the University of Durham has argued, it is, as he writes:

> tempting to trace [the] troubles of the [present-day] Church of England to the very nineteenth century movement which did most for its revival.[16]

He is referring of course to the Oxford Movement, born as that was in the crisis of the European confessional State at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Gilley's words, its leaders were

> more than conservatives: they were right-wing radicals who transformed the very tradition they set out to renew.[17]

[14] Ibid., p. 17.
[15] Ibid., p. 19.
[16] S. Gilley, 'The Ecclesiology of the Oxford Movement: a Reconsideration', *Nova* I. 1 (1996), pp. 4–9, and here at p. 4.
[17] Ibid., p. 5. The evidence is laid out in Gilley's prosopographical study of Newman in relation to his contemporaries, the distinguishing feature of his biography of the Servant of God: thus S. Gilley, *Newman and his Age* (London 1990).

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Hurrell Froude, like the future Tractarian leaders, was a political conservative with a hearty contempt for majorities, and an even stronger contempt for the liberalism and rationalism to which he like they traced the radical Utilitarian critiques of the Church as a corrupt institution. With his affection for the theocratic mediaeval Church Froude could be called the founder of Anglican Ultramontanism, a harbinger of the Anglo-Papalism of the most extreme or consistent (depending on how one looks at it) Anglo-Catholicism of the twentieth century. More influentially, the rest of the Oxford Movement men did what their High Church predecessors generally had *not* done: they declared that in possessing the apostolic ministry of bishops to guarantee the sacramental and spiritual life, the Church of England was Catholic and not Protestant. The Anglican via media was not the 'old High Anglican Protestant middle way between popery and radical Protestantism'. Rather, Anglicanism, properly understood, was a via media between popery and Protestantism itself. In Gilley's words, John Henry Newman:

> awakened the Church of England from the condition in which it could blithely assume that it was both Protestant and Catholic by asking the question which has plagued it ever since: is it essentially Catholic *or* Protestant *or* Liberal?

and, as Gilley adds:

> the points were connected, for Newman thought that the Protestant doctrine of *sola scriptura* led inevitably to the liberalism which denied the authority of Scripture altogether . . .[18]

something Gilley declares by the early twenty-first century a claim New Testament scholars proved daily. But just by calling itself Catholic rather than Protestant the Oxford Movement awoke folk fears of Rome. By setting out to appropriate the devotional life and discipline of contemporary Catholicism its followers appeared to be not so much interpreting the Book of Common Prayer as supplanting it. Many informed Protestants came to distrust Newman's appeal to the Fathers, implicit in the new Library of the Fathers, and his appeal to the more Catholic writers of the Anglican tradition, explicit in the new Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology. Though Anglicanism had long been in Gilley's memorable phrase an 'ecclesiological Noah's Ark', what was novel in the early Victorians was the sharpness of the ensuing self-definition of factions, 'partisan and even warring positions'. The older Protestant High Churchmen were marginalised as Anglican Protestantism became an anti-Anglo-Catholic Evangelicalism, and High Churchmanship an anti-Protestant Anglo-Catholicism. A few notable High Anglicans such as

[18] Idem., 'The Ecclesiology of the Oxford Movement', art. cit., p. 5.

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W. E. Gladstone retained a strong element of Protestantism in their Anglican Catholicism but the general tendency of Anglo-Catholicism was towards a repudiation of the Protestant inheritance. The resulting internal divisions weakened the Church, leading to the secularisation of the University of Oxford in the later nineteenth century, and more widely new problems in competing with an expanding Nonconformity. Newman's secession to Rome left his remaining disciples under a cloud as secret papists who might even yet secede, though their spiritual and intellectual gifts drew to them many of the best in the Church of England. The Anglo-Catholics, however, could survive and prosper only by flouting constituted authority. Theoretically, they had adopted an exalted theology of the monarchical episcopate owed to St Ignatius of Antioch and St Cyprian in the early Church. In practice, they defied Protestant and Liberal bishops *con bravura*. Secure in the 'parsons' freehold', they established:

> an infallible priest-Pope in every parish, loyal not to his immediate bishop but to Catholic Christendom in some vaguer, wider sense.[19]

So here we have them: on the ascendant from about 1870 to 1940 and then on the decline – and either way, beyond a doubt as to doctrine, worship and devotion though not ecclesial communion, a displaced portion of Catholic Christendom. But the party system created in the later nineteenth century with theological colleges teaching diametrically opposed Catholic and Protestant theologies could in the long term benefit, as Gilley comments:

> only theological liberalism, for it made the defining character of Anglicanism neither Protestantism nor Catholicism but a liberal comprehensiveness including them both and claiming to be broader, more inclusive, than either.

Appeal to comprehensiveness dilutes both Catholic and Protestant dogma, so that

> In the end neither Protestants nor Catholics but the theological liberals have proved the victors in the war for the soul of the Church of England.[20]

The question thus arises, What are we to do? Gilley writes:

> The decline of Anglo-Catholicism seems to me a serious impoverishment of Christianity. No one who has not known the High Church tradition from the inside can appreciate its seductive fascination. It took all that is best and most beautiful in the Church of England – the King James Bible, the Book of Common Prayer with its wonderful Cranmerian cadences, the ancient cathedrals and parish churches, a tradition of literature and a

[19] Ibid., p. 7.
[20] Ibid.

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> tradition of learning, and the kindness, gentleness and tolerance of English life, and enriched them with judicious borrowings from the doctrine, devotion and scholarship of the wider Catholic world.

In fact, for Gilley, who himself left the Church of England to become a Catholic at the time of the controversy over the denial of the bodily resurrection by Bishop David Jenkins of Durham:

> It seemed the perfect meeting place between Catholicity and Englishness, without the harshness and philistinism of English Roman Catholicism, which has spent a generation destroying everything that was most beautiful about itself.[21]

V. The question of an Anglican Uniate church

The question of an Anglican Uniate church is the question of whether all this – or most of it, or, at any rate, a significant part of it, could be preserved in a union, nonetheless, with Rome – not through absorption by the modern Latin-rite church in England or elsewhere but in union with the Petrine office whose continued steadfast guardianship of classical Catholic Christian doctrine in faith and morals remains remarkably unshaken among the squalls of the contemporary world.

The 1992 Synod decision to ordain women to the priesthood induced a crisis in historic Anglo-Catholicism – by which I mean the Anglo-Catholic movement once its modernising 'Affirming Catholicism' element is left out of the count. This put my question on the agenda in an urgent fashion for the first time. And in one sense England turned out not the most helpful place to be when thinking through what such a union might involve. Speaking very generally, in England Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholics are too close for comfort. Owing to geographical proximity in a relatively small and culturally fairly homogenous country, Roman Catholics think they naturally understand Anglicanism. But they by no means necessarily do. An added problem is the temper of the Latin episcopate in England, at least at the time of the Synod vote. It is the implication of William Oddie's *The Roman Option*, that the Latin-rite bishops were implacably opposed to a Uniate jurisdiction for former Anglicans, Cardinal Basil Hume alone excepted. On my speculative analysis – unlike in the United States of America, in England and Wales the proceedings of the Catholic Bishops' Conference are shrouded in confidentiality — the larger number of them believed Anglo-Catholics would never become proper Roman Catholics. Anecdotal evidence suggests there was widespread episcopal ignorance of how advanced the Catholicising spirit is in classically

[21] Ibid., p. 9. This essay is more easily accessible under the same title in P. Vaiss (ed.), *From Oxford to the People* (Leominster 1996), pp. 60–75.

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Anglo-Catholic and especially Anglo-Papalist parishes. The remaining bishops, Westminster apart, were equally opposed, one gathers, on quite opposite grounds – namely, that these were aggressive doctrinaire conservatives who would swell the ranks of traditionalist Catholics already found irksome at their diocesan pastoral meetings or by their letters to the Catholic press. Neither of these negative attitudes was totally without foundation. We can note that so distinguished a former Anglo-Catholic as Graham Leonard now thinks that those 'coming over' were saved from impending disaster by such episcopal resistance.

But the upshot was predictable. The pro-Roman leadership of Forward in Faith, the organisational expression of the classical Anglo-Catholics, having ascertained that, where corporate reconciliation is concerned, no help can be expected from the Catholic bishops in England, determined to look to the Vatican directly. It aims in a preliminary move to establish full authority over its own parishes and other institutions through a 'third' or 'free' Province on the territories of the Provinces of Canterbury and York, and this will be 'free' not only in the sense of exempt from the jurisdiction of General Synod but also in that of able to establish its own ecumenical agenda, looking away from the Northern European episcopally ordered Protestant churches and Methodism, to which the eyes of the Synod are now turned, and looking towards Eastern Orthodoxy, and, especially, Rome. One of the reasons Forward in Faith has to tread carefully in the latter respect is the existence in its ranks of 'non-papal' Catholics for whom Eastern Orthodoxy is a reason for not taking the papacy seriously – even though in the first millennium, as the French Orthodox lay theologian Olivier Clément has recently shown in his study *You are Peter*, whether or not a given oriental at some particular time chose to affirm or to query the Petrine authority, the topic never left the central agenda.[22]

Anglicanism has achieved a more or less world-wide diaspora, and its Anglo-Catholic component likewise. So there is a need, even apart from local difficulties in England, to consider these issues on a wider than insular level. At the present time, it is the so-called Traditional Anglican Communion, the largest of the Anglican 'Continuing Churches' with most of its strength in the developing world, which is making the running in matters of actually approaching Rome – though this is perhaps more owing to the realistic recognition that an attempt to repair an old schism by a new schism is somewhat contradictory than through enthusiastic rediscovery of the Petrine office as such. They know of course that not all is well in the Roman Communion which they may be entering, that in some places they

[22] O. Clément, *You are Peter. An Orthodox Theologian's Reflection on the Exercise of the Papal Primacy* (Hyde Park, NY, 2000). I owe this point to Father John Hunwicke.

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may need a special environment not just to preserve an Anglican Catholic ethos but to preserve orthodoxy and orthopraxy until the crisis of post-Conciliar Catholicism in the West has passed — an eventuality considerably aided and abetted, it can be said, by the election of pope Benedict XVI. Giving a brief address to their archbishops and others at a meeting in Arlington, Texas, in February 2005, I tried to offer some orientation for possible incomers to the Catholic Church from an Anglican background. I made six points which I expand somewhat here.

1 Starting – prophetically enough, as things have turned out – from comments by the then Cardinal Ratzinger, I echoed his view that the great crisis of the present day, underlying the shaking of foundations in all the Churches with the exception of those largely cut off from Western influence, such as the Ethiopian Orthodox, is anthropological, to do with the essence of man. Is man simply part of nature, or has he through mind and personhood a spiritual vocation and destiny? Doubt about this is why all of a sudden bioethics has become so central a discipline, in issues like cloning, abortion, euthanasia. For Ratzinger, what is at stake goes far beyond these particular issues, important as they are, and concerns the entire Christian worldview. For Christian orthodoxy, the situation is so serious that a parallel can only be found by going back to the Gnostic crisis of the second century.
2 Secondly, the question, Is man simply part of nature? inevitably creates huge problems for the idea – the basic credibility – of divine revelation. Is man the kind of creature who has fundamentally spiritual powers of understanding and love that can be elevated by grace into the means of meeting with the self-revealed God?
3 Thirdly, while, on behalf of the Church, philosophers indebted to her are struggling to show the anthropological possibility of revelation, the rest of us who claim the name of Christian must at least bear witness in the world to the essentially coherent nature of the orthodox concept of revelation: namely, that revelation is an utterly comprehensive truth, attested in a unique literature (the Bible), transmitted by a corporate subject, the Bride of Christ, who alone can receive that testimony aright and is equipped for that purpose with apostolic guardians, the bishops, whose task it is to ensure that the doctrinal deposit – which consists of the judgments duly made about revelation's contents – is handed on aright. In our present circumstances, it is especially important to underline that, owing to this task of guardianship, bishops are primarily teachers, not bureaucrats, much less diplomats out for compromise.

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4 Fourthly, there is a consequent need for all Catholic-minded Christians to come together. For the future of Catholicity, the greatest potential *rapprochement* is in theory that between Rome and Orthodoxy. But the historical and emotional obstacles to this from the Orthodox side are such that in practice more is to be expected of convergences from the side of the Western communions that split off, directly or indirectly, from the Latin church in the course of the modern centuries. What this means in terms of hard facts is bodies that have disengaged or are in the course of disengaging from such doctrinally liberalised communions as the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht, the Lutheran State churches in Scandinavia and the Anglican Communion.
5 Fifthly, while the Latin Church today has considerable internal difficulties which it would be pointless to deny, a comparative survey of the dioceses within it would suggest that there can be successful strategies, usually comprising five pillars: the solid catechetical formation of the laity; enthusiastic encouragement of vocations to the priesthood; a care for liturgical beauty (in a sense, the Church's worship is her heart); missionary outreach, and a spirited defence of the family, which is the main place to nurture a right understanding of the human being whose nature and goals the current anthropological crisis has called in question.
6 Finally, I reported that, in England at any rate, many Catholics look to Anglicans for inspiration on the third and fourth of these pillars. Thanks to a multisaecular experience of vernacular worship, Anglicans know how to do it well. And they also have a drive to home mission linked to a sense of broader responsibility for the wider society. It was pointed out to me afterwards that the latter of those is probably a distinctively Church of England thing, connected to the role of the crown and to the parish church as centre of the larger community especially in villages. Be that as it may, the Anglican clergy often have a strong sense of the survival of the vestiges of Christendom. At the worst, given the Church Establishment, this means in England token civic status without either power or respect, but at best it can have real effects at the grass-roots especially where there is a touch of Evangelical charisma to give it dynamism.

VI. A vignette: participation in the 'Women in the Episcopate' committee

I had picked up this last point from my main recent source of experience of Anglo-Catholics which came from appointment in

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2001 as the representative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to a committee called the Official Shadow Working Party on Women in the Episcopate, so a report on my experiences there may be relevant. In July 2000, the General Synod of the Church of England voted in favour of a private member's motion to study the possible opening of the episcopate to women, whereupon the House of Bishops established an Official Working Party on the matter with the Bishop of Rochester, an Evangelical of Pakistani origin, as Chair. The leadership of Forward in Faith, supported by the Provincial Episcopal Visitors, sought and gained from the then Archbishop of Canterbury recognition (hence the word 'official') of a Shadow Working Party of their own on the same subject, the mandate of which was not to adjudicate the issues in a neutral spirit but to prepare the best possible theological statement of the case for the traditional position as well as to establish a strategy for how to respond in the event of the innovation being made. In the course of my membership of this commission whose work came to an end in 2004 I certainly learned a great deal about the episcopate if not necessarily about women! I also learned a lot about how these classical Anglo-Catholics (two bishops, three priests, one layman and one laywoman) saw the situation.

It transpired there is little if anything that can be called official teaching on the nature of the episcopate in the Anglican formularies. The best that can be found is some material in the Canons of the Church of England, especially canon 18, which affirms that the bishop is the principal minister in pastoring and teaching but is otherwise chiefly concerned with a bishop's administrative functions. Though this legislation in a number of respects continues the mediaeval canons that governed the matter, it also reflects, as one of the Provincial Episcopal Visitors rather brutally put it, the origins of the Anglican episcopate in the Tudor and Stuart civil service. Like all Anglo-Catholics the members of the Working Party wanted to affirm a richer and more sacerdotal concept of the bishop's role as high priest and bridegroom of the local church, type and sacrament of Jesus Christ, the whole Church's High Priest and Spouse.

Without breaking too many confidences I can say that the discussion frequently strayed into expressing the wider hurts and anxieties that had followed on the 1992 Synodical decision, which the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament had subsequently sanctioned as expedient, even if part of the Parliamentary agreement hinged on provision for those who could not accept the introduction of women priests whose orders they considered at best dubious and at worst clearly invalid. The participants spoke of a loss of nerve, a disruption of parochial life, collapse of vocations and damage to mental and physical health amounting to what one termed a 'nervous breakdown of Anglo-Catholicism'. The knowledge that a vociferous minority in

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the Synod wished to end the alternative episcopal oversight of parishes and effectively eject those who dissented did not help, nor did the awareness that 'tricksy' solutions were being mooted by the Rochester Commission such as team episcopacy and parallel episcopal jurisdictions, which would include women. One clerical member, contrasting such solutions with the ancient Christian notion that the single bishop as the ministerial principle – in Greek, *archê* – of sacramental life in each local church signifies obedience to the one divine Father there, went so far as to say in a written submission that

> A plurality of bishops and thus a plurality of *archai* (polyarchy!) in a Church would make its episcopal ministry an efficacious sign of plurality in the monarchical fatherhood of the first Person of the Holy and Undivided Trinity: in effect, we would be committed to polytheism.

Subsequently, a published survey from an independent monitoring agency which showed that women priests were more likely to be unorthodox on the Incarnation than were male priests seemed to vindicate the Working Party's stand that the issues of gender, priesthood and Christology belong together in a delicate balance that cannot be upset.

Some members were chiefly concerned about the provisionality built into the reform by its recognition of its own experimental character. This meant, they argued, the deliberate institution of avowedly dubious sacraments. I heard predictions that the reduction in seats of the 2006 General Synod would disproportionately reduce the Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical vote. Ideas of 'reception', much trumpeted in the debates in Synod and the House of Bishops, were lambasted. Many of those in favour of women priests held that the 1992 decision itself constituted reception, though the notion could also be turned against the innovators. For example, if, as such frequently argued, Junias in the Pauline letters was a woman apostle, or if images on the walls of the Roman catacombs showed women celebrants of the Eucharist, then evidently the Church had subsequently determined not to 'receive' these variations in practice.

Realistically, the members of the Working Party knew that few people in the Church beyond were likely to change their minds, so their efforts were directed to leaving behind as impressive a theological document on the subject as they could manage, and, more especially, looking ahead to a new settlement in the form of a free Province. Work on this was delegated to a sub-group of canon lawyers who in England, owing to Establishment, are essentially civil lawyers using canon law as an additional tool. It was a task of some complexity, notably in regard to marriage jurisdiction, the law of burial, property law and pension provision. All of this and more is covered in the final document, *Consecrated Women?*, edited by Jonathan Baker, the Warden of Pusey House, Oxford, which

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contains both the theological report and the legal blueprint, published by the Canterbury Press.[23]

I have little doubt that for the leadership of Forward in Faith and the Provincial Episcopal Visitors at any rate in the Southern Province, the ordination of women into the episcopate is the hurdle they cannot jump. The key arguments run as follows. When the bishop has ordained women to the presbyterate, unity may be impaired but the very impairment illustrates that unity is the norm that could be restored if the error were removed. If, however, one were to be ordained bishop who could not possess the character of a bishop, then the element of unity would be entirely missing and an essential note of the Church would be absent. There would be no local church. Furthermore, irregularly ordained bishops, in conferring their own irregular orders not only on other women but also on men, would disrupt the male priesthood and diaconate, creating doubt and uncertainty of a kind in practical terms impossible to resolve about the wider sacrament of Order. Such bishops, once welcomed into the provincial college of bishops, would place its competence in doubt, not least in the matter of its commissioning any future Episcopal Visitors for traditionalist groups.

Invited to address the 2002 Forward in Faith National Assembly in London, I included the following passage. The stand of the classical Anglo-Catholics on the issue of the ordained ministry:

> would not make complete sense unless it formed part of a wider movement to recover and maintain the Great Tradition, the *Paradosis* of apostolic Christendom, in its fullness, in matters of faith and morals as a whole. The unity of Catholic Christendom is the unity of a face. In a face no one feature can be changed without altering the cast of all the rest. Contemporary orthodox-minded Roman Catholics look with admiration at those Anglican divines who, in various historical periods, sought to restore the authentic portrait of the Church and the faith of the Church. One thinks for example of Thomas Ken and John Keble as well as, closer to our own day, Gregory Dix and Eric Mascall. These are separated doctors in whom the Church of Rome can recognise the overwhelming preponderance of the apostolic patrimony she has received. Your task is now not only the negative one of defending their work but the positive one of completing it. The Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council makes this clear. The purpose of the Ecumenical Movement is not to arrive at a lowest common denominator Christianity. It is to restore the integrity of Christendom on the basis of the total revelation given to the Church by Christ and daily rendered a living reality by the Holy Spirit.

Inevitably, I had to refer to the delicacy of this project. Through the instrumentality of ARCIC, the Anglican Roman Catholic

[23] J. Baker (ed.), *Consecrated Women? A. Contribution to the Women Bishops' Debate* (Norwich 2004).

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International Commission, the Catholic Church has been engaged for the last forty years in a bilateral dialogue with the Anglican Communion as a whole. At one time, great expectations were placed on this dialogue. It was thought at Rome to be the one dialogue which might actually lead to organic reunion. One has the impression that bishops and archbishops were selected by the Holy See for the Church in England by the criterion, in part, of how warmly they would collaborate in that process. That is true most obviously of the present Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who was for a time the Catholic co-chairman of those negotiations. Many English Anglicans and a few English Catholics knew that owing to the comprehensiveness of Anglicanism it was never going to work but until recently it was – and in some quarters no doubt still is – politically incorrect to say so. Certainly it is true that on any showing the Church of England will remain for any British Christian of whatever type an important part of the landscape to which some relation must be worked out. That is not to say that the hind can embrace the panther as a whole. The problem now is not only historic comprehensiveness or increasingly anarchic moral inclusivity, it is also the arrangements made recently for ministerial exchange with Continental Lutherans and, mediately, the Reformed. Hopefully, what I said was not so coded that it failed to strike home at all. It went like this:

> We know how delicate in practice is the ecumenical path we tread. There is in England a wider Anglicanism with less of a common mind than yours and yet a crucial national role to play in sustaining what remains of a Christian culture in this land. We can think of this as the Anglican Thames, sweeping down to the Westminster of Parliament, to Whitehall and beyond, out to the North Sea and the entrances to the Baltic and the Rhine where the national churches of the Lutheran Reformation have their homes. The ecumenical conversations between this Anglicanism and the Catholic Church will inevitably be long and arduous.

'But then', I went on:

> there is also another Anglicanism, more restricted in size but at the same time more compact and coherent in doctrinal outlook and sacramental practice. Perhaps for those of you who know Oxfordshire this is not the Thames but the Thame, a river without ocean-going pretensions, with clearer water, more at home in its historic landscape which is still the country Alfred and St Edmund of Abingdon would have recognised, not to mention Dr Pusey. This is the Anglicanism that looks to pre-Reformation Christendom, to the apostolic see of the West and, further afield, to those of the East. It is an Anglicanism that has already received much from the Latin Catholic inheritance, liturgically and otherwise. It is an Anglicanism too that has often nurtured the hope of restoring union with the patriarchal church of the West from which it was

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> sundered. . . With this other Anglicanism the ecumenical road is, by any reasonable assessment, shorter and more secure.

Naturally, this particular way of putting things was tailor-made for people in England, but the general issue – how to deal simultaneously both with a wider communion, with which one wants at any rate peaceable and friendly relations, and a narrower body within that communion, with which one seeks actual ecclesial unity – could crop up almost anywhere.

VII. Conclusion

In my conclusion I ask, how might the way to union with such smaller bodies — the way of Uniatism, in a word — be 'shorter and more secure'? What are its chances of success, and what the pitfalls on its way? Speaking from a Roman Catholic standpoint, this question falls in one sense outside our responsibility to answer. It is up to bodies like the Polish National Catholic Church, emerging from the Union of Utrecht, the Nordic Catholic Church, emerging from the Lutheran Church of Norway, the Continuing Churches of the wider Anglicanism and the free Province of St Augustine of Canterbury which Forward in Faith may or may not succeed in establishing to decide what it is they ask of Rome, whether by 'Rome' we mean the Catholic Church generally or the Holy See. We can, however, take steps to prepare for a response from our own side.

1 Firstly, it should hardly need to be said that groups seeking Catholic communion but retaining a distinctive ecclesial life must manifest that desire for communion by a willingness to find in and as the Word of God the doctrine of the Catholic Church in its entirety – everything taught by Peter. If you want the communion of Peter, you must have Peter's faith. This is a *sine qua non*, and needs to be recognised as such.
2 Secondly, if we take the model of the Eastern Catholic Churches, which is the only model for Churches united but not absorbed that we have, we need to say that petitioning groups must be able to specify what it is about their distinctive patrimony that they wish to safeguard through having what used to be called a 'ritual Church' of their own and in the present Codes of Canon Law is termed a Church *sui juris*, which I think should be translated 'by its own right' rather than 'with its own law'. Anglican Catholics need to specify what it is theologically, liturgically, spiritually, that it would be both legitimate and desirable to retain in communion with Rome. This is a particular difficulty for English Anglo-Papalists who are already what one

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well-known representative of their number described to me as 'Roman-rite Anglicans'. The *Book of Divine Worship* produced for the Anglican Use parishes in the United States is a start here – though it may not be easy to commend it to the leadership of Forward in Faith UK, whose view of anything connected with the Prayer Book tends to be 'We can't go back to that'. Archbishop John Hepworth, the Primate of the Traditional Anglican Communion, has called it at least in private a basis for a definitive book. One reason for regarding it as not yet definitive are the criticisms put forward by well-informed orthodox-minded Latin-rite Catholics who point to the desirability of some further fine-tuning of the Cranmerian texts it includes.[24] At the meeting I attended in Arlington, Texas, the Revd David Moyer, who, controversially, was ordained a suffragan bishop in the Australian Diocese of the Murray by bishops of the Traditional Anglican Communion in a ceremony in his own embattled parish church in Philadelphia, spoke of the need for at least one theological college which would cultivate a distinctively Anglican Catholic ethos as well as for a married presbyterate and episcopate. I doubt myself that Rome would permit a married episcopate except possibly by way of dispensation for a single sacramental generation, but the theological college would certainly be indispensable. There must be some way of transmitting a tradition with a small 't' within the Tradition with a capital 'T'. One cannot be forever living from hand to mouth. That is already a problem even now for the Anglican Use parishes of the Pastoral Provision since despite the word 'provision' no provision has been made for a future supply of pastors willing and able to lead their parishes on the basis of the Anglican Use. As I see it, such a College would take for its textbooks not only Roman Catholic works of impeccable orthodoxy but also *within that framework* Anglican 'classics' any deficiencies in whose doctrinal understanding would be catered for in advance through contextualisation by Catholic works.

3 All this would have to be presented prudently to the wider Catholic public. It can certainly be pointed out that the Second Vatican Council goes out of its way, in the Decree on Ecumenism, to give a special place to Anglicanism among the ecclesial communities that emerged from the Church crisis of the sixteenth century, and assurances that whatever is valid in the patrimony of Anglican worship, thought and spirituality, could be preserved in Catholic unity have

[24] See R. I. Williams, *The Book of Divine Worship. A Catholic Critique* (Bangor is y Coed, 2004) for details. I disagree with Mr Williams inasmuch as he objects to any use of Cranmerian paraphrases or compositions on principle; I would defend it on the patristic principle of 'despoiling the Egyptians'.

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been forthcoming, if in very general terms, from post-Conciliar popes. Places to look would be, for instance, the speeches of Paul VI at the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales and of John Paul II on his visit to Canterbury Cathedral.

St Thomas Aquinas, when speaking of the variety of Religious Orders in the Church, liked to cite the psalm which, in its Latin version, describes the Church as *circumdata varietate*, surrounded by variety. The pains and purgatories of the post-Conciliar period have taught us to treat 'variety' with some caution, since pluralism comes in two forms, the legitimate and the anarchic. But an Anglican Uniate body, defined with discernment and sensitivity, could I believe join the ranks of the Churches *sui juris* which give Catholicism an indispensable dimension of its plenary or holistic quality.*

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