



Anglican Church in America

(Traditional Anglican Communion)

Diocese of the Northeast

The Rt. Rev. Brian R. Marsh, Bishop

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October 22, 2009

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Many of you are no doubt aware of the recent news, news that made the front page of the New York Times last Wednesday and has been widely reported in the press since then. In that very prominent article, Cardinal William J. Levada was quoted as saying that Anglicans would be able "to enter full communion with the Catholic Church while preserving elements of the distinctive Anglican spiritual and liturgical patrimony." Needless to say, this is an extraordinary development in the life and witness of both Anglicans and Roman Catholics worldwide. The letter from the Holy See expresses generosity toward Anglicans while recognizing the ultimate goal of intercommunion, a goal the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion has worked patiently toward.

Many of us have been answering phone calls and email messages virtually nonstop since this news broke. In all cases, these conversations and communications lean toward one fundamental question: "what does this mean for me and my church?" For the time being, there are and will be no changes at all. Our structures haven't changed, our worship services and pastoral care will continue as they always have. The only thing, in fact, that has changed is that we have received an affirmative letter from the Holy See, a letter that holds out the promise of greater unity for our church. Our next step will be to study the Apostolic Constitution that has been developed for the purpose of providing a structure to any intercommunion arrangement. The House of Bishops has agreed to give "serious, prayerful reflection" to this document once we receive it.

We all need to pray as well. We must offer our prayers to God for guidance and I ask your prayers for us all; prayers for the unity of the church, prayers for our Anglican traditions and prayers that we may all exercise the discernment to see God's will. I also ask that passages from St. John's gospel that we hold so dear (St. John 17 vv. 20-26) be read on this Sunday and for the next four weeks at an appropriate place in our worship services. May this help to bring us to a clearer understanding of God's will for all of us.

At this moment, we have received a message. It is a message of hope and encouragement. While it is a glorious moment in time, we must remember that it is a moment only. There are many more steps that we must take,

many more decisions we must reach and many prayers that must be prayed before we attain that final goal of intercommunion, where we may all be unified once again in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church where God wishes us to be.

Faithfully,

+Brian

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