

# ***Drawing Aside the Purple Curtain***

***The Papal System Today: an Analysis of the News***

## **From the Thames to the Tiber**

***Rome Builds a Bridge for Anglicans to Cross Over***

**by Shaun Willcock**

### ***Benedict's New Offensive***

Ecumenical relations between the Roman Catholic and the Anglican institutions have been progressing for decades. Much ground has been gained by Rome, at Canterbury's expense. But now the pope of Rome has boldly and aggressively marched right into the Anglican ranks and made them an offer many will find difficult to refuse. On October 20, 2009, Benedict XVI made it possible for groups of traditionalist Anglicans to convert to Rome while still retaining many of their distinctive Anglican traditions!

Over the years, many traditionalist Anglicans have approached the Vatican expressing their disillusionment with the "progressive" bent of the modern Anglican institution, many of whom have left Anglicanism and already consider themselves to be Roman Catholics at heart, but have not found an official home within the Roman Catholic institution. Romish cardinal, William Levada, the Vatican's chief doctrinal official, essentially the Inquisitor General as he heads the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – formerly the Inquisition which, it must be remembered, Benedict himself headed before becoming pope of Rome – said at a news conference when this plan was announced: "Those Anglicans who have approached the Holy See have made clear their desire for full, visible unity in the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. At the same time, they have told us of the importance of their Anglican traditions of spirituality and worship for their faith journey."<sup>1</sup> He declined to give figures on how many such requests the Vatican had received, or how many Anglicans the Vatican anticipated would take advantage of the new structures.

He also said: "The initiative has come from a number of different groups of Anglicans. They have declared that they share the common Catholic faith as it is expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and accept the Petrine ministry as something Christ willed for the Church. For them, the time has come to express this implicit unity in the visible form of full communion."<sup>2</sup>

He said, "It has always been the principal aim – the principal aim – to achieve the full, visible unity" of the Roman Catholic and Anglican "churches". But because of such issues as the Anglican ordination of women and acceptance of homosexuality, the prospect of full unity "seemed to recede."<sup>3</sup>

This new move is a major assault on the Anglican institution by the Roman Antichrist, and needs to be properly understood. But first, there is a need for some background information:

### ***A Brief Background: Infiltration and Ecumenism***

At the time of the Protestant Reformation, England was Roman Catholic; but political maneuvering and intrigue brought about a break with Rome and the establishment of the so-called "Church of England", or Anglican "Church". This was far from being a biblical church. In many respects it was simply a modified version of Roman Catholicism. Instead of the pope of Rome being its head, the English monarch was established in his place – which was totally unbiblical. Doctrinally it retained such Popish errors as baptismal regeneration, a priesthood, etc., and it also retained the persecuting spirit of its mother. It was truly a "daughter" of the Mother Harlot of Rome (Rev. 17:5). Nevertheless, as long as this state of things continued, Rome could never be in full control of England. And for this reason Anglicanism has been a particular target of the Vatican ever since then. Jesuit secret agents were

sent in to infiltrate and then undermine the Anglican institution from within, gradually turning it Romeward again. The nineteenth-century “Oxford Movement” was a major Romeward movement within the Anglican institution, led by Anglo-Catholic priests who desired to deceptively move Anglicanism back into the Roman fold.<sup>4</sup> And by the middle of the twentieth century huge progress had been made, with large numbers of Anglican priests decidedly sympathetic to the Roman Catholic religion, many of them even being closet Papists themselves. And at the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, its “Decree on Ecumenism” pushed the ecumenical movement even further, by stating that “Among those [religious communions] in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.”

As further background to this latest Papal move, I quote from my book, *Satan’s Seat*:

“One of Rome’s primary objectives has been the conquest of England. To achieve this, it was necessary to destroy the Anglican denomination, the so-called ‘Church of England’. The Jesuits did their work well: the ‘Romeward Movement’ within Anglicanism gained momentum through the 19th century, and into the 20th; and then came Vatican II, which gave it a massive boost.

“In 1966, Pope Paul VI and the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury decided to begin ‘dialogue’, the objective being to establish ‘unity’. The first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was established in 1969 to study the issues involved. Its final report was published in 1982. That same year, ARCIC II was established. As a result of these commissions, tremendous progress was made towards ‘unity’ (in reality, the *absorption* of the Anglican denomination into the Roman Catholic Institution).

“In 1980, the Queen of England visited the pope, and approved of the Ecumenical Movement. And in 1982, John Paul II visited Britain! He called the Anglicans his ‘brothers and sisters’, saying he loved and *longed* for them, and he referred to the years since the Reformation as ‘sad years of division’!

“His visit to Britain did wonders for the Ecumenical Movement. It was the first time a pope of Rome had ever visited that country; and the ‘Protestants’ accepted it. Today the Anglican denomination is committed to ‘unity’ with Rome. Roman Catholics and Anglicans are looking upon one another as ‘fellow Christians’, and many ‘Protestants’ are regretting that the Reformation ever took place...

“In November 1986, the General Synod of the ‘Church of England’ endorsed ARCIC documents which envisaged the pope as ‘Universal Primate’ in a union between Romanism and Anglicanism. Thus another step forward was taken.... The Anglican denomination is clearly well on the way to ‘unity’ with the Mother of harlots and abominations.”<sup>5</sup>

Since then, even more ecumenical progress has been made, as Anglicanism has continued to weaken and Romanism has surged ahead in England. But even so, there have been some major setbacks for “unity”, in particular Anglicanism’s acceptance of women and sodomite priests. When the Anglican general synod voted to permit women priests back in 1992, over 400 Anglican priests left the “Church of England”, with many of them joining Rome.

Nevertheless, despite these serious setbacks, the “unity” talks continued.

### ***A New Structure for Anglicans to Find a Home Within the “Church” of Rome***

But now, Benedict XVI has gone on the offensive, and has come up with a plan to make it easier for conservative Anglicans worldwide, disillusioned with their “church’s” stance permitting female priests, sodomite bishops and the blessing of “same-sex” unions, and permitting many of its bishops to deny such doctrines as the bodily resurrection of Christ and the virgin birth, to join the Roman Catholic “Church” while still maintaining their beloved Anglican spiritual and liturgical traditions, via new ecclesiastical structures. These will be called Personal Ordinariates, and will be established within local Roman Catholic churches, headed by former Anglican prelates who will provide spiritual care for Anglicans who wish to become Roman Catholics. They would resemble Roman Catholic military ordinariates, which are special units of the “Church” established in most countries to provide spiritual care for Roman Catholic members of the armed forces.<sup>6</sup>

Rome does not permit its priests to marry, whereas Canterbury does. However, married Anglican priests, and even seminarians, would, according to this new canonical provision, be allowed to become Roman Catholic priests. This would be similar to the way “eastern-rite” priests in communion with Rome are permitted to be married. Married priests are already permitted to become Romish priests, but

only on a case-by-case basis. This new structure would for the first time permit groups of married Anglican priests to join Rome. However, married Anglican bishops would not be allowed to become Roman Catholic bishops. When asked at the press conference where Rome's new tactic was announced whether or not a married Anglican bishop who becomes a Roman Catholic could become a married Roman Catholic bishop, Levada replied, "This does not provide for married bishops, respecting the long historical tradition of both the West and the East in which bishops were celibate. As for priests, many are asking, if these married Anglicans can be [Roman Catholic] priests, what about us? The Church has now, over the past number of years, dispensed [in the case of married Anglican priests who become Roman Catholics] from the discipline that only unmarried men can be Catholic priests. When the Church deals with these cases, it is an exception".<sup>7</sup> In other words, at this stage it would permit married Anglican priests to become Romish priests, but not married bishops.

### ***Rome's Strategy: to Absorb Traditionalist Anglicans***

Truly, as Austen Ivereigh, a former advisor to the Roman Catholic archbishop of Westminster, said, the Vatican announcement was historic because it allowed for the "*gradual absorption into the Catholic Church* of huge numbers of Anglicans".<sup>8</sup> This most definitely is the objective. Damian Thompson, a religion writer for the Telegraph Media Group put it like this: "New era begins as Benedict throws open gates of Rome to disaffected Anglicans." He wrote, "This is astonishing news. Pope Benedict XVI has created an entirely new Church structure for disaffected Anglicans that will allow them to worship together – using elements of Anglican liturgy – under the pastoral supervision of their own specially appointed bishop or senior priest.... In theory, they can have their own married priests, parishes and bishops – and they will be free of liturgical interference by liberal Catholic bishops who are unsympathetic to their conservative stance. There is even the possibility that married Anglican laymen could be accepted for ordination on a case-by-case basis – a remarkable concession."<sup>9</sup>

Remarkable indeed. In fact, everything about this papal step is remarkable, and a clear indication of just how badly Rome wants to draw Anglican elements under its wing. This is very important to it, as a major step in the direction of eventually controlling England once again.

Thompson also wrote: "The truth is that Rome has given up on the Anglican Communion. With one announcement, the Pope has given conservative Anglicans a protected route to union with Rome.... Thousands of Anglicans who reject women bishops and priests and liberal teaching on homosexuality are certain to avail themselves of this provision." He is wrong in thinking that Rome has given up on Anglicanism – it is more a case of Rome being frustrated at the increasingly liberal bent of Anglicanism and therefore deciding to move faster; but ecumenical attempts to re-absorb Anglicanism will continue. Thompson is right, however, when he says that this opens up an easy path for disaffected Anglicans, perhaps in their thousands, to come into union with Rome.

The fact is, the worldwide Anglican institution is in deep, deep trouble. It has become extremely liberal, extremely politically correct, jettisoning many of its doctrines, ordaining women and sodomites as priests, etc. It is, truly, unravelling, as I showed in my article, *The Anglican Institution Continues to Unravel – and Rome Benefits*.<sup>10</sup> This is exactly what Jesuit moles within the Anglican institution sought to accomplish, and they have succeeded. And now along comes Rome, looking to the blinded masses as if it is rock-solid and steady, never changing, and offering the traditionalists a home. It is an extremely clever move.

### ***Rome's Secrecy and Haste While Bypassing the Ecumenicals***

It was immediately apparent that this Vatican announcement was made over the heads even of Roman Catholic officials involved in ecumenical relations with Anglicanism. For not one man from the Vatican's ecumenical office on relations with Anglicans attended the news conference where Romish cardinal Levada made this announcement. For example, German cardinal, Walter Kasper, head of the Vatican's Council for Promoting Christian Unity, nominally in charge for many years of Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenical dialogue, was noticeably absent. Levada claimed that these men had been invited, but that they were all away from Rome at the time. That was a very lame excuse. Why could the announcement not have been delayed until they all got back? Why the sudden rush to make the announcement? It was all kept under wraps until the very last moment. Usually the Vatican gives a

week's advance notice to journalists of any upcoming press conference, but not this time – the conference was announced via a cellphone text message from Jesuit priest Federico Lombardi, the Vatican's press director, sent to journalists' cellphones only at 5.00pm the day before.<sup>11</sup>

And the timing of the announcement was precisely co-ordinated between Rome and London: in Rome on October 20, at 11.00am, the Inquisitor General, Romish cardinal William Levada, and the archbishop Joseph Augustine Di Noia, Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, held a press conference to announce this unprecedented move on Rome's part. At exactly the same hour in London, a parallel press conference was held by Romish archbishop Vincent Nichols, head of the "Church" of Rome in England, and Anglican archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, head of the "Church of England".<sup>12</sup>

In addition, although the conference was called to present the text of the new document, it was not actually presented. The document was announced, but no copies were handed out as it was not actually completed.<sup>13</sup> It was not, in fact, published until November 9 – many days later!

Precisely why Benedict felt the need to move with such urgency and speed was not exactly clear, not even to seasoned Roman Catholic Vatican-watchers. One of them, Robert Moynihan, editor of *Inside the Vatican*, wrote: "What is going on? Why the evident haste to make this announcement? Why go ahead and hold a press conference about a document before the document is finalized? Is someone trying to 'steal a march' on someone? It would seem so. But who is hurrying, and why? Is it the Pope himself? If so, why? I don't know."<sup>14</sup>

It was all very cloak-and-dagger. As Moynihan summarised it: "the announcement was made in an almost off-hand way, at a last-minute press conference, announced without any description of its content, at 5 pm yesterday, allowing no time for journalists to prepare questions, and without the presence of any Anglicans who might have answered questions from their perspective, and with the text itself still unfinished."<sup>15</sup>

### ***Sidelining, Undermining and Humiliating the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury***

It was also apparent that the Anglican archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, spiritual head of the world's Anglicans, was caught by surprise by this Vatican announcement. It had clearly been a decision made without consulting him. In fact, Levada visited Williams only the day before to explain to him what the announcement would mean. Levada then flew back to Rome at midnight, to be there in time for the morning press conference at which the announcement was made. This again shows that Benedict was acting with extreme haste and urgency. The decision was clearly taken over the heads of both Williams and even Nichols.<sup>16</sup>

In their joint statement, Nichols and Williams tried to do damage control, saying the Vatican decision to offer Anglicans a home "brings to an end a period of uncertainty" for Anglicans wishing to join Rome, and saying that the decision could not have been made had there not been fruitful dialogue between the two: "The ongoing official dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion provides the basis for our continuing co-operation," the statement said. Williams, attempting to downplay the significance of this Vatican move, said it was not a Vatican commentary on Anglican problems. "It has no negative impact on the relations of the [Anglican] communion as a whole to the Roman Catholic Church as a whole," he said.<sup>17</sup> But none of this was fooling anyone. The bottom line is that Rowan Williams was treated as the junior partner that he is. He was sidelined. Williams' own representative in Rome, David Richardson, admitted that the Vatican decision was "surprising", considering that in the past Rome had welcomed individual Anglicans into its fold without creating parallel structures for entire groups of Anglicans. He told the Associated Press, "The two questions I would like to ask are 'why this and why now'. Why the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [it used to be called the Inquisition! – *Shaun Willcock*] has decided to embrace that particular method remains unclear to me."<sup>18</sup>

That Rowan Williams felt humiliated is beyond question. He wrote an emotional letter to the Anglican priesthood of England expressing what he felt about the Vatican announcement. It read: "The Vatican has announced today that Pope Benedict XVI has approved an 'Apostolic Constitution' (a formal papal decree) which will make some provisions for groups of Anglicans... who wish to be received into communion with the See of Rome in such a way that they can retain aspects of Anglican liturgical and



spiritual tradition. I am sorry that there has been no opportunity to alert you earlier to this; I was informed of the planned announcement at a very late stage, and we await the text of the Apostolic Constitution itself and its code of practice in the coming weeks. But I thought I should let you know the main points of the response I am making in our local English context – in full consultation with Roman Catholic bishops in England and Wales – in the hope of avoiding any confusion or misrepresentation.”<sup>19</sup>

“It is understood that leading members of the council [the Vatican Council for Promoting Christian Unity] and other senior Anglican and Catholic figures tried desperately to block the decree,” wrote Ruth Gledhill, the religion correspondent of the *Times* of London.<sup>20</sup> This behind-the-scenes attempt to prevent the decree from being announced was also reported by Damian Thompson of the Telegraph Media Group. He wrote: “This from a good source in Rome: apparently both Lambeth Palace [Anglicanism’s “HQ”] and elements in the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity were ‘implacably opposed’ to Pope Benedict XVI’s dramatic new arrangements for Anglicans. The source also reports speculation that Archbishop Rowan Williams put pressure on Vatican ecumenists to stop the Apostolic Constitution being issued.”<sup>21</sup> All to no avail; Rome forged ahead anyway.

Without question this tactical Vatican move greatly undermines Rowan’s authority as the Anglican archbishop of Canterbury. “He has been undermined. He now faces the unenviable prospect of an increasing fragmentation of Anglicanism and a severely attenuated state of Anglican-Catholic relations.”<sup>22</sup>

Privately, many Anglicans attacked Williams for capitulating to the Vatican, with some even calling for his resignation. It is true that he could not have done anything to prevent the Vatican going this route and making its announcement, but they were angry with him for his damage-control joint statement with the Romish archbishop of Westminster.<sup>23</sup>

Williams travelled to the Vatican in late November to meet with Benedict; but it was merely reported that the private audience, at which the recent events were discussed, included “cordial discussions” at which they reiterated the shared will to continue with the ecumenical relationship between Papists and Anglicans.<sup>24</sup> All very calm and collected, hiding the very real tension there must have been.

### ***Benedict’s Plan***

Plainly Benedict plans to employ a two-pronged offensive against the Anglican institution in the future: the first being the ecumenical movement, which will continue despite setbacks, the long-term objective being to eventually absorb the “Church of England” into the Roman Catholic institution; but the second being to *immediately* provide a door for disillusioned, traditionalist Anglicans (as opposed to liberal ones) to cross over to Rome without waiting for the ecumenical Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue to reach that point, which (because of all the setbacks) could be still far in the future. In this way the Anglican institution will be weakened still further, by the defection of disillusioned priests and people, making it increasingly difficult for what is left of Anglicanism to hold out against the might of Rome, causing it to either be absorbed, or to fracture and disintegrate eventually; Rome’s grip on England itself will tighten; and thus short-term results will be achieved long before the ecumenical movement ever reaches its climax in bringing the rest of Anglicanism within the Roman fold.

The truth is that Benedict is not like his predecessor, John Paul II. John Paul was an ecumenist, Benedict is far less of one. For him, ecumenism is not the most important thing. He wants to see Rome absorb all other religious institutions, just as John Paul did, but if he can do it without waiting for the ecumenical movement to take its course, then he will happily do so. He has far less patience with the slow dialogue of ecumenism, which takes many years and in the end often achieves very little. He wants “Christian unity” (i.e. Roman Catholic absorption of all other “churches”) but he wants it now.

In addition to desiring to absorb Anglicanism, Rome desires to control England; and this is a major step in that direction, given the prominence of the Anglican institution in the life of the nation and the serious consequences if it were to disintegrate or to be absorbed by Rome. As Andrew Rabel, a Roman Catholic journalist in Australia, wrote after the Vatican document was published: “England has long been called Mary’s Dowry. But a secularized nation and church have caused this gift to be taken from her. *She wants it back, and this is the start.*” (Emphasis added).<sup>25</sup> Rome has drooled over reclaiming England ever since the Reformation. It (not Mary!) has always wanted it back. Indeed, this move by Benedict is a major offensive against England itself in the long run, not just the Anglican institution.

## ***Traditionalist Anglicans Look to Rome***

Just how many Anglicans will take advantage of this new structure and formally move over into the “Church” of Rome? It is difficult to say, although the potential for thousands to do so is certainly there. Levada himself played the numbers down, stating that he believed the number of Anglican bishops who cross over might be in the 20s or 30s, and hundreds of Anglican “laypeople”. When a journalist at the press conference asked him, “This is all rather vague. What type of numbers are we talking about here?” he replied, “If we have been vague, then so be it.”<sup>26</sup> Clearly he was hedging. Rome might, to placate worried Anglicans, publicly state that perhaps only a few hundred would actually join, but secretly it would be wishing for thousands, even tens of thousands.

The Anglican archbishop in charge of a group called the Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC), John Hepworth, received a special briefing before the press conference. The TAC had formally requested to join Rome in 2007. Its members would be attracted by the new structure Rome has created. Hepworth welcomed the Vatican announcement, saying, “This is a moment of grace, perhaps even a moment of history, not because the past is undone but because the past is transformed.”<sup>27</sup>

Other traditionalist Anglican movements, such as Forward in Faith, would in all likelihood also be attracted by it. It consists of sixteen member churches throughout the world, with about 400 000 members, many of them in Africa; and is opposed to the ordination of women and active homosexuals within the Anglican institution.<sup>28</sup> And its chairman, John Broadhurst, Anglican bishop of Fulham, called the announcement a “decisive moment” and predicted that, based on his own group’s membership, up to 1000 Anglican “clergy” could leave Anglicanism and join Rome.<sup>29</sup> The organisation a little later spoke of Rome’s “generosity” in opening a path for them to join it. Broadhurst said, “This is a struggle for the truths of the Gospel.”<sup>30</sup> Well, no, actually, for neither Romanism nor Anglicanism hold to or proclaim the Gospel. Forward in Faith may be opposed to female and sodomite ordination, but in other matters it is far from biblical. The very fact that it welcomes Rome’s announcement shows that it is Anglo-Catholic in doctrine, not biblical. Broadhurst noted the dismay of many Anglicans when the “Church of England” decided to ordain women, and he said that while Anglican bishops were deaf to these concerns, the “Bishop of Rome” had heard them.

## ***The Issue of Priestly Celibacy***

Ironically, Benedict’s attempt to woo conservative Anglo-Catholics into the Roman fold may in the long run end up liberalising Rome’s own approach to a doctrine it has doggedly maintained in the face of centuries of criticism: priestly celibacy. For Anglican priests are usually married men. And if they are permitted to come over into Rome and become Roman Catholic priests even though they remain married, then obviously celibate Roman Catholic priests are going to start wondering why they cannot marry as well: why, they will ask, must we take a vow of celibacy, and yet one can become an Anglican priest first, get married, and then convert to Rome and remain as a married Roman Catholic priest? Why the double standard?

There are what are called “eastern rite” Catholics, and they have always been married men. But now, for the first time, there will be a structure within what is called the Latin rite, or the western rite, which will allow married priests.

It raises the possibility of a Roman Catholic man, wanting to become a priest but not wanting to remain celibate, first becoming an Anglican, then becoming a married Anglican priest, and then rejoining the Roman Catholic “Church” within this new Anglican structure as a married Roman Catholic priest. Vatican spokesman, Jesuit priest Federico Lombardi, dismissed the idea as a “trick”;<sup>31</sup> but in theory there is a very real possibility of men going this route in order to avoid the requirement of celibacy.

Austen Ivereigh, former advisor to Romish cardinal, Cormac Murphy O’Connor of Westminster, explained: “If you get used to the idea of your priests being married, then that changes the perception of the Catholic priesthood necessarily.” He said, “We face the prospect in the future of going to a Catholic church in London and it being normal to find a married Catholic priest celebrating at the altar, with his wife sitting in the third pew and his children running up and down the aisle.”<sup>32</sup>

It certainly would not be the present Roman pope’s intention to liberalise the doctrine of celibacy; but

when he is gone? Will Rome, once it cracks the door open in this way, be able to forever prevent it from being pushed wide open? And the question then is: would Rome in the long run be prepared to sacrifice its doctrine of priestly celibacy for what it would gain in doing so? For priestly celibacy is a major reason why fewer and fewer men are entering the Roman Catholic priesthood. And now, with the option of a married Anglican priest being permitted to become a Romish priest, it will make it even more difficult to justify the old doctrine.

There could, in fact, be very good reasons for eventually dropping the celibacy requirement, chief among them being that it would result in greater numbers of men entering the priesthood; lowering the number of sodomites who at present are a huge percentage of all priests (see my article, *Homosexuality in the Roman Catholic Priesthood*<sup>33</sup>); and hopefully (from Rome's perspective) reducing the number of child sex abuse cases that have done such harm to Rome's cause over the past few years.<sup>34</sup>

### ***The Official Text, and Rome's Concept of "Unity"***

The official text of the document itself was finally published on the 9th November – many days after the Vatican announcement about it had been made. It was entitled *Anglicanorum Coetibus* ("Groups of Anglicans"). It begins like this:

"In recent times the Holy Spirit has moved groups of Anglicans to petition repeatedly and insistently to be received into full Catholic communion individually as well as corporately. The Apostolic See has responded favourably to such petitions. Indeed, the successor of Peter, mandated by the Lord Jesus to guarantee the unity of the episcopate and to preside over and safeguard the universal communion of all the Churches, could not fail to make available the means necessary to bring this holy desire to realization."<sup>35</sup>

Note the wording carefully. First, it says *the Holy Spirit* has been moving Anglicans to seek full union with Rome. This immediately sends out the message that this Romeward movement is the work of the Holy Spirit, and that therefore for any Anglicans to say that it is merely the desire of various disgruntled Anglicans is to contradict the work of God Himself. Second, it states that the pope of Rome is Peter's successor and the legitimate, divinely-mandated Head of all Churches (see my article, *Rome Still Claims to be the One True Church*<sup>36</sup>). This sends out the message that to resist submission to the pope of Rome is to resist Christ Himself. A little later in the document this doctrine of Rome was restated, but it was added (quoting the Second Vatican Council) that "many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside her visible confines. Since these are gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, they are forces impelling towards Catholic unity."

On the day the document was released, the official Vatican press release stated: "This Apostolic Constitution opens a new avenue for the promotion of Christian unity while, at the same time, granting legitimate diversity in the expression of our common faith.... The provision of this new structure is consistent with the commitment to ecumenical dialogue, which continues to be a priority for the Catholic Church."<sup>37</sup> This was playing with words. How exactly the absorption of disgruntled Anglicans into the Roman fold "opens a new avenue for the promotion of Christian unity" was not said, nor indeed could it truthfully be said, for it simply does not. At least, it does not promote the "unity" which naive Protestant ecumenists understand by the term, i.e. a unity of "equals". It *does* promote Rome's understanding of "unity", i.e. *absorption*. It is an aggressive move on Rome's part, bypassing the ecumenical movement entirely. That is obvious to all who do not wear blinkers over their eyes. Rome might say that ecumenical dialogue remains a "priority", but this too is a smokescreen. Creating a structure to allow Anglicans to defect *en masse* to Rome is hardly "consistent with the commitment to ecumenical dialogue." It is all smoke and mirrors. But the naive will believe it, and not see what is really happening: Rome is on the offensive, and Anglicanism is crumbling before its onslaught.

### ***Rome Wins, Canterbury Loses***

This Vatican tactical move will yet further divide the already-tottering Anglican institution, reeling as it is from internal splits and divisions between conservatives and liberals. Rome is the real gainer here, Canterbury is the very obvious loser.

For those naive and foolish Anglicans and "Protestants" who believe in the ecumenical movement, and who think that it involves all "churches" on an equal footing, this should be a huge wake-up call. It

should reveal, as plain as day, that Rome's *real* goal in the ecumenical movement is nothing less than to draw all non-Papists back into the Roman fold. But, alas, although they *should* see it, most will not.

This latest papal move indicates that Rome under Benedict XVI is not going to be as ecumenically accommodating as it had been under John Paul II. If ecumenism does not move fast enough or achieve the desired results, Rome will make use of other, less friendly tactics to take control. It will still use ecumenism as well, but not solely. As journalist Damian Thompson put it, the professional ecumenists could not get the matter of unity between Rome and Canterbury right in decades; "So now Pope Benedict has opened up another route to unity: a high-speed bypass."<sup>38</sup> This is exactly what this is: a high-speed bypass, designed to bring Anglicans into the Roman fold as painlessly and swiftly as possible, leaving the worldwide Anglican institution in the hands of liberal leftists.

And in the process, Benedict is taking his abominable "Church" back into a more traditional position, from which it had emerged under John Paul II, Paul VI and John XXIII. Veteran Vatican reporter in Italy, Sandro Magister, said: "Today more than ever, with Joseph Ratzinger as pope, the ecumenical path seems not to be a march toward modernity, but a return to the land of tradition."<sup>39</sup> Benedict is bending over backwards to accommodate traditionalists, both within and without the "Church" of Rome, finding ways of bringing the traditionalists back into the fold of Rome, while pretty much ignoring the liberals. This can be seen, also, in his decision in January 2009 to revoke the excommunication of four schismatic bishops from the ultra-traditionalist Society of St. Pius X, including one who had denied the extent of the Holocaust. Benedict is holding talks with the group with the aim of bringing them back into subjection to Rome.

And all this shows just how very close to Romanism, doctrinally and practically, traditional Anglicanism is. That conservative Anglicans could leave, believing themselves to be Romanists at heart yet desiring to retain certain aspects of their Anglican faith, demonstrates that Anglicanism truly is a "daughter" of Rome. It is *not* a true Christian church and never has been. In the words of the joint statement issued by the Anglican archbishop of Canterbury and the Romish archbishop of Westminster after the Vatican announcement, Rome's provisions are a recognition of "*the substantial overlap in faith, doctrine and spirituality* between the Catholic Church and the Anglican tradition."<sup>40</sup> They are, essentially, one and the same.

And if indeed many, even eventually most, traditionalist Anglicans move across to Rome, what will be left behind? An Anglican institution that is extremely liberal, denying many doctrines Rome holds to be important, and practicing many things Rome rejects. This will make it even harder for Rome to maintain ecumenical overtures towards Anglicanism; but perhaps it is calculating that such a severely weakened Anglicanism will eventually be persuaded to turn from its errors and embrace Rome. Or perhaps, under Benedict, it just doesn't care about liberal Anglicanism and is prepared to sacrifice its ecumenical relations with it in order to seduce conservative Anglicans into its fold, believing a deeply fractured, liberal "Church of England" will eventually just disintegrate. Remember the words of the cardinal, Levada, quoted above, who said that although the aim has always been for full, visible unity, that prospect has "seemed to recede" in recent times with Anglicanism's ordination of women and homosexuals.

As Andrew Brown of the UK *Guardian* said, "One of the things that this development means is that the Roman Catholic church is no longer even pretending to take seriously the existence of the Anglican Communion as a coherent body."<sup>41</sup> Indeed. It appears Rome has realised that Anglicanism as a coherent body is finished, and it might as well do a deal with those traditionalist elements within it that are already in close affinity with Rome, and leave the liberals within it to their own devices.

### ***Rome: Reversing the Liberal Trend of Recent Years***

In all of this we see the true nature of Roman Catholicism. It is *not* naturally ecumenical; it does *not* truly believe that other "churches" are real churches, or that they are on an equal footing with itself; it believes them to be schismatics or heretics, and needing to be reconciled with Rome, i.e. absorbed by Rome. Since the Second Vatican Council, Rome has used the ecumenical movement to woo most "Protestant" and other institutions; but this was always nothing but a tactical accommodation so as to achieve its long-term goal. In truth, Rome despises all others and has no genuine love for ecumenism. Journalist Rachel Donadio, writing for the *New York Times*, put it correctly: "Many liberal Catholics in



the United States [and worldwide! – *Shaun Willcock*] lamented that the decision over the Anglicans again demonstrated that Benedict reached out only to the most conservative elements on the Catholic spectrum, not the more progressive ones. And many experts noted that the decision also reflected a similar tendency inside the Vatican: as in the case with the schismatic bishops, the arrangement with the Anglicans was hammered out by doctrinal offices, generally staffed by more conservative clergy, without close consultation with the office responsible for ecumenical dialogue, whose staff members tend to be more moderate. Many saw it as yet another sign that the true power of Benedict's papacy lies in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [the old Inquisition], which he oversaw for two decades before becoming pope."<sup>42</sup>

For Benedict, the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) needs to be reinterpreted so as to be understood in a more traditionalist, conservative Roman Catholic way. The fact is that Vatican II was established by a liberal pope, John XXIII, and gave huge impetus to liberals within Rome, causing immense confusion in the ranks of the millions of Roman Catholics worldwide as things they had believed and practiced for centuries seemed to be now overturned, all in a frantic effort to make Rome appear more attractive to both the world and to various "churches" and even other religions. Rome swings between a traditional and a liberal doctrinal stance, depending on which popes and cardinals are in charge at any given time. Under Pius XII during World War Two, it was doctrinally very traditionalist and conservative; under John XXIII it became much more liberal, and this continued under Paul VI and John Paul II. But Benedict, although politically a Socialist, is religiously a traditionalist. He has never been very comfortable with Vatican II or the way in which it was interpreted by liberal Papists. And now that he is pope he intends to swing Rome back, doctrinally, to a conservative, truly "Roman Catholic" (in his view) position.

### ***The Bigger Picture***

And, it seems in truth, there is something far bigger going on here; something in the ambitious, scheming mind of Benedict XVI that aims for something more, much more, than mere "Christian unity". Rome is well aware that there is a mighty clash of worldviews occurring in the world; a clash between "Christianity" (by which of course the Vatican means Roman Catholicism) and secularism, "Christianity" and Islam, "Christianity" and atheism. There is an ideological battle being fought, especially for the West, and Benedict – Inquisitor General that he once was<sup>43</sup> – sees this clearly. As far as he is concerned, it is a battle Rome *must* win. It must regain ground it has lost through the centuries since the Reformation, so as to combat the anti-Papist elements rising like a tide to engulf Roman Catholic Europe and the West. To win this war, Rome needs all the help it can get. Hence these recent extraordinary measures to suck in as many "Papists in heart" as it can. Veteran Roman Catholic journalist, Robert Moynihan, wrote in *Inside the Vatican*: "This activity [of Benedict's], occurring at an accelerating speed over recent months, looks almost like a 'rallying of the troops' before some final, decisive battle."<sup>44</sup> Coming from such a Roman Catholic source, these words are ominous!

Moynihan went on, by way of explanation: "Benedict is rallying his troops. He is trying to reunite all those factions and denominations and groups in the West that share common beliefs... And so he is doing his best, in what seems perhaps to be the 'twilight of the West,' to build an ark, centered in Rome, to which all those who share these beliefs about human dignity may repair.... Benedict, from his high room in the Apostolic Palace, seems to be trying to rally the West in the twilight of an age, so that what was best in the West [best for Rome, that is! – *Shaun Willcock*] may be preserved, and shine forth again after the struggles of our time are past." This is indeed his desire. He sees Rome as the salvation of the West, the great bulwark against all that threatens the West, the "One True Church" to which all men must belong. And he is going all out to place the Roman Catholic religion firmly at the world's centre stage, dominating all, controlling all.

### ***Conclusion***

Christians should be interested in these goings-on because of their significance in revealing the real nature of Romanism, Anglicanism, and the wolves in sheep's clothing who lead them. This kind of backstage intrigue, behind-the-scenes cloak-and-dagger carryings-on, are what one would expect from political institutions, not "churches". But that's just it: these are *not* churches of Christ, and their

leaders are *not* men of God. It is all about power.

Christians should take an active interest in these workings of Rome, because the religio-political institution that sits on the seven hills is working ceaselessly to rule the world – its ages-old desire. Every move it makes, every carefully-planned step, is another step towards that goal, which it always keeps in view. It is relentless.

Quite frankly, we don't care what happens to the Anglican institution, as an institution. The world will not be worse off should it fall apart. It is a false "church" and if it collapses, we will shed no tears. It is a daughter of the Romish Whore that has deceived multitudes of souls. But we do care for the souls of those within it, just as for those within the Roman Catholic institution. Confused by the bewildering changes going on within Anglicanism worldwide, their faith being in their "church" rather than in Christ, these poor people are lost, and as they cast about for some solidity, something sure and certain, increasingly their eyes fix on Rome. And truly, should they go over to it, they would have become twofold more the children of hell than before.

And so, disillusioned Anglo-Catholics will make their weary way from the Thames to the Tiber; from Canterbury's confused leadership to the Vatican's perceived rock-solid foundation. Canterbury is the loser; the Great Whore on the seven-hilled city is the winner, yet again.

February 2010

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