



## WATCH TRAINING DAY

### **Principles drawn up by a joint Affirming Catholicism/WATCH working party according to which the Church of England can and should proceed to the ordination of women as bishops:**

#### **A How the Church should proceed in consecrating women bishops**

1. The Church of England is competent to make the decision to ordain women as bishops. This principle is enshrined in the Canons of the Church of England.<sup>[1]</sup> Further, the Lambeth Conference has recognised that Provinces of the Anglican Communion are competent to move on the question of the ordination of women to all stages of the three-fold ministry when the time seems right to each Province.<sup>[2]</sup>
2. Legislation must express the Church's joyful acceptance of the decision to ordain women as bishops, whilst making suitable pastoral provision for those who continue to have difficulties with the ordained ministry of women.
3. There may therefore be no discrimination in the enabling Measure. The historic and catholic identity of episcopal ministry and office must be retained, and all women and men who are appointed as bishop must have the same authority and responsibilities.
4. Pastoral provision for those who have private reservations about the ordained ministry of women can – and should – be made, but such provision should not create structures which undermine the catholic order of the church or suggest ambivalence about the Church's decision to admit women to the threefold ministry.<sup>[3]</sup>
5. If pastoral provision is to have the force of law, it must be enshrined in secondary legislation or in an enforceable, statutory code of practice. Provision should be made for alleged breaches of such secondary legislation / statutory code of practice to be referred to an independent body (to be defined in law) for mediation (in which the agreement of both parties would be binding) or arbitration (in which a decision would be imposed on both parties).<sup>[4]</sup>
6. The process of reception should be recognised as the means by which the Church enters into the fullness of its joyful acceptance of women's ministry; it is not a continuing process of judging the rightness of the decision. The pastoral provision must be drafted on this basis.
7. There can be no amendment to Canon A4. That is, "those who are made, ordained or consecrated bishops, priests or deacons" according to the ordinal and by a bishop of the Church of England are "to be accounted, both by themselves and others, to be truly bishops, priests or deacons." Consequently, there can be no re-ordination of a priest or deacon ordained by a bishop of the Church of England who subsequently moves to another Diocese; similarly there can be no re-confirmation.

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[1] See especially Canon A6.

[2] Lambeth Conference 1978; Resolution 21.

[3] Cf. Guildford Report, § 130.

[4] Putting the detail of the arrangements for the exercise of Episcopal authority in the Code or into secondary legislation keeps these discriminatory provisions out of primary legislation. The Measure can then be short and simple. This approach also gives Synod the necessary power to deal with this matter without reference to Parliament. It would also put these provisions on a firmer legal footing than the existing Act of Synod given that the 1993 Measures on the ordination of women to the priesthood do not mention the Act.

## **B. How the Church should make pastoral provision for those with private reservations about the ordination of women**

1. The pastoral provision may not create a parallel jurisdiction of those who are not prepared to accept the ordained ministry of women, but must seek the highest possible degree of communion together with the highest possible degree of permeability.
2. The pastoral provision must not give rise to a 'theology of taint' whereby opponents of women clergy are able to declare themselves out of communion even with those male clergy who have shared a sacramental ministry with ordained women.
3. Arrangements requiring ordained women to exercise pastoral sensitivity towards those who are opposed must be balanced by reciprocal arrangements requiring pastoral sensitivity from those who are opposed.
4. With respect to Dioceses and Diocesan structures, the pastoral provisions must maintain the integrity of the Diocese as the fundamental unit of the Church.
5. The bishop is and must be recognised to be Ordinary in his / her Diocese.
6. Any bishop who exercises a ministry specifically with respect to those opposed to ordained women's ministry must therefore share in the ministry of the Ordinary.
7. Any such bishop must accordingly work within and according to the policies and practices of the Diocese where he exercises that ministry.
8. In Dioceses where the Ordinary is opposed to the ordination of women and does not ordain women as priest and/or deacon, the interests of women priests and those who are supportive of the ministry of ordained women must have episcopal representation within the Diocese.
9. All bishops and all parishes of a Diocese must continue to be part of the same synodical structures (through which the ministry of oversight or episcopate is also exercised).

