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HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE STATEMENT ABOUT THE PERSONAL ORDINARIATE OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM IN ENGLAND AND WALES

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In accordance with the provisions of the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* of Pope Benedict XVI (November 4, 2009) and after careful consultation with the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has today erected a Personal Ordinariate within the territory of England and Wales for those groups of Anglican clergy and faithful who have expressed their desire to enter into full visible communion with the Catholic Church. The Decree of Erection specifies that the Ordinariate will be known as the *Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham* and will be placed under the patronage of Blessed John Henry Newman.

A Personal Ordinariate is a canonical structure that provides for corporate reunion in such a way that allows former Anglicans to enter full communion with the Catholic Church while preserving elements of their distinctive Anglican patrimony. With this structure, the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* seeks to balance on the one hand the concern to preserve the worthy Anglican liturgical, spiritual and pastoral traditions and, on the other hand, the concern that these groups and their clergy will be fully integrated into the Catholic Church.

For doctrinal reasons the Church does not, in any circumstances, allow the ordination of married men as Bishops. However, the Apostolic Constitution does provide, under certain conditions, for the ordination as Catholic priests of former Anglican married clergy. Today at Westminster Cathedral in London, the Most Reverend Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, ordained to the Catholic priesthood three former Anglican Bishops: Reverend Andrew Burnham, Reverend Keith Newton, and Reverend John Broadhurst.

Also today Pope Benedict XVI has nominated Reverend Keith Newton as the first Ordinary of the *Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham*. Together with Reverend Burnham and Reverend Broadhurst, Reverend Newton will oversee the catechetical preparation of the first groups of Anglicans in England and Wales who will be received into the Catholic Church together with their pastors at Easter, and to accompany the clergy preparing for ordination to the Catholic priesthood around Pentecost.

The provision of this new structure is consistent with the commitment to ecumenical dialogue, which continues to be a priority for the Catholic Church. The initiative leading to the publication of the Apostolic Constitution and the erection of this Personal Ordinariate came from a number of different groups of Anglicans who 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 now come to express this implicit unity in the visible form of full communion.

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