

Personal Ordinariates

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The Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* (AC), promulgated by the Holy Father Benedict XVI on the fourth of November 2009, establishes in canon law a new personal ecclesiastical circumscription: personal Ordinariates. This circumscription is on the whole similar to other personal circumscriptions that already exist in the Catholic Church – military Ordinariates, personal Prelatures, Ordinariates for the faithful of the Eastern rites –, but it is new on account of the “type” of factors that were taken into consideration when planning it and also, therefore, in the fundamental lines of its structure, which show the originality of the ecumenical horizon in which it is situated.

As a whole, the legislative provision is made up of two documents, which are interconnected but which have a different juridical value. The first is an apostolic constitution that establishes *ex novo* [from scratch] the structure of the personal Ordinate. This is a pontifical document of the highest level of canonical legislation, which is then developed in Complementary Norms (CN) of a lower level, approved by the Pope but promulgated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which will be the Dicastery entrusted with erecting the Ordinariates, with dictating the specific Complementary Norms of each Ordinate, and above all, with following over time the ordinary vicissitudes of the new Ordinariates, in a way similar to how the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (*Propaganda Fide*) follows the ecclesiastical circumscriptions located in mission territories.

1.– Important Priority of the Ecumenical Context

The principal dimension in which it is necessary to evaluate the provision that concerns us is, therefore, the ecumenical one. This statement serves both to recall the reasons that prompted it and the more significant contents of the pontifical document.

The establishment of personal Ordinariates is not an initiative that originally arose within the purview of the Catholic Church. It is rather the response of the Church “to the many requests that have been submitted to the Holy See from groups of Anglican clergy and faithful in different parts of the world who wish to enter into full visible communion”. This fact, confirmed both by the Catholic and the Anglican side, is important for understanding the provision in the ecumenical context. This is what emerges from the contextual presentation of the news given in Rome by the Prefect of the Congregation of the Faith and at the same time in London, with a joint statement issued by the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury and the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster.

The Prefect of the dicastery that for years has advanced the study of the question pointed out that this concrete gesture is the result of “trying to meet the requests for full communion that have come to us from Anglicans in different parts of the world in recent years in a uniform and equitable way. With the new juridical structure the Church wants to respond to the legitimate aspirations of these Anglican groups for full and visible unity with the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter”.

More generally, the recent Apostolic Constitution is a concrete result of the ecumenical dialogue that has progressed for years in an atmosphere of growing trust and hope. Therefore, in the present circumstances, it has opportunely been recalled how the conciliar decree on ecumenism sought to affirm that among the communities separated from the Catholic Church at the time of the

Reformation “in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place”.

The appreciation of the common patrimony of faith represents, as we will see, one of the important characteristics of the new provision. In this sense, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith expressed the hope that the Anglican clergy and faithful who desire union with the Catholic Church will find through the structure now prepared “the opportunity to preserve those Anglican traditions precious to them and consistent with the Catholic faith”.

The uniqueness of the Vatican response to all these requests is rooted in the possibility that is now open in an institutional manner to be able to achieve a “*corporate*” *incorporation* to the Church of Rome. Without prescinding, obviously, from the individual dimension that characterizes the act of faith, the possibility is now recognized of receiving into the Church organized groups of Anglican faithful, maintaining precisely certain elements of their own liturgical and spiritual identity, and above all something of their own social structure as a group.

The pastoral experience of group incorporations in the Church is not new because in recent years “there have been groups of Anglicans who have entered while preserving some “corporate” structure. Examples of this include, the Anglican diocese of Amritsar in India, and some individual parishes in the United States which maintained an Anglican identity when entering the Catholic Church under a “pastoral provision” adopted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and approved by Pope John Paul II in 1982”.

These experiences have allowed the Holy See in recent years to be able to evaluate the concrete pastoral problems inherent in these so-called “corporate” unions, not least the problem regarding the personal position of Anglican pastors who, having attained full communion, continue their ministerial activity and are admitted to Holy Orders. The various questions involved have been studied in depth in view of being able to sketch a juridical structure tailored to pastoral needs of this kind.

Let us briefly consider some of the concrete needs of such corporate unions in order to be able to understand better the response given by the legislator in the recent documents.

2.– Postulates of the Special Pastoral Work

a) The Sacramental Structuring of the Communities

The reception of these groups into the Catholic Church poses, first of all, a requirement that the community have a structure in itself. Because the Church is a hierarchical structure, resulting from the interaction of the Sacrament of Baptism – common to all the faithful – with the Sacrament of Order, which confers on the ordained the ministerial functions, it is necessary that a community be articulated in a hierarchical form in order that it may become an “ecclesially structured” group: it has to be structured in conformity with Holy Orders.

The groups coming from Anglicanism, at the moment of their entry into communion with the Catholic Church, are groups of the baptized gathered around someone who exercised “ministerial functions” for them, but these functions were not supported by the Sacrament of Order. There is a “ministry”, but the community is not “hierarchically vertebrate”, which comes from Holy Orders. In Catholic ecclesiology, the basic ministerial functions are articulated beginning with the Sacrament of Order, which functions as the determinative factor of the hierarchy.

Now, “structuring” the group signifies “constituting” the necessary sacramental basis of the ministerial functions through the ordination of the ministers; this “sacramental basis” can be different depending on the type of “structure” that is intended to be established. In the case, for example, of the “Pastoral Provision” till now existing in the United States, it was sufficient to

configure personal parishes, which were then integrated in the respective dioceses: the structural problem was thus limited to the priestly ordination of the pastors (cann. 150, 521 § 1 CIC).

Now, instead, by instituting the personal Ordinariates as a jurisdiction with a certain autonomy, it is not enough to create pastors; it is also necessary to establish ministers who will assume “episcopal functions”, something which does not necessarily mean instituting them in the rank of the episcopate, because it is sufficient to confer on them the quasi-episcopal juridical power that is sufficient for the roles of leadership and governance of the *coetus fidelium* [group of the faithful] that forms the Ordinate.

In the Catholic Church, however, sacramental ordination is not a subjective right of the baptized: it is an autonomous choice of the competent Authority that comes at the end of a process of formation and discernment; it is a journey that requires “time” even if the Authority can always dispense for a just cause (can. 90 § 1 CIC).

b) *The Spiritual Identity of the Group*

A second requirement posed by the entrance of these groups regards the recognition and the juridical tutelage of the liturgy and other elements of spirituality and worship which have marked over time the identity of these communities, welcoming fully in the Catholic Church a spiritual heritage which has matured historically in the Anglican tradition.

At the center of the dialogue that led to the promulgation of the norms that we are considering was, on the part of the Catholic Church, the appreciation that these liturgical traditions, developed in the heart of the Anglican Communion, effectively represent an element of diversity that enriches the Catholic Church.

As a consequence, it will be necessary to obtain the approbation of the Holy See for the pertinent liturgical books (n. III AC), an area in which a fair amount of experience was gained with the approbation on the part of the competent Dicasteries of “The Book of Divine Worship” prepared in the United States for the “Pastoral Provision”.

Moreover, the ecclesial identity of these communities in terms of their liturgical profile will have to find the necessary juridical tutelage in order to avoid wrongful “forced” assimilations. Precisely such a requirement justifies some precautions adopted by the published norms in relation to the exercise of the power of the diocesan Bishop with respect to the institutional development of the personal Ordinariates (n. VIII AC, art. 14 CN).

c) *The Structural Limit of not being a “Church sui iuris”*

The starting up of these personal structures involves, therefore, the recognition of new rites and liturgical forms, but not of a new “rite” of membership; rather, we are dealing with a liturgy that will coexist within the Latin-rite Church along with the variety of other rituals that are present in it, such as, for example, the Ambrosian rite in the area of Milan. Something similar, from this point of view, was signified by the promulgation of the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* (2007) in regard to the liturgy prior to 1970.

With the establishment of personal Ordinariates, the Holy See has not by any means intended to create new “Churches *sui iuris*” similar to those created for the communities of the East that, beginning in the sixteenth century, entered into communion with the Church of Rome. The groups of the faithful coming from Anglicanism that now come to Catholic communion belong in full to the Latin-rite Church and the structure designed for them – that of the personal Ordinariates – does not constitute a Church “in se”, but is rather an entity of the Latin-rite Church, which comes under the discipline of the Code of Canon Law (CIC) in whatever is not established to the contrary.

One can understand the reason for a structural limit of this kind from an ecumenical perspective as well. The technical solution of the “Church *sui iuris*”, adopted at moments in history in which there were poor relationships with other Christian denominations, would actually be a clear deterrent to the ecumenical progress which for years has been inspired by a rather different orientation.

The personal Ordinariates that are erected will not make up, therefore, a “Church *sui iuris*”. Each of them will have its own autonomy and will depend directly and immediately on the Apostolic See. Neither will there be any kind of “personal bond” analogous to that which ties the Oriental Catholic faithful to their own rite in a stable manner. The mere fact that an explicit request is necessary to belong to an Ordinate and consequently, the freedom to make a choice not to join it, or to abandon it at a later time without the need for a dispensation of any kind, clearly indicate the differences with the Oriental ritual Churches.

d) *A Solution with a Process Perspective*

Finally, another pastoral requirement of the present undertaking seems to come from the fact that the insertion of these communities into the Church has the character of a process protracted in time.

Unlike other kinds of pastoral necessities for which personal ecclesiastical circumscriptions have been used, in the present case the pastoral problem before us is not resolved only by the juridical act of erection of the personal Ordinariates. Yes, this erection begins the process of integration, but afterwards it will be necessary to monitor it attentively and channel it in the right direction. From a structural point of view, rather than that of the personal act of faith, the erection of the Ordinate is not the end, but the point of departure for a journey of consolidation in the Catholic faith for the communities.

This fact is noticeable in the norms through the particular role assumed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith as regards the institutional aspects of the Ordinariates as well as the following of these structures, which the Congregation will have to carry out on an ongoing basis.

These then are some of the pastoral requirements that have tried to be addressed by sketching a new institutional structure to receive these groups coming from Anglicanism. Let us now look at the characteristics which this structure has adopted, indicating first of all its doctrinal context.

3.– *The Ecclesiological Context of the Personal Ordinariates*

In order to adequately understand the personal Ordinariates as an institution, it is necessary to consider the ecclesiological framework in which all the personal circumscriptions of the Latin-rite Church are currently situated. As is well known, this framework was not sufficiently clear at the time of the promulgation of the Code in 1983. At that time, there was an inability to understand the way in which the idea of “particular Church”, around which the ecclesiology of Vatican II had been formulated, was applicable or not to these personal circumscriptions; what they had in common with these categories and what distinguished them was not understood.

Since then, however, the doctrinal framework has much changed, and in various ways the relevant conciliar Magisterium was deepened. It now appears clear that not all the hierarchical structures that the Church uses to group the faithful around their own Pastors are theologically the same; moreover, the aggregation of the faithful does not come about in these structures in the same way or for the same reasons, principally because not all the structures correspond to the theological idea of particular Church.

In fact, while some of these hierarchically structured communities are particular Churches, others instead are not because access to them does not come about by reason of the Sacrament of Baptism as “efficient cause”. Indeed, it is not the same to belong to a structure “because” of Baptism (ontological reason) than to belong to it “from the moment” of Baptism (temporal reason). In this perspective, the structures that are not particular Churches appear as complementary structures.

These differences were taken up in comprehensive terms in 1992 by the letter *Communiois Notio* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a text of singular importance that synthesizes the central principles of Catholic ecclesiology. For what concerns us here, the document contains two fundamental statements, which it is not possible now to discuss in detail, but which are as follows: first, that the incorporation into the Church of the baptized takes place in a particular Church, that is, that immediate incorporation, so to speak, into the universal Church alone does not exist, because the universal and the particular of the Church are two corresponding dimensions.

The other fundamental statement is the indication that, in addition to the particular Churches into which the faithful are incorporated by the Sacrament of Baptism, there are hierarchical structures for specific pastoral tasks that belong ecclesologically – says *Communiois Notio* – to the “logic” of the universal Church, even if their members, inasmuch as they are baptized, are members of particular Churches for the preceding reason.

To this kind of structure would belong, precisely, the personal ecclesiastical circumscriptions, and concretely the personal Ordinariates, as also the personal Prelatures and the military Ordinariates. None of these institutions are particular Churches and, therefore, with the profession of faith, the faithful baptized originally in Anglicanism, including also the ministers who later will be ordained, are received “in” a particular Church, which will necessarily be that of the respective domicile (can. 107 § 1 CIC), and they will remain in that particular Church even after having indicated their wish to belong to the personal Ordinate created for them.

Later on we will return to other elements related to this. For now let us move on to a more technical consideration of the structural elements of the personal Ordinariates, as they appear in the founding documents.

4.– *The Canonical Structure of the Personal Ordinariates*

The Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* establishes a personal ecclesiastical circumscription that is supra-diocesan and national in scope, even if the possibility is foreseen of establishing more than one Ordinate in the same country (nn. I §§ 1-2 AC). The individual personal Ordinariates will then be erected by decree of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (nn. I § 1, XIII AC), will depend hierarchically on it, and will follow the canonical norms common to the Latin-rite Church in whatever is not contrary to the Apostolic Constitution, the common Complementary Norms, and the specific Norms given for each Ordinate (n. II AC; art. 1 CN), taking into account the normative hierarchy proper to canon law.

i) *A Complementary Personal Circumscription*

The personal Ordinate appears to take its name from the circumscription occupied with specialized pastoral activity with the military, namely, the military Ordinariates.

Beyond the name, only with difficulty can one say that the two institutions are equal, also because under more fundamental theological aspects, such as the voluntary character of the ascription of the faithful coming from the Anglican Communion, the personal Ordinate is instead similar to other personal structures.

The personal Ordinariate consists of a *coetus fidelium* [group of the faithful] entrusted to the spiritual care of a proper Pastor assisted by his presbyterate. Pastor, presbyterate and faithful are the three “subjective” elements of every hierarchical community. The personal Ordinariates, however, are not particular Churches, as are, for example, the dioceses. For this reason, the faithful belonging to the Ordinariate necessarily belong to the Church of their respective domicile.

b) The Pastor of the Ordinariate

As a rule, the personal Ordinary nominated by the Roman Pontiff as the head of an Ordinariate will not be a Bishop (n. IV AC), even though he will have to exercise the same “piscopal functions” from the point of view of juridical effectiveness. This preclusion, as is obvious, is not a limit willed by the legislator, but is rather a consequence of the married condition of the clergy which, at least at the beginning, will have to take charge of these communities.

Another characteristic of the Ordinary is the configuration of his jurisdiction as “vicarious” of the Roman Pontiff (n. V, b AC). This factor indicates a difference with the type of power of the Pastors in charge of other personal circumscriptions, which is always a “proper” power. This choice evokes the so-called “missionary” structures (can. 371 § 1 CIC) that depend on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, which, however, are “particular Churches” said to be “in formation”.

A problem is posed by art. 4 § 1 CN when, in mentioning only some of the canons that outline the powers of Bishops, it seems to establish only a partial equivalence of the personal Ordinary to the diocesan Bishop. The norm cannot be interpreted in the strict sense because that would not be consistent with the Apostolic Constitution, which declares to be applicable to the Ordinary other canons that are not mentioned.

It is clear that he will not be able to perform the kind of acts that regard a sacramental condition which he does not possess: obviously, he will not be able to celebrate pontifical functions nor ordain his own priests; however, he will instead have to sign the “dimissorial letters” so that a Bishop can ordain and incardinate candidates into the Ordinariate.

The personal Ordinary, therefore, is substantially equivalent to the diocesan Bishop. Moreover, he is indicated as a member by right of the respective Episcopal Conference, with the duty of coordinating pastoral activity with the Conference (art. 2 CN) and with each of the diocesan Bishops (art. 3 CN). As is well known, while they are called “Episcopal”, the Conferences in fact gather the “Pastors” that are in charge of the piscopal circumscriptions of a nation, even though some of them are not bishops, which occurs frequently in mission countries. For the same reason, no difficulties are created by making former Anglican bishops, who may be members of the Ordinariate, equivalent to retired bishops (art. 11 § 4 CN). The law does not say it, but it seems necessary to hold that this solely regards the Anglican bishops who are ordained priests once they have attained communion.

c) The Presbyterate of the Ordinariate

In the exercise of his own mission, the Ordinary is assisted by a presbyterate proper to the Ordinariate (n. VI § 4 AC). It is formed both by former Anglican ministers received into the Catholic Church and then ordained and, at a later time, by priests coming from the *coetus fidelium* itself, formed in the Centers of formation proper to the Ordinariate and then incardinated into it (n. VI § 3 AC, art. 4 § 2 CN). In fact, the Ordinary can erect, in keeping with law, a house of formation with its own “*Ratio institutionis sacerdotalis*” [Program of Priestly Formation] (art. 10 § 3 CN). For the clergy of the Ordinariate, exceptions in the disciplinary regime are also foreseen (art. 7 CN), and forms of the clergy’s collaboration with the diocesan clergy are also indicated (art. 9 CN).

Regarding the clergy incardinated in the circumscription, a particularly delicate point regards the discipline of celibacy. Here also there has been an attempt to reconcile the needs that can initially appear at the time of the creation of the Ordinariate and what is desirable to happen in the future. Initially, the groups proceeding from Anglicanism bring their own “ministers”, generally married, who will have to be dispensed from celibacy in order to be ordained as priests (n. VI § 1 AC). At a later time, however, it is expected that these ministers will be succeeded by clerics formed in the houses of formation of the Ordinariates, who have received the gift of celibacy. Possible exceptions are foreseen, as well as the eventuality of asking for a dispensation from the Holy Father, but the direction taken by the norm is clear in ratifying in this regard the discipline of the Latin-rite Church (n. VI § 2 AC); it otherwise would not augur well for the formation of the seminarians of the Ordinariate together with those of the local diocese (n. VI § 5 AC; art. 10 § 2 CN).

d) The Faithful of the Ordinariate

Membership in the personal Ordinariate is reserved to the faithful baptized in Anglicanism, or its related bodies, and to those who receive the Christian faith and are baptized in the Ordinariate itself (n. I § 4 AC). Other faithful cannot be a part, obviously, except by dispensation (art. 5 § 1 CN). In every case, such persons “must manifest this desire in writing” (n. IX AC); therefore, a “voluntary” and “explicit” adherence to the personal Ordinariate is required, which, as such, is something essentially “different” from the adherence to the Catholic Church through the profession of faith.

The documents lack clarity concerning the membership of the faithful in the particular Church of their respective domicile. The texts neither affirm nor deny such a double membership – in the Ordinariate and in the diocese – which represents a basic element for defining the responsibility of the various pastors. However, even though the texts are silent, there is no doubt that what is declared by the letter *Communiois Notio* is applicable to the personal Ordinariate, and therefore that, with the profession of faith, the ex-Anglican faithful are incorporated into the particular Church of their domicile and are entrusted to its Pastor, while with the voluntary request and the enrollment in the apposite register (n. IX AC, art. 5 § 1 CN), they are inserted in the personal Ordinariate and entrusted to the special pastoral care of the Ordinary. This last choice is one that some people will probably not want to carry out and which, in any case, could be withdrawn if necessary at a later time, abandoning the personal Ordinariate.

e) The Religious Communities Assisted by the Ordinariate

The religious communities proceeding from Anglicanism can also adhere to the Ordinariate in conformity with the norms of religious life.

Unlike the lay faithful, however, in the case of consecrated persons, who are already bound by bonds of obedience, an individual act of adherence to the Ordinariate is not required; the legitimate Superiors are the ones who, on behalf of the religious community, will have to achieve the appropriate written “consent” with the personal Ordinary (nn. VII, IX AC) in order that the whole community may form a part of the Ordinariate. In any case, it will always be possible to respect the potential desire of those who, after entrance into communion with the Catholic Church, want to follow not the discipline of the Ordinariate but the common discipline of the Latin-rite Church; in these cases, it would suffice to follow the norms established by law for the transfer to other institutes (cann. 684-685 CIC).

The personal Ordinary, moreover, is given the faculty of erecting new Institutes of Consecrated Life and, as the case may be, of promoting their members to Holy Orders, always

according to the norms of canon law (n. VII AC). Experience will confirm the foresight of these provisions.

f) The Pastoral Governance of the Ordinariate

For what regards the structure of the organization, the Apostolic Constitution foresees the adaptation of the general canonical norms to the concrete characteristics of the institute. As was already said, the erection of personal Ordinariates is envisioned at the national level (n. I § 2 AC), also because different needs – such as the economic need or the need to provide care for the clergy (art. 7 § 2 CN) – are difficult to satisfy without the common effort of the dioceses of the country.

A Governing Council, composed of at least six priests and with its own Statutes, should assume the duties which canon law assigns to the Presbyteral Council and the College of Consultors, as well as those specific functions which the current particular norms entrust to this Council (n. X AC, art. 12 CN). Moreover, there are requirements to have a Pastoral Council (n. X § 3 AC, art. 13 CN) and a Finance Council (n. X § 3 AC), with the duties indicated by the Code of Canon Law, as well as the possibility, already mentioned, of erecting a house of formation for seminarians (art. 12 § 2 CN).

The norms now given do not contain precise indications about personal offices. Only art. 11 § 2 CN speaks of an “assistant” to the Ordinary, and n. 4 § 3 CN mentions “territorial deans”, who have the functions of coordinating the various parishes that are subject to the Ordinariate. Therefore, for what regards the remaining offices, it seems that one must hold that the norms of the Code apply, namely, canons 469ff [469 and following] on the curia, the offices of the vicars, etc.

g) The Pastoral Care of the Faithful

For what concerns pastoral care, the erection of personal parishes in various places – or even of personal quasi-parishes – is envisioned for the faithful of the Ordinariate (n. VIII § 1 AC, art. 14 CN); these parishes may possibly be grouped into territorial deaneries (art. 4 § 3 CN). This specific pastoral organization will by necessity have to rely rather frequently on the organization of the diocese of domicile of the faithful, as it has been accordingly established how the respective territorial pastors may assume – the texts speak of “mutual pastoral assistance” but not of “replacement” – the pastoral responsibilities of the pastors of the Ordinariate (n. VIII § 2 AC, art. 14 § 2 CN).

The erection of personal parishes is done directly by the Ordinary, after having heard the Diocesan Bishop and once the consent of the Holy See has been obtained (n. VIII § 1 AC). The erection of territorial deaneries also requires the consultation of the Episcopal Conference and the assent of the Holy See (art. 4 § 3 CN). What has prevailed, in these cases, is the desire to reinforce the position of the Ordinary with the prevailing intervention of the superior Authority, avoiding that the evolution of the institute could be conditioned on the part of the circumscription of the territory. The erection of quasi-parishes, even, could take place without the assent of the Holy See (art. 14 § 3 CN), but it seems only right to understand all this in a context of harmony sought with the Diocesan Bishop, and thus, in these cases and also for the building of churches of any kind, the same practice should at least be followed as with the parishes.

i) Relationship with the Diocesan Bishop

In this regard, another question can be posed: what juridical relationship exists between the jurisdiction of the diocesan Bishop and that of the personal Ordinary? In canon law, for some time the notion has been coined of “cumulative power”, above all to designate the ensemble of situations

in which the powers of two Pastors, territorial and personal, meet, and in which both have a right to take action.

The present texts do not speak of “cumulative power” but rather of “joint exercise” of power. This is a descriptive expression which says nothing on the technical level about the juridical relationship between the two powers; it determines rather the spirit of communion in which these powers should be exercised. The expression has already been regarded as equivalent to “concurrent jurisdiction”, and substantially it is to be considered also as “cumulative”, according to law.

The Complementary Norms deals with this subject in the cases in which the faithful of the Ordinariate “collaborate in pastoral or charitable activities, whether diocesan or parochial”, that is, when such faithful “are subject to the Diocesan Bishop or to the pastor of the place”, and thus regarding only these two ministers (art. 5 § 2 CN). It is clear that in these and other cases they are subject in everything to the Diocesan Bishop.

However, one should take note that ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the lay faithful is extremely restricted, and that, unlike incardinated clerics and religious subject to the rules of their respective institutes, lay people move in the Church in spheres of full freedom.

I think that the structure that has been delineated, in order to receive into communion with Rome entire groups of Anglican faithful guided by their own ministers, represents a good instrument that has succeeded in making fitting use of the elasticity that characterizes canon law. The result is a personal ecclesiastical circumscription that provides for the specific spiritual needs of the faithful that come from the Anglican experience of faith, but who at the same time remain faithful of the dioceses of their domicile. They have a double Pastor of reference.

The limit of the norms we have considered regards, however, the uncertain determination of the task of these two Pastors and of the responsibility which the diocesan Bishop has over these faithful. It is to be hoped, therefore, that these uncertainties will be clarified, either through new and more precise general Norms given by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, or by clearly establishing in the Norms given for the individual Ordinariates what the responsibilities of the respective Pastors are and in what way they ought to collaborate with one another.

We should not marvel that a norm that had to be prepared in conditions that are truly special may contain technical limits, for which the Holy See will opportunely have to make provision. It has to be admitted, however, that this profile appears immediately eclipsed and marginalized when one realizes the extraordinary ecclesial importance of the provision in itself, considered from the profile of the unity of the Church.