

the central priestly function and was deliberately designed to contain no indication of the 'fullness of the ministry', specific tasks of the Catholic bishop or the 'high priesthood', which the Holy See considers essential. The Romans assume that their point of view, based on Late Medieval sacramental theory, is valid for all periods of church history. In their refutation the Archbishops pointed out, amongst other matters, that no such priestly functions or sacramental theology were evident in the Papal ordination rites of the 9th and 10th centuries, which would render their ordinations invalid as well, using the same criteria aimed at the Anglicans.

What about the authority of the Pope?

Since we have stated that the Anglican Catholic Church is not a "Roman" but an "English" Catholic Church it will come as no surprise that we do not consider ourselves to be under the Bishop of Rome's "Universal Jurisdiction". Again our position is comparable to the practice of the Undivided Church. The Pope claims to be infallible. Anglican Catholics believe in infallibility, but they believe that it is found not within the Office of the Pope, but within the Church itself, and that this is best expressed when it is acting as an undivided unity through the medium of the Ecumenical Councils. But since A.D. 1054 this hasn't happened. We recognize and give due honour to the Pope as Bishop of Rome and his pre-eminence as Patriarch of the West, but there are other Patriarchs whom we also recognise, those of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.

Continuing Anglicans?

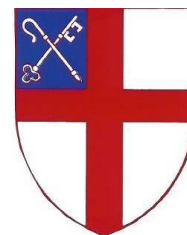
There are several present-day bodies, often described collectively as "Continuing Anglicans", which claim descent from the 1977 Congress of St Louis. However it is only within the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC), The Anglican Province of Christ the King (APCK), and The United Episcopal Church of North America (UECNA) that one finds the legitimate continuation of traditional Anglican Catholicism. They all share a common bond, stemming from the same apostolic succession and bear the same responsibility for preserving apostolic order and for being the custodians of faith and morals. A recent, exciting development, in terms of Church unity, is a reaffirmation of the mutual recognition and inter-communion between these jurisdictions.

The above text has been prepared by the

**Diocese of the United Kingdom
ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

YOUR NEAREST ACC PARISH

**Why
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and
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Why Anglican & Catholic?

The Anglican Catholic Church is **Anglican**, which means “English”. In other words, we are Christians who have an English liturgical and theological heritage – a spiritual heritage and an ancestral connection to the Church in England. The Anglican Catholic Church is **Catholic**, because it accepts the doctrine of the ancient Church, which has been “believed everywhere, always, and by all”.

But aren't you Protestants?

Firstly one must understand that to be Catholic one doesn't necessarily have to be “Roman Catholic” despite what some in the Roman Church may claim. The Orthodox Churches of Greece and Russia and in other places are “Catholic Churches” but not in communion with the Pope.

The Catholic Church of England separated from the Roman Catholic Church during the sixteenth century. However, although a Protestant Reformation was taking place on the Continent the English Reformation was fundamentally different in nature and intention. Primarily the reasons for its formation were political. King Henry VIII, whilst wanting to be independent of Rome, was not a Protestant in intention, although his reasons for separation were not especially honourable. Of course there were and have been Anglicans who have wanted to be Protestant, just as there are Anglicans who want complete union with Rome. However, the Church of England was not formed in the same way as the Continental Protestant Churches.

The Continental Reformation was primarily German, under the leadership of Martin

Luther; French, under John Calvin and Swiss, under Ulrich Zwingli. The Continental Reformers accepted the principle called *Sola Scriptura*, that is, Scripture alone as the basis for faith and practice.

However, the English Reformers appealed to Scripture as interpreted by the ancient Church, especially through the Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church. The Continental Reformers also almost unanimously rejected or dropped the principle of apostolic succession. That is, bishops, by virtue of their consecration, being successors of the apostles, tracing a straight link back to them through history. But the English Reformation retained apostolic succession.

Since the Continental Reformers rejected the apostolic succession of bishops, they eventually lost a “valid” ordained priesthood. But at the English Reformation, the Church of England deliberately retained the title “priest”, because it contained a real truth and intention. Christ is the perfect priest. The Church is His body. The organ of a priestly body cannot be less than priestly.

The Church of England maintained its apostolic ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. Its form of worship, though translated into English and reformed, nonetheless stood in continuity with the Church's historical worship. The goal of the English Reformation was to reform the practice of the Church and return to the ancient and Catholic faith of the Undivided Church.

From the time of Henry VIII there has always been a theological position within Anglicanism which has sought to stress the continuing Catholic nature of the Church of

England. Through the reign of his daughter Elizabeth I this was championed by the Elizabethan divine, Richard Hooker. Then later by Archbishop Laud and the Caroline divines, up to the time of the Oxford Movement, Tractarians, and the Anglo-Catholic Congresses, to the point at which the Church of England finally abandoned Apostolic order by admitting women to the priesthood.

What do Anglican Catholics believe?

The Anglican Catholic Church accepts the teachings of the Undivided Church, the Church of the first millennium of Church history. From the Day of Pentecost, when the Church was born, to the Great Schism in A.D. 1054, the Church was truly Catholic: one in faith and doctrine, even though there were differences between the way Eastern and Western Churches worshipped. Therefore, the Anglican Catholic Church claims, in essence, to be both an English Catholic Church and a Western Orthodox Church.

But didn't the Pope declare Anglican Holy Orders null and void?

In response to Pope Leo XIII's *Apostolicae Curae* of 1896, which declared the Anglican apostolic succession invalid, the Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York made an official response, *Saepius Officio*, stating that there is an unbroken apostolic succession in the Anglican priesthood, and that the historical episcopate has been in the British Isles from the earliest days of the Church. However, the Roman Catholic Church maintains that this apostolic succession was broken by the use of the Ordination Rite of King Edward VI, which deletes all reference to