



Anglican Catholic Church



Diocese of the United Kingdom

Catholic Faith † Orthodox Worship † Apostolic Order

April 2018

My dear friends and colleagues,

Sharing in people's joys and sorrows – their laughter and concerns, experiencing their kindness and their deep faith – is a privilege and honour that priests often feel that we do not deserve. For me it is an honour that places me at the feet of Jesus, thanking Him for choosing me to be a priest and asking Him to give me the grace to love



and serve others as He loves and serves me. The events of Maundy Thursday in the upper room bring home most vividly the ministry of service to which priests are called. The priesthood of the Church is not simply a function, or job to be done. No man *owns* his priesthood, even those who are part of it. Rather, it is the extension of Christ's own ministry in the world. It is uniquely apostolic, and to an even greater degree when it is taken into the episcopate, that is the Order of Bishop. The priesthood was established with unique authority and responsibility, and it cannot be assumed or granted by any human power. The *Church* does not authorize the role of bishops, priests or deacons, because the fact is they are called and sent by *Christ*. The Church is the means through which this takes place.



The English word "Easter" has pagan roots. Before the word "Easter" was used, the word used for the celebration was "Pascha", derived from and linked to the Jewish festival of Passover. Indeed the French word Pâques and the Italian Pasqua have retained that link, as have other languages. According to the Venerable Bede, the word Easter comes from the Anglo-Saxon name for the month of April, "Eostremonath" (after the Saxon goddess Eostre). When the Saxons came to England they brought Eostre worship with them. Many of them subsequently converted to Christianity and since Pascha was most often celebrated in Eostre month, English Christians began calling it "Easter". Eostre (sometimes spelt Oestre) was a fertility goddess from whom we derive the word "oestrogen". One Eostre symbol was "adapted" by the Saxon Christians: eggs representing fertility and new life, which came to represent the resurrection or new life of Christ after the crucifixion. (But, strangely, whilst Eostre was also symbolised by a hare, there is no evidence of any link to the popular Easter Bunny, which made its first appearance in the 16th century in Germany.)

May you all have a very happy and blessed Eastertide.

Fr. Raymond Thompson

Archdeacon

Mobile: 07443 438465 Email: rthompson@anglicancatholic.org

Diocesan website: <http://www.anglicancatholic.org.uk/>

Email: diocesanoffice@anglicancatholic.org.uk

Canonical Vows and Canonical Obedience

The *Constitution of the Anglican Catholic Church, Article XIV, Section 3*, requires the bishops and clergy to take an oath of obedience to their respective superiors. *Canon 16.2.08* requires Lay Readers to make the declaration of obedience set forth there, and *Canon 16.3.10* requires lay workers to make the same declaration of obedience to the bishop as is prescribed for Deaconesses in *Canon 16.1.06*. The vows the clergy make at their ordination are as follows:

I, AB, do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Anglican Catholic Church.

I, AB, do willingly subscribe to and declare that I assent to, and will obey and abide by, the Constitution and Canons which have been, or shall be, from time to time, passed by the Holy Synod or the Provincial Synod, or the Synod of the Diocese of the United Kingdom.

I, AB, do swear that I will pay true and canonical obedience to you, the Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the United Kingdom and your successors in all lawful and honest commands. So help me God.

I, AB, solemnly declare that I have not made, by myself or by any other person on my behalf, any payment, contract, or promise of any kind whatsoever which, to the best of my knowledge or belief, is simoniacal, touching or concerning the preferment as CD in the City of EF in the County of GH, nor will I at any time hereafter perform or satisfy in whole or in part any such kind of payment, contract, or promise made by any other without my knowledge or consent.

But what is Canonical Obedience?

In 1863, during a legal dispute in Cape Town, the British barrister, judge and politician Lord Kingsdown, provided an admirably succinct and helpful definition of canonical obedience which is worth repeating:

‘canonical obedience does not mean that the clergyman will obey all the commands of the Bishop against which there is no law, but that he will obey all such commands as the Bishop by law is authorised to impose’.

Lord Kingsdown’s definition made clear that canonical obedience really means obedience to the law (Canons) rather than to the superior personally. The superior is entitled to obedience when exercising powers conferred by law.

Canonical obedience does not mean treating the will of the superior as the will of Christ. According to the definition of canonical obedience stated by Lord Kingsdown a clergyman or lay worker will be guilty of disobedience to an order only if the bishop or other Church authority giving the order has the legal right to do so. A clergyman or lay worker is within his rights to disregard an order that is given without proper authority.

The particular responsibility of all ordained, and lay, ministers is ministry of the Word and the Sacraments. The general rule is that a minister or lay worker must be authorised or licensed by a bishop, in order to exercise this ministry. The bishop also has the primary responsibility for ministerial discipline. The bishop may therefore be described as the professional authority of his clergy and lay workers. He has a responsibility over them similar to that of the General Medical Council over doctors, or the Bar Council over barristers. This underlines the point that the bishop’s superiority is authorised by, and limited by, law and Canon law. Remembering this can avoid much unfortunate misunderstanding.