



*A Statement from Archbishop Vincent Nichols,
President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales*

11 January 2011

**THE ORDINATION TO THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD OF THREE FORMER ANGLICAN BISHOPS
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT IN ENGLAND AND WALES OF A PERSONAL ORDINARIATE**

On Saturday 15th January, it will be my privilege to ordain John Broadhurst, Andrew Burnham and Keith Newton to priesthood in the Catholic Church. This ceremony will take place in Westminster Cathedral.

On or before this date, I expect the Holy See to announce the establishment of the first Ordinariate for groups of former Anglicans and their clergy who seek full communion in the Catholic Church. The three men ordained on Saturday will be the first priests of this Ordinariate.

This is a unique moment and the Catholic community in England and Wales is privileged to be playing its part in this historic development in the life of the Universal Church.

We offer a warm welcome to these three former bishops of the Church of England. We welcome those who wish to join them in full communion with the Pope in the visible unity of the Catholic Church. We recognise the journey they are making with its painful departures and its uncertainties. We salute their depth of searching prayer and the desire which leads them to seek to live within the community of the Catholic Church under the ministry of the Bishop of Rome. This is the faith we share.

We are deeply grateful for the depth of the relationship which exists here between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. This firm, positive and on-going relationship is the context for Saturday's important initiative. We are grateful, too, for the sensitive leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He graciously acknowledges the integrity of those seeking to join the Ordinariate and has assured them of his prayers. This is the noble spirit of true ecumenism between the followers of Christ.

Pope Benedict has made clear his own intentions: that the Ordinariate can serve the wider cause of visible unity between our two churches by demonstrating in practice the extent to which we have so much to give to each other in our common service of the Lord. With this in mind he describes this step as 'a prophetic gesture.'

With great trust in the Lord, we look forward to Saturday, to the new phase of Church life it brings and we ask God's blessing on its future development.

The Most Reverend Vincent Nichols

President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales