

**THE CONGRESS OF TRADITIONAL ANGLICANS**

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**An Address by**

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**At The First Evensong of Ascension Day  
Wednesday, June 1, 2011**

**CATHOLIC FAITH AND ANGLICAN DOCTRINE**

Dearly beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

I am honoured to have been asked to stand here this evening in this House of God, and to deliver the address at the First Evensong of this Congress of traditional Anglicans.

The particular tradition within our Anglican family to which I adhere places great emphasis on Catholic Faith and Apostolic Order, and also accepts the gifts of the Holy Spirit as the permanent endowment of the whole Catholic and Apostolic Church; and so it is not my custom to preach from notes, believing, as I do, that preaching ought, ideally, to be in, of, and from the Holy Ghost Himself speaking directly through the preacher to the assembled congregation of Christ's faithful. Preaching should always be less about the preacher, and even less his art, than Him of and about Whom the preacher is witnessing when he preaches. However, in a situation such as I find myself this evening, great care must be taken in order to ensure that no error be made when speaking authoritatively, and no room be given for misinterpretation. Therefore, this evening, I shall read my address to you.

Gathered together here this evening are Bishops, Clergy, and laity from several jurisdictions of Anglican faithful. We come from the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada, the Traditional Anglican Church of Canada, the Anglican Province of Christ the King, the Anglican Catholic Church – Original Province, the United Episcopal Church, and from the Christian Episcopal Churches of Canada and the United States of America. My own jurisdiction is the Christian Episcopal Church, founded in 1991 by Bishop A. Donald Davies and the Clergy of the Missionary Diocese of the Americas of the Episcopal Church. Bishop Davies, who was consecrated the Fourth Bishop of Dallas in 1970, was elected the First Bishop of Fort Worth in 1985, and was later the Bishop of the Convocation of the American Churches in Europe, was also the First Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond. I myself was ordained Priest by Bishop Davies in 1993, and was later consecrated Bishop Coadjutor of Richmond by him as my chief

consecrator, assisted by Bishop Jon Mark Lindenauer and Bishop Theodore Chris Casimes, in 2002. I succeeded Bishop Davies as the Second Bishop of Richmond in 2004.

The Christian Episcopal Churches are different from other “continuing” Anglican bodies and jurisdictions in that we were founded by the established Episcopal Church, were headed by licensed Episcopal Bishops and Clergy, and are still, in fact, part of the Anglican Communion in that we have never been ejected by the Communion, nor did we ever secede from the Communion. In fact, there has been a sort of unofficial recognition of our status in that we have been allowed to give pastoral oversight to the Church of England in the Cayman Islands without any censure from or protest by the Lord Bishop of London who has jurisdiction over them, and has had since their establishment by law in 1634. We have been ignored by the Communion, that is true, but we have never been repudiated or excommunicated by them.

Therefore we are not really a part of the “Anglican Continuum” that was begun at Saint Louis in 1977, and we have quite a different history from them. We do not accept the Affirmation of Saint Louis, not because we do not agree with what it maintains and sets forth, but because it is not part of our body of constitutional and canonical law. And inasmuch as we have not severed our ties with the wider Anglican Communion, we are fellow-heirs of the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission; and when one reads over our Constitution and Canons, one can see this reflected in them. And years ago, long before any idea of an “Anglican Ordinariate” was even considered, the Christian Episcopal Churches had already moved towards full intercommunion with the Roman Church on the basis of the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, beginning with the first common declaration made by Pope Paul the Sixth and Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1966.

And it was on this basis that we sought reconciliation and the restoration of full and visible communion with the Holy See, and those particular Churches in communion with Rome. It was for this reason that we endorsed the Catechism of the Catholic Church almost a decade ago, but with the very important provision that we only accepted the Catechism subject to the Constitution of our portion of the Church and the Book of Common Prayer. This provision was essential because in our Book of Common Prayer is set forth the whole position of the Church of England taken at the time of the Reformation, and which is set forth and codified in our Constitution and Canons. We recognise that the Catechism of the Catholic Church was the final codification of the great work of the Second Vatican Council, and that there was input from the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran Churches, and the Reformed Churches. And so, in a sense, the Catechism is truly an Ecumenical work.

However, as Anglicans, we cannot endorse the position taken by Rome that the Church of God is founded and built upon the Bishop of Rome. The claims of the Papacy colour the Catechism in so many parts; and many practices to which we Anglicans objected, and still object, are not only countenanced but also approved and encouraged, such as an over-emphasis on the intercession of Our Lady and the Saints, the excessive honour paid to images, the morbid veneration of relics, the continuation of the penitential system of indulgences, and the enforced celibacy of the Clergy. It was these practices that initially brought about the Reformation, and which the Church of England at that time rightly repudiated and rejected, and still repudiates and rejects today.

In matters of doctrine, moral, theological, and systematic, however, the Catechism, like the official teaching of the Church of Rome, is on the whole absolutely correct. And in this, as it is stated in our Constitution, the Catechism is the “normative and authoritative exposition of the Catholic Faith” which may be endorsed and accepted by Anglican Christians. In regard to the sacred Scriptures and sacred Tradition, the Ministry and the Sacraments, and the moral and social teachings of the Church, the Catechism correctly and precisely sets forth for Christians the true orthodox teaching of the one holy Catholic Church. It is only in those matters of contention, which, for us, have not yet been fully and satisfactorily resolved, that we Anglicans must charitably, but nonetheless firmly, continue to voice our principled and valid objections.

Any attempt here to enter into a full description and explanation of the many arguments and disputations concerning the subtle differences between Rome and Canterbury would be futile since the subject matter already takes up whole libraries of books. Suffice it to say that the whole matter, from the Anglican side, may be summarised into seven principal cardinal points, that is to say, the chief points upon which any matter actually depends.

However, before we proceed to an examination of these seven points, perhaps here a little historical background may be necessary. Following the death of Queen Mary in 1558, the relations between the Church and the Government of England had, for the most part, returned to the way they had been prior to the break with Rome under King Henry the Eighth, in 1535. The six-year reign of the Queen’s young half-brother, King Edward the Sixth, had, from the point of view of Catholics, been mercifully short. The damage done to the material fabric of the Church had, indeed, been great; but the actual order of the Church had not been broken. Few priests had been ordered, and fewer bishops consecrated, during his reign. And when Queen Mary acceded to the Crown in 1553, the old order of things was quickly, and again for the most part, restored. The old Latin Mass returned, improperly ordered ministers were re-ordained, and the canonical obedience of the English Church to the Papacy was restored as well.

Thus it was, upon the death of her half-sister in 1558, that Queen Elizabeth ascended the Throne and assumed the Crown of a Catholic and papist England. The new Queen was crowned according to the ancient coronation rite during a celebration of the old Latin Mass, and became the Catholic Queen of a Catholic country. The Queen, however, was no papist, nor were her ministers. Catholic, certainly, was the Queen in her faith, as she pointedly told the Spanish ambassador, claiming to be “as good a Catholic” as he was himself. It was the Queen’s aim not to overthrow the Catholic Faith and Religion, but to reform the Church of abuses, and to restore the order of the primitive and undivided Church. The vision was that of a purified English Church, united in the essentials of the Catholic Faith and Religion and tolerant in matters inessential, with the Bible and Liturgy in English, and superstition and abuse put away; an English Church to which every loyal subject belonged, and which embraced all but the most recalcitrant and obstinate whether Puritan or Recusant.

This is a *crucial point* for Anglicans to understand. The Church of England that existed at the time of the accession of Queen Elizabeth was the selfsame Church which had existed from the time of Saint Augustine. The Christian Church had first been planted in the Roman province of Britannia during Apostolic times; and, in spite of great persecutions, wars, and invasions, had

flourished, developing its own British customs and practices. During the troubles that followed the decline and fall of Rome, and the invasions of the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons, the British Church found refuge in the so-called Celtic fringes of Cornwall, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. After the introduction of Roman Christianity by Saint Augustine and the evangelisation of the Anglo-Saxon tribes, and the unification of the old British Church with the Church of England in 664, there was one Church for all of England, a Church which was Catholic and Apostolic, and in full communion with all the Apostolic Churches of Catholic Christendom. It was this Church to which Queen Elizabeth belonged, and over which she was crowned Queen in 1559. The first break with Rome may have come in 1535 during the reign of her father, King Henry the Eighth; and her half-brother, Edward, may have attempted a radical reformation of the Church; but following the death of Queen Mary, the Church which Elizabeth inherited was the old Church of England as it ever had been. It was not until 1570, when the Pope excommunicated the Queen and encouraged her subjects to rebel against her, that the final break with Rome was made. Therefore the Anglican Reformation dates from the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and not before.

However, the English Church was in need of reform. Many Bishops and Clergy held multiple benefices, and many were absent from their cures. The Scriptures were read only partially, and, like the Mass and the other Services of the Church, were read in Latin. There was rumoured widespread immorality amongst the celibate Clergy and religious, and the monasteries restored by Queen Mary were notorious as places of refuge for Spanish spies and Papist fifth-columnists. At Communion, only the consecrated Bread was given to the faithful, the other half of the Blessed Sacrament being reserved to the Priest. The Papal Curia had regained some jurisdiction over the English courts, and Canon Law was often at cross purposes with English Common Law. Superstition was still rampant, and the churches were crowded with images which were often abused with worship by the ignorant. And, very often, more attention was paid to our blessed Lady and the Saints than to God Himself. Such was the state of the unreformed English Church at the time of Elizabeth's accession.

Therefore, one of the first matters to which the new Queen and her ministers attended was the reformation of the Church. With the co-operation of the leading Bishops and the loyal Clergy, and with the authority of Parliament behind her, Queen Elizabeth authorised and took a leading hand in the reformation of the English Church. With the passage of the Act of Supremacy in 1559 whereby the Queen was acknowledged to be the "Supreme Governor" of the Church, and the Act of Uniformity (which is still printed in the English 1662 Book of Common Prayer), the ancient Church of England was duly reformed under the terms of what we would now refer to as the Elizabethan, or Anglican, Religious Settlement. And this "religious settlement" is the practical foundation of what we would now recognise as and term the "Anglican Tradition".

And of what exactly does this "Anglican Religious Settlement" consist? We of the Christian Episcopal Churches would hold that this "Anglican Religious Settlement" consists, as I have already mentioned, of seven principal cardinal points. And these seven points are as follows:

First. That the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments constitute the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and morals; and that the Church, in every aspect of her mission, must at all times be obedient and faithful to that written revelation which is the Word of God.

- Second. That each national or particular Church has the inherent right to oversee its own affairs in all matters of ecclesiastical government and order, in relation to its own people, in accordance with the written Word of God and the Tradition of the undivided Catholic Church.
- Third. That the Queen has supreme and sovereign authority in all matters of temporal jurisdiction, whether ecclesiastical or civil, within her dominions; and no foreign power has any right to interfere in the affairs of any realm subject to the Queen's Majesty. And that no external power has any right to usurp authority over the lawfully constituted domestic government of any other nation; neither has any spiritual power the right to usurp authority over the temporal power, nor the temporal over the spiritual, all of which comes from God Himself, and is properly apportioned by Him according to His will.
- Fourth. That each national or particular Church has the right to order its own Liturgy and Canons in accordance with the written Word of God and the Tradition of the undivided Catholic Church, as may seem best for its own people.
- Fifth. That all the Clergy, unless voluntarily submitting to the obligations of the religious life, are free to marry as each shall be moved by God in his heart to do, within the bounds plainly set forth in Holy Scripture.
- Sixth. That the Word of God should be read, and the Liturgy of the Church should be celebrated, in the common language of the people.
- Seventh. That Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Communion in two kinds, that is to say, under the outward forms of Bread and Wine; and that, while never denying at any time the doctrine of the concomitance of the Lord's Real Presence under either Species, the Cup of the Lord is always to be offered to those who wish to receive the Precious Blood at any celebration of the Lord's Supper.

These, then, are the seven points of what we have come to know as the "Anglican Religious Settlement", and which remain the foundation and guide for Anglican Christians today.

It is important here, however, to note something of great significance; and this is that, of all these points, *not one* touches on doctrine, order, or practice. Each point of the Anglican Religious Settlement touches only on the discipline of the Church and ecclesiastical polity. As it was stated in the Canons of the Church of England published in 1571, "but chiefly they shall take heed, that they teach nothing in their preaching, which they would have the people religiously to observe, and believe, but that which is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old Testament, and the New, and that which the Catholic Fathers, and ancient Bishops have gathered out of that doctrine". And even now, in the present Canons of the Church of England, the Faith held and taught by the Church of England is required to be "grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures". And so, in essential matters, the old Catholic Religion was left untouched, and remains still the Religion of the Church of England today.

And throughout her long history since the Reformation, the Anglican Church has continued to maintain, until very recently, her essential Catholicity in doctrine, order, and practice, since these were laid down for us in our Book of Common Prayer. There is an old maxim that says, “Lex orandi lex credendi”, meaning, “The law of prayer is the law of belief”.

This means that what the Church prays and does shows what it believes; and no one who has ever worshipped or prayed according to the Book of Common Prayer can come away with any other impression than that he or she has, in some very real and tangible way, worshipped God as the whole Catholic and Apostolic Church has done from the Apostles’ time and down throughout the ages to our own. The doctrine, the order, the ritual, and ceremonial are Biblical, orthodox, Catholic, and Apostolic. And, buttressed by Articles of Religion exact where needed and wide where necessary, and a body of Canon Law well-crafted and wisely generous, the whole edifice of Anglican Christianity has been raised up upon a foundation strong and sure, a foundation laid by God Himself in His Son Jesus Christ and the pure Gospel and Religion taught and established by His holy Apostles and those who followed after them.

So, then, of what does our beloved Anglican Tradition consist? I often like to refer to it as the Anglican “CAPER” which we managed to pull off at the Reformation. By the grace of Almighty God, we had emerged from the religious confusions and wars of the Sixteenth Century as a portion of the One holy Church which was, and remains, *Catholic, Apostolic, Protestant, Evangelical* and *Reformed*. “Catholic and Apostolic” in that we hold and profess the faith once delivered to the saints: revealed in the Old and New Testaments, set forth in the three Catholic Creeds, and defined in the Dogmatic Definitions of the undisputed Ecumenical Councils, in other words, the Faith of the One undivided Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are also “Protestant” in that we stood for that one true and orthodox Faith, protesting against the superstition and abuse that had so marred the Church, casting aside the worshipping of images and relics, the misuse of pardons, false teachings regarding the Holy Eucharist and the final state of the departed, and the tyranny of a corrupt Papacy that usurped the authority of both Apostle and King. We are “Evangelical” in that we preach the Gospel of salvation wherever and whenever we are called by God to do so, and witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ in the lives of men and women. And we are “Reformed” in that, without changing the one holy Faith and Religion which we had received from our ancestors, we purged our part of the Church of corruption, put the Bible and the Liturgy into the language of the people, upheld the Bible as the supreme and final guide and authority in all matters of faith and morals, and brought the practice and polity of the English Church back into conformity with the practice and polity of the Primitive Church.

This is God’s great gift to us; this is our Anglican heritage and treasure; and this is our legacy to the greater Catholic Church. This is what we are fighting for. We are fighting for our Anglican tradition because it is in peril, and in danger of being lost. If we return to the Papal fold as it now stands in relation to us and to all the other separated Churches of Christendom, then we will have disowned our very identity and thrown away our integrity. If we succumb to the spirit of the age, and embrace liberal humanism, we will have lost our faith and our whole reason for existing. If we compromise our Catholicity in the name of a false ecumenism, we will have destroyed the very foundation upon which we have built. Therefore, we have to stand, and we have to fight.

And this we cannot do alone and by ourselves, or separated one from another into competing jurisdictions, because a house which is divided against itself shall surely fall. We have to stand and fight together if we are to have any victory in this war.

The theme of this present Congress is “Reaffirmation”: reaffirmation of our belief in the Christian Faith; reaffirmation of our obedience to the orthodox Catholic Religion; reaffirmation of our commitment to the sound principles of the Anglican Tradition; and a reaffirmation of our real oneness in the Body of Christ and our need to be united together in one bond of communion and fellowship within that Body which is His holy Catholic Church. And this, I do believe, can be achieved if we can only agree on a “Basis for Full Communion” upon which we can build together in unity, an irreducible minimum of principles that will become for us the foundation of our common fellowship.

And so, finally, my brethren, as I come now to the close of this address, I would set before you a challenge. I would propose to you that we here at this Congress should formulate just such a “Basis for Full Communion” amongst ourselves, and that we come together to form a Communion of Catholic and Apostolic Anglican Churches, and that we then take this back with us to our respective jurisdictions to be considered by our several Synods for their approval. And I would propose to you that this “Basis for Full Communion” should contain the following fundamental principles: that full and visible communion should exist between all Anglican Christians who uphold, maintain, preserve, and teach the true orthodox Christian Faith and Catholic Religion as set forth in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as are expressed in the three great Catholic Creeds, and the Dogmatic Definitions of the undisputed Ecumenical Councils; who accept the two Sacraments of the Gospel, that is to say, the sacred mysteries of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as being generally necessary to salvation, and who believe and teach the Catholic doctrines of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Real Presence of Christ in that Holy Supper; who accept those five other sacred mysteries also commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Matrimony, Orders, and Unction, as means of grace imparted to faithful Christians, each according to his calling in Christ; who uphold, maintain, and preserve the Three-fold Ministry in its fullness and integrity, and the unbroken Apostolic Succession; who uphold, protect, and defend the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, and the sanctity of marriage and the family; and who strive to live as true and loyal Christians in this present world as they look for the long-awaited fulfillment of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the establishing of His everlasting kingdom.

These, for me, are the essential truths of the Catholic Religion, and the doctrinal foundation of the Anglican Tradition, and the irreducible minimum for full communion of traditional Anglicans one with another. We need to settle once and for all what we believe to be the essentials of our common faith and practice, and establish definite doctrinal parameters, while allowing for breadth and diversity in those matters where such are permissible, and perhaps even necessary, for a greater wideness of the Christian experience. And if we can do that, then we can leave this Congress not only feeling that we have, by the grace of God, come to the point where we can agree together, but where we can also begin to walk together in that agreement, and start again to rebuild our portion of the Catholic Church upon that sure Foundation, that Foundation which is of, and about, and by, and through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: a Foundation of

revealed Truth, a Foundation solid and sure, laid by God Himself, that one and only Foundation which Saint Peter confessed, and upon which Our Lord promised to build His Church, and against which, as He promised, the gates of hell shall not prevail.