



EVANGELISM

IN ACTION

**Suggestions and guidance on starting
Missions and Parishes in the
ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Much of following material was contributed by members of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States - Anglican Catholic Church (ACC) who were instrumental in the formation of new parishes in areas where previously no ACC parish existed. Endowed with a spirit of evangelism and a strong loyalty to the historic faith, and trusting in the Holy Spirit to guide them, they set about accomplishing what might have seemed at the outset to be impossible. Today these efforts have come to fruition as three thriving parishes of the ACC.

(N.B. It has been adapted in part for use in the Diocese of the United Kingdom, by the Bishop, the Right Revd Damien Mead).

It is the sincere hope of the contributors and the publishers that this outline will be helpful to others who may have the opportunity to bring the Church into a new area.

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered In My Name, there am I in the midst of them." These will be the watchwords for anyone who desires to be a part of the Anglican Catholic Church and finds no traditional parish in his area. You might ask "But what can one or two individuals do?" Our Lord answered that question when he told his apostles that they could move mountains with faith as small as a mustard seed. Whether you are a single individual, a husband and wife team, or a member of a group desiring to return to orthodox Anglican worship, you can be a catalyst in bringing a new congregation together.

WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?

The first step deals with a personal assessment. A review of the following questions may be helpful:

1. Am I sufficiently motivated to devote the time and energy necessary to this task?
2. Am I sufficiently strong in my faith to draw others to form a new congregation?
3. Do I have the necessary administrative and organisational skills?
4. Do I know enough about the Anglican Catholic Church to convince others?
5. Am I able to make at least a modest financial outlay to get started?
6. Here is a hard one - Take a long and carefully considered look at yourself – is there anything about your personality, your appearance, habits or manner that may put people off? I know its difficult but often people make their initial judgment on our message by how we present ourselves. I am not suggesting we all need to be Mr Universe or Miss World, nor the greatest wit or most charismatic figure. However we do need to be honest about any shortfalls we have and try and compensate for them.

If you cannot answer each question with a resounding YES...DON'T GIVE UP! These questions were not designed to become stumbling blocks, but rather to help you face realistically the effort that will be required. If you have reached the point of seriously considering your capabilities to do this work, believe that God is reaching out to you. Respond to Him with PRAYER and FAITH and ACTION!

Some of those involved in the establishment of ACC Missions above suggest:

"PRAY for motivation and a strong faith. PRAY for solutions to difficult problems. PRAY for courage and endurance. Things go better with prayer. Never underestimate the power of prayer or think that you can accomplish much without it. Make God a partner in your effort. Contact the Diocesan Office of the Anglican Catholic Diocese in which you live and advise them of your desire to start a mission or parish. They will provide support and assistance in particular in obtaining a Priest or a Deacon to minister to your group as often as is practical."

"We began on the foundation of two Scriptural principles: recognizing the authority of the clergy; and ministering to the poor through tithing and personal involvement in local charities-- and everything seemed to sort itself out around this foundation. Even when the work was hard or the results temporarily discouraging, God seemed to be blessing us and we continued to move forward."

"Become involved in local community or church initiatives, Pro Life Meetings, even Prayer Book Society Meetings and ecumenical gatherings and groups can raise the profile of the ACC. It is important that ACC isn't compromised but it is equally important that we be seen to be outward looking and concerned about issues outside of the popular myth that we are only obsessed with Women Priests, Sexual Morality or moaning about the Church of England."

Remember that the Bishop is the Chief Shepherd and is ultimately responsible for the life and growth of the Church in his Diocese. We would not presume to do his work without his knowledge and permission. If you are beginning your missionary project with the help of a Priest, Deacon or Lay Reader, he will communicate with the Bishop on your behalf, if you haven't got a Priest, Deacon or Lay Reader then it is important that, if you are an individual starting a Mission, you speak to the Area Dean responsible for your area yourself (see below). If you are a group of people you should elect / appoint someone as the leader of the group to communicate with him.

Dean of the North:

The Very Revd Charles Johnson
24 Woodward Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 8TU
Tel 0161 798 6251 Email: mary1callan@yahoo.co.uk

Dean of the North:

The Very Revd Raymond Thompson
24 Bronington Close, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 7RA
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HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

If you are already an Anglican Catholic, with membership in an existing parish, you probably have the basic knowledge to tell others about the Church. On the other hand, if you have been a member of the Church of England, or a member of a non-Anglican body, you may need more information about the ACC. In your initial contact with your Area Dean, you might want to ask for help in locating the nearest ACC parish. If at all possible, visit that parish, talk with the Priest and, as soon as appropriate, become a communicant. If you are too far away to attend regularly, at least get on the parish mailing list. You will then have a church home until your own local parish is established.

There are several excellent publications that will keep you abreast of the activities of the ACC as a whole. A list of these publications is included in the back of this booklet. Note also the address for the Anglican Catholic Bookshop which is an invaluable source of information about the DUK and ACC.

PHASE I : PUBLICISE YOUR MISSION

After completing the preliminary steps outlined above, you are ready to begin your search for others who, like you, may be seeking a new church home. There may be some local Anglican and Roman Catholic traditionalists who have stopped going to church. (Maybe a few who are still "hanging on" will be influenced by your dedication and decide to join you.) There are always people in the community who are not affiliated with any church. How are you going to reach these prospective parishioners?

Spread your message by word of mouth in social, job and church situations. When someone asks how you are keeping busy, tell them without hesitation that you are working to form a new congregation. Explain why you're doing this and encourage their interest and participation. Perhaps they will know of someone who is seeking a new church home. It might be helpful to have small cards printed up with your name and phone number as a representative of the Anglican Catholic Church. The Diocesan Office will be able to help with advice on appropriate wording etc.

Follow up by writing or phoning anyone whose name is given to you. If possible, send literature and brochures which explain the Mission and the ACC. Such materials can often be obtained from other parishes, through the Bookshop and Diocesan Office. Be original where you can - prepare flyers and information sheets about local ACC efforts. However appearances are important it is better to have things printed or well photocopied and everything 'going out' under the name of the ACC should be accurate and not contain anything that the ACC doesn't support or believe in. Where you produce poster remember that advertising experts recommend that 'less is more' and that only around 10 – 15 words should be used on a poster – with an eye catching picture or image. Avoid language that appears too complicated "11am Solemn High Pontifical Mass" could be just as effective as 11am Mass.

Start a publicity campaign.

- a. Contact radio and TV stations and request public service announcements which are usually cost free.
- b. Send newsworthy Information on the ACC along with plans of your project in the form of a press release to the local newspapers. This is free "advertising." The Diocesan Office can advise of the wording of Press Releases.
- c. Advertise in your newspaper in the church directory section (if it has one) Remember to tell Newspapers that Church Service Advertisements are VAT free.
- d. Be prepared to make a telephone number 'public' and be prepared for telephone calls, and make sure you have ready answers for the questions such ads may generate. Again, follow up by sending brochures and information by mail. Through telephone and mail inquiries, you can assemble a mailing list for use whenever you have announcements about your activities. A periodic newsletter can be especially useful.
- e. Contact your local Yellow Pages and Thompson Local Directories where a free line ad can be inserted – make sure that because of space restrictions - "Anglican Catholic Church" should take priority as a title for the advert.
- e. Send information about your progress to the ACC-UK the Diocesan Magazine and ask that your activities be publicised in it and copy sent to the Trinitarian, the official newspaper of the ACC. Invite other Anglican Catholic Parishes to inform you of any persons they may know of whom you might contact.
- f. The Diocesan Office and Website often gets enquiries from people in different parts of the Country – they will be put in touch with their nearest ACC Mission – which may be you.

PHASE II: ORGANISE YOUR CONTACTS

Does all of this sound overwhelming? Don't be discouraged. Your initial efforts will hopefully result in at least a small nucleus of persons willing to work with you in this exciting venture in faith. However sometimes it takes a long time ... people are sometimes reluctant to make a commitment to something that seems unstable or untested. Don't be afraid to seek out people with special skills and get them involved. Invaluable is someone with journalistic talent for your publicity campaign and general information program. A good typist with some creativity can produce your service bulletin. Of course, access to a computer is a real plus. Someone with a sound financial background can be very valuable as your first treasurer.

PHASE III: PLAN YOUR FIRST GROUP MEETING

The initial meeting can be an informal one for the purpose of getting acquainted, or if time seems right, a full blown organisational meeting where you will map out a course of action for the future. If at all possible, hold your first meeting in conjunction with a worship service, either a Mass or perhaps Evensong. Continue your publicity program, using all the techniques listed above.

"When we first began we advertised an organizational meeting, but no one showed up! Undaunted, we advertised the beginning of services to be held in our home. Seven attended, and the number has continued to grow!"

"We began with heavy advertising for our first service through print ads and radio announcements. Posters with an information number were helpful in getting to know potential visitors personally when they called. It was also critical in building a list of contacts. We were also helped by the support of friends (and clergy) from other ACC parishes, who came to our first service to show visitors that the Anglican Catholic Church was alive and well, and to help answer any questions. Once you begin services, continue them, in one way or another! Even the appearance of inconsistency or discontinuity can seriously impede your efforts to grow as a viable parish."

"We started by holding one or two services each month, with group discussion at a coffee hour afterward. Attendance was generally good, but it was ten months before a significant number committed themselves to forming a parish."

At this point, several important requirements should be addressed. Which of these planning details you will be able to arrange before your first meeting will depend on your particular circumstances. If your search has brought forth considerable enthusiasm and expressions of commitment, move quickly toward an organisational meeting while interest is high. On the other hand, it may be necessary to work out the following details to attract people and generate interest in your program.

Where to hold the first meeting: Restaurant, hotel, Age Concern Centre, school building, village hall, your home, someone else's home, a local church, cemetery chapel? All are possibilities. If possible, choose a centrally located site, or at least one easily reached from all sections of your town or city. Parking can be a concern, so try to find a site with adequate off-street parking spaces, remember too public transport, and a nearby public toilet if the venue doesn't have one.

Prospective worship sites can be difficult, but not impossible to find. First, try for accommodations at local churches. Contact Protestant ministers, Roman Catholic and Orthodox priests, as well as Rabbis. Don't be discouraged by negative replies. Again, consider schools, clubs, Undertakers, even hotel rooms.

Be prepared to pay a fee, if only in the form of a donation. Hotel fees may be too high for a small beginning group. Remember that many congregations started by worshipping in private homes.

Important When contacting prospective hosts, present a letter of introduction from your priest in charge or the Area Dean. This will establish your credibility and may open more doors than if you appear to be acting independently.

Equipment and furnishings. Unless you are fortunate enough to obtain the use of an altar equipped church right from the beginning, you may have to improvise. Whatever is used for the altar should be as nearly as possible 39" high and suitably draped. Simple cloths will do in the beginning. Other items needed right from the start are (at least) two candlesticks, candles, a cross or crucifix and the usual communion vessels, including chalice, paten, and cruets for the wine and water. However your priest or the priest who serves your Mission will normally have these with him initially.

"Our first altar was a household ironing board on top of which was placed a rectangular piece of plywood; the entire structure was then covered with smoothly ironed white sheets and a tablecloth of delicate fabric as fair linen."

"We received a number of items as gifts from our sponsor parish. Our priest supplied the chalice, burse, veils and vestments on a loan basis. Most people attending services bought their own Hymn Books, but we were grateful that our sponsor parish donated both Service Booklets and some extra Hymn Books."

"We were helped tremendously by the Diocese and the generosity of other parishes, who provided us with liturgical objects, altar hangings, communion sets, etc. We began by having no music; once we had enough people who knew some hymns, we sang them acapella; after a short while, we used a keyboard played by a member of the congregation; then progressed to hiring an organist, so that when we rented a church building, he was able to play on a real organ. It's important not to get too concerned about perfect music in the very beginning!"

Sometimes the Diocesan Office acts as a clearing house for various items of church furnishings and equipment, making them available to parishes in need.

An expensive option to the music problem is A Gilbransen Digital Hymnal which retails for many hundreds of pounds. However there are various recordings available on CD and Tapes of Hymn Music.

Your priest or deacon will probably have his own vestments or may be able to borrow them from another parish. However, a cassock and surplice for a lay reader may be an immediate requirement and these should be purchased as soon as possible, if they are not otherwise available. Lay readers need to obtain a license from the Bishop, which is renewed annually. There are also restrictions on what a Lay Reader can do.

Some new parishes are formed almost from the first gathering of interested persons. How quickly you progress toward your established goal will depend on many factors. Some you will have control over, others you will not.

Here are some additional suggestions – infact they are really MUSTS:

Right from the beginning, treat your effort as the most serious undertaking of your life. Not only will this enable you persevere in what may be a difficult task, but it will indicate to those you are trying to reach that yours is a legitimate and worthwhile goal. Present yourself as a dedicated and stable Traditional Anglican, and present the Church you have embraced as a viable, authentic province of the one, Holy Catholic Church of Jesus Christ.

As early as possible, seek to "do things right." Under the guidance of your priest or deacon, promote orderly conduct of worship and church business. Don't be satisfied with "makeshift arrangements" any longer than necessary.

What if you are unsuccessful in getting a clergyman at the start? This will be a true test of your faith and that of the people who have joined with you. It may be necessary to begin with Morning and Evening Prayer conducted by either a member of the Congregation (in lay cloths) or a Lay Reader, vested in cassock, surplice (and scarf). These services can be supplemented with prayer groups, bible study, etc.

You may be unable to find a host church willing to accommodate you on Sunday morning. How about Sunday afternoon or 5:00 o'clock Evensong? If your Priest serves another parish and travels to your area to minister to your congregation, Saturday Mass may be the answer. But remember Sunday worship is the norm.

Finally, try not to worry if your progress is not as rapid or satisfying as you would desire. Place your faith in Him whose work you are doing. Be patient and persevere. Never lose sight of your goal; God will work out the timetable.

"We were blessed by having the interest and loving care of our priest and the support, both financially and spiritually, of our sponsor parish, St. Margaret of Scotland. They represented a tangible connection with the rest of the Body of Christ which was very important in an area where historic Anglicanism had all but disappeared."

"Things will not always move forward without trials and discouragement. These will pass. We are dealing with the institution that our Lord established. It is HIS Church and HE will not allow it to fail. Continue to pray, to grow, to prosper, to be a light in a dark world. Experience all the peace, love and Joy that God has for you. "

"There is a delicate balance to the process of beginning a mission. You must want it to succeed with all your heart, soul and mind; yet in the midst of your utter commitment you must be always aware that it is a work not of your own making, and that God's will-- not your own -- will be done. Remember St. Paul's words about establishing churches: 'Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.'"

In this booklet we have attempted to guide you through the beginning stages of starting a new Anglican Catholic Church parish. To begin with you will be designated as a 'Provisional Mission'. The Canons have established the practice to qualify as a new parish or as a mission. Once you have satisfied those requirements, you are ready to move forward toward full status as a parish of the Diocese. Your clergyman in charge will direct you in the matters of selecting a name for your congregation, petitioning the Synod for admission into the Diocese, and electing your Church Council and officers. God bless you and give you joy and success in His service.

A PRAYER FOR CHURCH GROWTH

"Go with us, Holy Spirit, into the world. Mold us, make us, and shape us into the image of Christ; that men may take notice that we have been with Jesus, and so join with us in thy house to glorify thy name; for the sake of Him who died and rose again and ever liveth to make intercession for us, our Saviour Jesus Christ." *Amen*

[Written by the Most Rev. Dean Stephens, late Archbishop of the ACC]

INFORMATION SOURCES

ACC UK (Magazine of the Diocese of the United Kingdom)

The TRINITARIAN (Bi-monthly newspaper of the Anglican Catholic Church).

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC BOOKSHOP

c/o The Diocesan Office (carries a range of missals, prayer books, devotional works and ACC merchandise such as badges, posters and leaflets)

DIOCESAN WEBSITE

www.anglicancatholic.org.uk

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