

PRECEPTS AND STANDARDS OF THE UNITED ANGLICAN CHURCH
(PREVIOUSLY THE ANGLO-CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE AMERICAS)

Note: This statement stands on the shoulders of many witnesses to God's gift to the Church Catholic to humankind. Especially is this so of Archbishop Robert Q. Kennaugh and the Anglican Rite Jurisdiction of the Americas (ARJA). To all of them the "Precepts and Standards" are dedicated with gratitude. The statement extends their principles to ARJA's ecclesiastical successor, The Anglo-Catholic Church in the Americas (ACTA). And it reaches out to all in charity and ecumenical hope.

God's saving Gospel is the message of man's perfection attained through union with His Son, Jesus Christ - that by His Love, manifest in Jesus, deliverance from the despair of sin, sickness and death is assured for those who believe and follow Him. It is the good news - ratified in His Resurrection - that death is not the end of life, but the point of mortality's culmination in immortality, in life eternal in the resplendent glory of God's radiance, His unending presence, shining reflectively in and through all of Heaven's company. The Gospel is addressed to all who would hear, believe and share in that company. Until history's final consummation the voice of the Gospel is God's Church - which, by His Holy Spirit since Pentecost, he consecrates, empowers and send into the world, and in which He continually dwells.

Obedient to the Lord's charge and instruction the Apostles with their chosen companions, after that the Holy Spirit had come upon them at Pentecost, traveled afar to proclaim His wondrous life, death and resurrection, Baptizing and making Disciples and establishing communities of the Faith as they went.

Through history's course the ever-growing number of these congregations were gathered into episcopal jurisdictions (dioceses), provinces, convocations and synods, and finally into branches characterized by the bonds of common language and ethos, especially, Greek, Latin and English. According to an early oral tradition Christianity was planted in Great Britain within a hundred years of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Some say it was by St. Paul. Others by Joseph of Arimathea, the tin merchant who bought from the tin and copper mines of Cornwall

Until the Reformation Age the Church was essentially one in belief, order and worship through local variations in aesthetic style and form were widespread. The last half of the present millennium has seen the fragmentation of its visible unity through schism both within and outside established ecclesiastical institutions - to the point that there are now innumerable truncations of the Church, each holding tenaciously to its own insights into Gospel Faith, Church Order, Liturgical Style, and Governmental System as if theirs alone is valid and authoritative. To date, Rome, Orthodoxy and the Catholic parts of Anglicanism have kept whole and entire all the essentials of faith, order and worship of the ancient undivided church. These are the great Branches of the One Vine of Christ, the Holy Catholic Church.

Meanwhile the swirling currents of rapid changes in the world of secular politics, learning and fashion have accelerated, heightening their challenges to the Church's theological and pastoral witness. Secularism, materialism, humanism, scientism, modernism, hedonism, and post-modern Gnosticism flood many of God's altars and pulpits, to the confusion of the faithful, and to the confounding of their ability to speak to their cultures about the eternal verities concerning sin, mercy and hope.

Even so, today the Church is continuing to send forth the successors to the Apostles, its Bishops, with their clergy and laity, to preach the Gospel everywhere to all mankind, making new Disciples and gathering them into new and renewed faith communities. They continue to teach the faithful with sound spiritual learning, and to nurture its members by Word and Sacrament to the end that the world may see, hear and know Jesus. Through His Church He is still present to His human brothers and sisters, still leading us by the Holy Spirit into those paths of holiness which lead each of the faithful across Heaven's threshold and through the gates of everlasting life. This is the mission of the Anglo-Catholic Church, one of the constituencies of the Holy Catholic Church. Against His Church, ultimately, the Lord has promised that "the gates of hell shall not prevail."

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Through the Holy Catholic Church its members are called by the indwelling Holy Spirit to discipleship in the work of the world's transfiguration, to be faithful and obedient to God in worship, fellowship, learning and service. By the same Spirit they become the Royal Priestly People of God, a continuing manifestation of Christ's Mercy and Love in and to the world.

Revelation of spiritual truth comes to man from God. Man cannot decide what constitutes God's truth, but can only close his eyes and ears to it - or thankfully and obediently receive, understand, cherish, defend, teach and live what God has made known by the spirit through the Saviour. Christ's Church is not of man's designing but of the divine will, promise and gift for the purposes of His Kingdom.

Three traditional symbols describe The Church's essence and meaning: The Body of Christ, The Vine of Christ, and the Bride of Christ. Seen as the Sacred Body it is understood to comprehend a complex, abundant, rich, interrelated and wondrously dynamic diversity contained and unfailingly sustained within one organic whole under one eternal Head. Seen as the Sacred Vine it is understood as a living, spreading vine carefully tended and pruned by apostolic husbandmen, through whose branches and tendrils course the life-giving Spirit of God - an ever fruitful source of spiritual shelter, nourishment and glad satisfaction for all who come under the spread of its lights and shadows. Seen as the Holy Bride it is understood to be the sign and promise of the ultimate nuptial mystery - mirrored in the sacred union of a man and a woman in the holy estate of matrimony - by means of which the Lord and His Faithful People are, and are becoming, eternally conjoined in ever gracious and loving Communion

The Church is the Communion of Saints, that spiritual solidarity between the faithful on earth and those in the company of heaven which, together with angels and archangels, joins all uplifted hearts in sublimest songs of thanksgiving and praise to the One thrice-holy Lord, Most High..

Finally, the Church is that society on earth which lives St. Vincent's ancient Rule of Faith: "Let us hold that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all, for that is Catholic."

APOSTOLIC PRINCIPLES

The Holy Catholic Church embraces in all its fullness the Faith Once Given - the same yesterday, today and forever - and bears witness to these essential Principles of Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order:

Holy Scriptures: The sacred writings, the Old and New Testaments, the Bible, are the Word of God and the Church's authentic record of His revelation of Himself, His saving witness and moral demands - a revelation valid for all men and for all time. The Scriptural Apocryphal Books are a connective literature which aids in the understanding of Scripture's witness

The Creeds: Drawn from the Baptismal vows used in first century churches, The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed (the oldest Creed in universal use - which came out of the Church's second and third century struggles with theological confusion) are summaries of the Church's basic Faith. Likewise, that known as the Creed (or Symbol) of St. Athanasius has long been honored, especially by Anglican Christians, as an authentic expression of the Church's belief in God the Holy Trinity.

Tradition: The Sacred Tradition of the Church is found in the Apostolic teachings set forth in the writings of the ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Church and in the ecumenical decrees of the Great Councils of the Undivided Church - especially those of the first four centuries.

The Sacraments: Obedient to dominical mandate and the Apostolic Tradition, the Church unfailingly offers to the faithful seven Sacraments which are outward and visible signs and instruments of God's Grace and Good Will towards mankind. They are objectively efficacious without dependence on any subjective perception of effect.

The Apostolic Ministry: Called, chosen, ordained and sent by the Lord in succession to the Twelve, the Church's Bishops, Priests and Deacons are bearers of the Holy Spirit for the upbuilding of the Body in grace of Holiness and the power of Service and Mission in the world. Given by Apostolic Men in the Church, their succession is not only in office and function, but also in collegial and doctrinal fellowship with all the successors of the Apostles - to whom they owe special fidelity, as to the Lord. These Orders are indelibly given to men only.

The Ministry of the Laity is an extension of and collaborative participation through ordered Discipleship and Service in this same apostolate of the Lord and of the Twelve with the many Disciples, witnessed from generation to generation in and through their successors. After Baptism and due instruction, and having reached that maturity of discernment at which the Lord's true Body and Blood is known and understood to be present in the Consecrated Bread and Wine of the Eucharistic Sacrament, the baptized should receive the Sacrament of Holy Confirmation. This Sacrament completes their initiation into membership in the Church by infusing in them the Gifts and Power of the Holy Spirit by means of which they are to live out their special vocations and ministries.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES: THE WORD OF GOD

The Holy Scriptures - The Bible, The Book of Books, The Word of God - are the Church's record of God's eternal love song with humankind, with His cosmic creation.

It is the voice of the Father speaking in trumpet sounds through the Prophets, Priests and Kings of His People Israel to call them by power and glory into an exclusive covenant relationship with Him, a relationship of Righteousness and Justice in the earth. And it is of Israel's antiphonal counterpoint of rebellion in pursuit of its vain idolatries; then its empty despair and longing for restoration when their falsehoods are overtaken by reality and truth. It is of their hopeless hope and of God's sure promise of their redemption through the One who would come as their Messiah, bringing His Mercy and Blessing upon the seed of Abraham, and through them upon all nations of the earth.

It is the song of the Divine Son coming from the realm of eternity and perfect Grace through the virginal womb of Mary to don the vestments of human flesh and blood, clothing His entry into the arena of man's history to claim it for His Father's Glory. It is of the bursting forth of resplendent Light upon history's darkness so that all men through Him might come to the Joy for which they were created. Then is heard the dreadful dirge of His momentary defeat in the shadow of rejection, of consequent sorrow and passion and suffering and death and black emptiness. At last comes the exultant soaring, full-throated triumph of Life over Death wrought in the Resurrection of the God-man from Galilee, Jesus, Messiah, Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Finally comes the diminuendo of His bodily departure from those who had seen His Light, His return to the Right Hand of the Father where he is completing His plea for us, offering in exchange the merit of His all-sufficient Sacrifice for all mankind.

The last movement is the unfinished chorale of the Spirit. At first heard faintly as a brooding over the waters of the Creation, then as harmonious accompaniment to the works of God's Providential Hand in Israel's long history, it whispers its spirations of hearing and seeing in the ears and eyes of the first Apostles and Disciples so that, when the time should come for it, they would remember and know and follow Him. In louder, then quieter voices the Spirit's song continues even now, and ever anew, to quicken Life in the midst of man's mortality until the last one crosses over the final threshold of Heaven's Mansions.

So the Bible is more than a vast collection of words drawn from the usages of many tongues to express somehow one's inexpressible longing for meaning. It is more than a storehouse of stories through which to reach for understanding of life and how to live it successfully. It is more than a sourcebook of propositional maxims for theological acceptance and moral guidance. It is more than a groundwork from which to mine wisdom about issues of life and death, of what is good and evil, of truth and beauty and their opposites, of love given and received. It is even more than an inexhaustible resource for meditation and for entering into the experience of the beyond and the wholly other in the midst of the here and now.

In addition, and preeminently, the Bible is the Church's Book, enshrining the Spirit of the Living God, by constant reference to which it calls men and women to the Faith in Christ Jesus in every age of history. It is the deposit of all things required as necessary for Salvation in the same Lord Christ - to whom, by the indwelling Spirit, the Church leads those who would see and know Jesus. And it is the point of discernment by which men and women in the Church come to know the ways and means of reaching for their own fulfillment in moral

existence by becoming personal icons of His Truth and Love to the world which longs for but does not know where to look for Him.

In the Church, then, the Word of the Gospel is inseparably companion to the Sacraments of Life and Grace. Word and Sacraments, Sacraments and Word. The two, intertwined in prayer and worship, become the backdrop and pathway through which the Divine comes to dwell in the inner being of the faithful and to transfigure them into points of hope for the unredeemed, imprisoned by the failing, yet still strong, wiles of the enemy of the family of Adam and Eve.

THE CREEDS: ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Church embraces ever anew the basic Articles of Faith contained in its three Creeds:

Revealed to the world in three distinct persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - the Creeds affirm the Church's belief in One God.

Of God the Father, the Creeds declare Him to be maker of heaven and earth, of the cosmic universe and all that is in it, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate - including the "laws" which regulate its interrelationships; wholly other than His creation, the eternal Father loves, sustains, and reigns over it.

Of God the Son, Jesus Christ, the Creeds affirm Him to be eternally begotten and only Son of the Father - co-eternal with the Father as God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God - Co-creator with the Father and mankind's Lord; he is God Incarnate, born from mankind's salvation from the womb of the Virgin Mary through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and made man; He lived in the time of Pontius Pilate and was crucified under Pilate's authority, suffering pain and death at his order; in accordance with the Scripture of the Jews, on the third day He rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven; he sits eternally co-regnant at the Father's right hand in power and sovereignty over heaven and earth; and He shall come again with glory to judge both those who are alive at his coming and those who have died. Of His Kingdom there shall be no end.

Of God the Holy Ghost the Creeds declare He is the Lord, the giver and sustainer of life. He is the Fount of Knowledge and Learning, Inspirer of Scripture, the One who speaks through the voice of the prophets; He proceeds from the eternal God-head to indwell and upbuild (edify) the Church into One Communion of Holy Love, illuminating and recalling the faithful to the fullness of truth about Jesus Christ and shining through them by the radiance of His Love to the quickening of Life for all the world. This Holy Spirit, as with each of the three persons of the triune Divinity, is to be worshipped and glorified in and by the Church.

Of the Church the Creeds proclaim it to be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. It's unity is the unity of the Body's members under Christ its head. It is Holy because the Holy Spirit dwells in it and sanctifies its members. It is Catholic because it is universal - that is its membership is open to any and all persons who hold earnestly the one Faith revealed for all people, everywhere, in all times - and because it is sent to preach the Gospel to the whole world. It is Apostolic because it continues steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine, Order and Fellowship, and "in the breaking of Bread".

Finally, the Creeds speak of the Communion of Saints, of the Forgiveness of Sins, of the Resurrection of the Body, of the final judgment, and of the Life of the world to come:

Of the Communion of Saints because it is the dynamic Society of the Redeemed - the ones who are advancing steadily in the Sanctifying Spirit towards the perfection of their own holiness, their perfect wholeness, and that of all members of the Mystical Body of Christ - the ones thorough whom the whole world is to come into unity in and with God;

Of the Forgiveness of Sins because without Mercy all hope of life cannot but perish in death's victory and prison, in the darkness of incompleteness, of being finally unknown and unknowing; and because Jesus, the head of the Body, whose name is Deliverer - who is eternal Mercy, who is Hope and Trust realized forever - brings totally cleansing and restorative Love to any who allow Him to touch them with His Absolute Faithfulness.

Of the Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting because He honored and dignified the human body by assuming flesh and blood in His Incarnation; and because He both promised and, by His bodily Ascension and heavenly session, made forever real as fact that our eternal being will be clothed with bodily substantiality. This body is not cursed, nor a curse, but a holy and shining vestment of immortality.

Of the coming again of Jesus in glory to judge the living and the dead because it confirms the expectation that history is not endless but will come to its final consummation through His Judgment. Faithfulness now is to be ready for the eschatological moment whenever in His will and foreordaining it shall come.

THE SACRAMENTS: SIGNS AND INSTRUMENTS OF GRACE

Sacraments. The Holy Sacraments give inward and spiritual grace to the faithful by means of outward and visible signs. The *Sacraments of Life* (the Dominical Sacraments) - Holy Baptism and Holy Communion - are required by the Lord's command for all who would enter into His Salvation. The *Sacraments of Grace* are: Holy Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, Holy Orders, Holy Absolution or Penance, and Holy Unction. These also mediate the Lord's Grace and Favor. Required of none, they enable and empower any for whom the promised benefit is needed for a particular vocation in the Lord and in the Church.

Holy Baptism. This Sacrament objectively accomplishes as its inward and spiritual grace the washing away of all pre-baptismal sin and the incorporation of the person into Christ, making him or her a child of God and an inheritor of eternal life; and it is their initiation into membership in His One Church on earth. Generally necessary for Salvation, Baptism's outward and visible sign is water poured upon the candidate (or in which he or she may be immersed) together with the baptismal words pronounced upon him or her in the name of the Holy Trinity by a competent minister of the Church. It effects the condition of being spiritually "born again" and indelibly confers newness of being and character. Therefore, once given, it is not properly repeatable.

The Holy Eucharist is the Church's obedient offering to God of the outward and visible signs of the bread and wine which His Son commanded in the night in which He was betrayed. To these elements we join our sinful unworthiness - which He redeems through His eternal and all-sufficient life, passion, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and exaltation. In their consecration at the hands of His Priest He infuses the real presence of His Body and Blood to be consumed by the Faithful in Holy Communion with Him. This is the Sacrament's inward and spiritual grace. It is the Lord's appointed means by which all the faithful are united to

Him ever anew in the glory of His Mercy and Benediction. Commonly also called “The Mass”, this sacramental rite is the central act of Christian worship. As such, it should be the principle service on Sundays and Holy Days when possible; it is appropriate also at burials (The Requiem) and marriages (The Nuptial). Worthily received, the Holy Communion nurtures in the Faithful their eternal life in Christ - which does not await their mortal end, but, though veiled, is even now.

Holy Absolution or Penance. The Lord’s appointment to the Successors of the Twelve of His Keys of Mercy is fulfilled in their ministrations (through their Priests) of the Sacrament of Absolution or Penance. When properly availed via Self Examination, Contrition, Confession, Absolution and Penance the Sacrament absolves from post-Baptismal sin and restores to fellowship with the Lord and the Church. It also imparts the added benefit of remedial grace which aids in recovery from sinful propensity. Absolution is objectively plenary, and assures pardon.

In *Holy Confirmation*, after personal renewal of the Baptismal vows of Faith, Love and Repentance, the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Ghost (the inward and spiritual graces of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Ghostly Strength, Knowledge, True Godliness and Holy Awe) are conferred by the visible sign Laying-on-of-Hands and anointing with Chrism by the Bishop. The Confirmand assumes direct personal responsibility and accountability to God for living his or her life as a Christian.

Holy Matrimony is the sacrament of the lifelong union of a Christian man and a Christian woman as husband and wife. The union is exclusive to the parties and is indissoluble by man. It is for the purpose of their mutual fellowship, encouragement and understanding, for the procreation (if it may be) of children and their physical and spiritual nurture, and for the safeguarding and benefit of society. It signifies the ineffably loving unity and fidelity that is between Christ and His Church. Bishops resolve questions of impediment which may prevent the completing of the sacramental union in particular cases.

Holy Unction is the sacramental Anointing and Laying-on-of-Hands with prayer by a Priest or Bishop upon the sick, especially those in danger of death. Oil blessed by the Bishop is used as commanded in the Epistle of James. Unction’s benefit is remission of sins where bodily or mental illness needs purifying grace, and fortification and healing of the mind, body and soul from the disorders producing illness. The Prayer of Faith heals the sick.

Holy Orders is the sacramental means by which the Holy Ghost continues Christ’s Apostolic Ministry and Order to His Church through divinely called and ordained Bishops, Priests and Deacons. By the Laying on of episcopal hands these orders are indelibly bestowed upon men in accordance with the model of Christ who said: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and ordained you.” In this way He confers the Apostolic vocation.

MINISTERIAL SERVANTHOOD

Jesus taught of Himself and those who would follow Him, “I am among you as one that serveth.” Just so, every member of the Body is called to a share in Christ’s servanthood - whether in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments for the edifying of the People of God in Holiness, or in the ministry of Mercy and Love in the world for the sake of its redemptive conversion into the Church and the Kingdom. Likewise, just as He appointed to His Apostles the function of empowering, ordering and correlating the ministries of the faithful for the better fulfillment of the Church’s Witness and Mission, even so He ever continues the

same Apostolic Vocation in the Church in every generation. Members of Christ's Body, the Church, are called to reverence those in the Sacred Ministry, for they are "Ambassadors of God who speak in Christ's stead."

SERVANTHOOD OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENTS

Bishops are men called and empowered by the Holy Spirit in the Holy Catholic Church to serve in particular times and places in the historic Fellowship of Christ's Holy Apostles. Within their continuing collegium, and gifted in their grace and authority, they are the Chief Pastors, Priests and Shepherds of the flock of Christ to whom they are appointed. They are fountains of the Divine Mercy, Grace, Order and Mission for the faithful members of His Holy Church committed to their charge. Bishops are consecrated to this Holy Office by other Bishops, regularly three in number, who are known to stand in Apostolic Succession to the Twelve. Bishops are: overseers of the faithful; they are interpreters, teachers, and preachers of the Gospel; they are intercessors, exemplars, and evangelists. No respecters of persons, nor greedy of the world's mana, they are the Lord's servants for the edifying of the Church, His Sacred Bride, and for the Praise and Glory of His Name. They lay down their lives daily for their flock.

Priests are men anointed and ordained by a Bishop of recognized Apostolic credential to minister God' Word and Sacraments under his oversight and in Christ's name; they are ordained to a Cure of souls in which they serve for life unless dispensed by their Bishop. Thus the Priest in his office is an extension of his Bishop's responsibility and pastoral vocation. If its Rector or Vicar, he is to be the spiritual head of his congregation. He is to preach the Gospel, to consecrate and offer the Holy Eucharist, to absolve and bless in the name of the Lord, to lead in evangelizing the unchurched of his locality, to teach, and to watch over his parishioners' souls as one who must give account.

Deacons are ordained and sent by the Bishop in a vocation of perpetual servanthood of the Church under his direct authority. Theirs is primarily a ministry of exemplary modesty and of reverent obedience of him and such other Ministers as may have canonical charge and government over them. There is to be faithful in the Gospel and in the things of the Holy Table. They assist the Priest in the Divine Service by reading the Holy Scripture, particularly the Gospel of the Liturgy, by reading homilies as may be appointed, and by administering the consecrated Chalice in Holy Communion. They are to instruct the young in the Catechism and search for the sick, the poor and impotent peoples of the Church so as to minister to their needs. While assisting a Priest in a local congregation, the Deacon remains under the Bishop's oversight and authority. In all his ministrations the Deacon is to labor for the edifying of the Church and the praise of God's Holy name.

Apostolic, Scriptural and Patristic standards are authoritative for all orders of the Sacred Ministry.

Theological Education. Provision for advancement in spiritual, orthodox and scholarly learning for all the faithful, especially for men preparing for Holy Orders, is a prime concern of the Holy Catholic Church. The Councils of Bishops have authority and responsibility to oversee this vital activity of Church life, and especially to determine the suitability of particular schools and curricula for theological training. As an alternative to enrollment of Postulants and Candidates in traditional residential institutions, well rounded and suitably rigorous reading programs, coupled with adequate pastoral training - all under the direction

of the Bishop and well-qualified tutors of his appointment - may be approved in any jurisdiction where traditional facilities are beyond the reach of apt candidates.

Clergy Celibacy. Neither holy Scripture nor the ancient law of the Church requires that Bishops, Priests and Deacons should marry or not marry; therefore, unless restricted by solemn vows of celibacy, they may choose marriage. Married Clergy have the same obligations of marital fidelity as the Laity.

SERVANTHOOD OF DISCIPLESHIP

The common Discipleship of all is: to hear and learn the Gospel message of Jesus; to worship Him regularly in private prayers, fasting and alms-giving, and in the public liturgies of the Church; to study, absorb and practice His teachings in their lives; to search for the light of His presence in the world, in the Church and in their own souls; to yield themselves courageously to His moral authority and direction; to worship and serve Him in every deed and care; to love and serve the good of every person genuinely with the divine Mercy - without judging and regardless of station or life circumstances; to enjoy the fellowship of the faithful; to receive thankfully and rejoice in His ever-present care and providence; and to be given to the extension of the Church through a personal witness of word and example.

Ministry in the World. Every person who is joined to the Body of Christ by the Baptismal bond is called to a lifelong vocation of Discipleship in the world in succession to and after the model of the Disciples who followed Him in first century Palestine. Each has a unique personal calling and ministry by means of which they utilize their God-given gifts and abilities in the world to search for their own and the world's true meaning and purpose, thereby appropriating and communicating the divine Mercy and Love for the sake of God's Kingdom. Coinherent in this vocation and ministry is the one end shared in common with all the Saints of all time: that through each the Holy Spirit acts over time to bring the person, the world, the Church and the Kingdom to their perfect fulfillment.

The Priesthood of the Laity. Thus in synergy with the mystical oblation of the Eucharistic Liturgy, the People of God exercise the Priesthood of the Laity as a fruit of their ministry in the world. In family life, friendships, work, public service, and recreation the Lay Person always has the calling to be a minister and sign of the presence of Christ and the Church wherever he or she may be. Every member brings the Church to the world through his or her consecrated servanthood, and returns the joys and sorrows of that servanthood as an offering of thanksgiving and penitence on the world's behalf at God's Altar.

Special Ecclesiastical Ministries. Among the many special ministries of service within the Church are those of Sub-deacons, lay Readers, Acolytes, Sacristans (Altar Guilds), Singers, Ushers, Wardens, Vestry and Congregational Council Members, Administrators, Catechists, Evangelists, Visitors, Intercessors, Guilds, Sodalities, and such like. All function collaboratively within the Apostolic Fellowship for the increase of the Church in holiness, edification and Christian joy.

Deaconesses. The ancient office of Deaconess provides opportunity for an established lay vocation for women of tested experience. Such women may be set apart for life by the Bishop to serve designated congregations with the consent of their Rector, as helpers, teachers, visitors and special counselors. The Order of Deaconesses is not and should not be considered an order of ministry for the setting apart of which sacramental ordination is

required or permitted. The Office of Deaconess is a permanent office in the Church, the exercise of which is always subject to licensing and godly direction by the Bishop.

Religious Orders. Religious Orders are spiritual communities for men or for women who offer themselves to God's service through a religious life cloistered from the world. Theirs is a life consecrated by daily work, prayer and study - of perpetual adoration of God. Monks and nuns live under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Religious Orders exist under the patronage of their episcopal visitor and under the ecclesiastical protection of the Bishop of the Diocese where their priory, abbey or convent is located. Within their own houses Religious Orders are governed in accordance with their own Rule under the oversight of their Superior (or other such authority); outside their houses their public functions (including those of third-order members) are under the same authority - with the consent also of the Bishop within whose jurisdiction they may be appointed to serve.

APOSTOLIC ORDER AND GOVERNANCE

Before God and in the Church all the Baptized are of equal value, dignity and importance, for all are called to be Disciples of the Lord and, according to the order of the Spirit's gifts to each, servants of one another and of the world. Yet the Church is not of the world, but living in it. It is not a democracy but a people sharing according to God's appointed Order in His Royal Priesthood. While according to Order individual roles and functions in the Church differ, according to God's mystical Grace and Mercy their value is both uniquely precious and the same. Where possible decision-making by prayer, counsel and common consent at all points or organizational interface is preferred.

Under Apostolic Order *Councils of Bishops*, standing in the shoes of Christ and of the Twelve, exercise collegial headship in the Provinces of the Holy Catholic Church, to oversee, govern and guide the Church in all Faith, Practice and Polity. As Apostles, prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, Teachers and Preachers of the Lord, the Bishops, in collaboration with their Clergy and Laity, are charged with maintaining God's Peace in the Church, with guarding and defending the purity and integrity of its Faith, Worship and Moral Teaching, and with projecting its Mission into the world.

In certain *Branches of the Church* a Bishop may be honored as first among equals within their episcopal collegium. After the model of Christ to Peter, one may be accorded primacy in the pastoral rule of an ecclesiastical household. Yet ultimate jurisdictional authority and responsibility with respect to Doctrine, Order and Mission pertains to the Council of Bishops as a whole - after the model of the Jerusalem Council to which James, the Lord's Brother, rather than Peter, presided.

Within the *Diocese*, the fundamental organic unit of the Church, its Bishop exercises the functions of headship and oversight as a member of the Council of Bishops. In like manner the Rector or Minister-in-charge heads the local congregation. Insofar as is ministerially appropriate and as practical effectiveness allows, the executive and administrative duties of Bishops and Pastors should be shared with other clergy and/or lay men and women - who function collaboratively with them according to Order.

The *selection of Bishops* is a process of initiative and proffer by the Council of Bishops into whose collegium the one to be chosen is to be admitted, and of responsive choice and acceptance (or not) on the part of the Clergy and Laity to whom he is to be shepherd and overseer.

The local *ekklesia* (congregation or Parish) is the gathered community of the faithful called out from the world into a place for the purpose of worshipping their Lord. It is an integral unit of the Diocesan's extended ecclesiastical family. It is not sufficient unto itself, but depends for its spiritual vitality upon the flow of Ecclesial Grace from God through the Diocesan household to the Parish - from Him through the Bishop to His People, and their responsive return of glad thanksgiving to Him in word and deed through the Bishop and Diocese.

All Synods, Dioceses and Parishes of the Church, as well as the Clergy and Laity in their duly appointed roles and inter-relationships, are governed in accordance with the *Canon Law of the Church* under the ultimate authority and magisterium of the Council of Bishops.

Ecclesiastical Courts. Ultimate judicial authority and responsibility for the defense of the faith and the just ordering of godly discipline in a Province of the Church is a function of its ecclesiastical courts, with respect to which the Council of Bishops is the Supreme Court of Appeal.

The Church's Temporalities. The Church recognizes unconditionally the stewardship rights and duties of local congregations in their ownership of their property and other temporalities.

CHRISTIAN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Moral Responsibility. All people, individually and collectively, are responsible before God for what they think, say and do. For the sake of the world and the fulfillment of God's Reign, members of Christ's family bear witness to Christian morality, follow it in their lives, and resist its confusion by the false standards of the world, the flesh and the Devil.

The Law of Love. Jesus confirmed the ancient Jewish Law of Love (Lev. 19:18, Dt. 6:5, Lev. 19:18b), summarizing and transcending both the prohibitions and the underlying positive intentions of the Decalogue. St. John synthesizes them in the one maxim to honor both truth and love as the obverse one of the other. These are ready standards by which every person should regularly assess both things done and things left undone.

Freedom of Conscience. The conscience, uninformed by the due knowledge of right and wrong, is not sufficient as the sovereign arbiter of morals. Every Christian conscience is to be prepared and predisposed under the Divine Moral Law, by the mind of Christ revealed in Holy Scriptures, by the authentic Teachings and Tradition of the Church, and by regular devotion to God via the practices of their religion.

The Christian as Forgiven Sinner. The Church recognizes that man by himself is a subject of his own vanity and a rebel from God's authority. Man sins and is liable to God's righteous judgment. Though original sin is absolved in Baptism, actual sin continues and is revealed in the pain and suffering that everywhere abounds. Against this Christians are called to bear witness of the Lord's plenteous Mercy by their personal acts of mercy joined to His; and, as well, by their own penitential devotion, their personal expression of the joy and power for newness of life experienced from the gift of holy Love channeled through the Sacrament of Forgiveness.

Prayer, Service and Fellowship. Save when the needs of charity or sickness dictate otherwise, attendance and participation in the Liturgy Sunday by Sunday and on appointed Holy Days

sensitizes the conscience of each Baptized person. Private prayer, whether in solitary or with two or three or more - together with constant sacrificial witness in evangelism - forms and informs it for each one of the faithful, clergy and lay. Loving, forbearing fellowship within the local family of God - where the dignity and worth of each is honored without "respect of persons" - tries and extends it. So also does purposive avoidance of disquiet, discontent, condescension, vain criticism, politicization of differences and adversarial advocacy, murmuring, tale-telling, conflict and such like.

Alms-giving. As a means of fulfilling by token their complete self-offering to God, Church members keep unconditionally the standard of the "Biblical Tithe" for their alms-giving. Tithes should be regularly remitted to the congregation so its ministry and mission are never without support. Likewise each congregation gives its "Biblical Tithe" to its Diocese, and the Dioceses to their Provincial Jurisdiction.

Reverence for Life. All life has its source and continuance in the sovereign will of God. God alone is the Lord of Life from its beginning in conception to the end of its mortal term, every created being having a unique dignity and sacred relationship with the Creator. All life, most especially all human life, is therefore to be treated with reverence as God-given, holy, and sanctified to God's purposes and glorification. Christians are called to the protection and enhancement of life in God's Name - avoiding its willful reduction or destruction by substance abuse, violence, abortion or euthanasia, or by the vain injustices of men.

Human Sexuality. The faculties of human sexuality and the gender identities which flow from biological differentiation are likewise God-given. They, too, are to be revered and consecrated to God's glory through the nuptial miracle of completion in sanctified family life or in chastity. Human sexual activity outside the sacramental bond of matrimony is adulterous and diminishes the participants' capacity for nuptial fulfillment. It contravenes the divine will for Creation's consummation in the marriage feast of Christ, the Eternal Bridegroom, with His resplendent Bride, the Church.

Departures from this norm lead to guilt, anger, and violence which attach both the parties and the societies of which they are members. It is noted with special concern that, out of ignorance of or rebellion against God's revealed will, heterosexual license and homosexuality are being advocated as legitimate ways of expression of human sexuality. These evoke a profound need for prophetic witness, and for divine mercy and healing - realized through sacramental Forgiveness and Unction.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

For the Christian, *all of life is prayer* - an offering to God, both conscious and subconscious, of everything we think, say and do, or our joy in Him for Himself, our thanksgiving for His love and beneficence towards us, our shame and sorrow for our offenses against His love, our longing for our perfection which only He can enable, our care for others in their needs and for our relationships with them.

The Daily Offices are formal liturgical prayers which gather up the private and personal prayers of the faithful and join them to the prayers of the Church each day, morning and evening (or by hours in monastic communities). Ordered by the inclusion of prescribed readings from the Psalter and the Old and New Testaments, the Offices are the Church's means of hallowing the passage of time in behalf of all. They need the participation of many that their benefits may be the more widespread.

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the altar of sacrifice, the place of gathering up of all the prayers of the faithful coupled to those of our Crucified and Risen Lord as an offering to the Father by the holy Spirit. In it He perfects our penitence, thanksgiving and adoration. This is an experience to be entered into, not merely a religious drama to be observed. For the Christian it is the total surrender, the giving up as offering to God, of the particularities of life's longings and disillusionments, its hopes and disappointments, its visions and imperfections, its excitements and sorrows. It is the yielding of the self to Him in unreserved faith and trust. It is the re-entry of the pilgrim into the Red Sea waters, a sharing with Jesus in His Resurrection, it is the means whereby God gives life back redeemed and purified of sin, made new in restored promise and hope, transfigured now and forever in the Consecration of Love. It is the absolute promise of the Kingdom of Heaven and of our Resurrection, made real again in the here and now.

Liturgical worship is cast in the language of deeds, and in the words of poetry. Its essential substance, order and meaning are accompanied by resonances of movement, color, sound and redolence. While constant in the givenness of its essence, the liturgical accompaniments, evolving slowly through the centuries, vary from time to time, from place to place, from culture to culture. The liturgy in English, contained in the historic Book of Common Prayer of 1549, and its authentic successors (including the Anglican and American Missals), translates and keeps the ancient Western Liturgical Tradition for spiritual enjoyment and enlivening from generation to generation. At the same time it incorporates (and permits variations of) religious expressions that are as yet unsurpassed for cultures descending linguistically, historically and aesthetically from the "land of the Angels". Anglo-Catholics continue to cherish and follow this liturgical tradition because, more than any other known to speakers of English, it evokes true dynamism in their worship.

Marian Devotion. She who gave consent to God's choice that she should give her flesh and blood to His Incarnate Son, and to birth Him from her virgin womb in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, is rightly to be revered and honored as the Mother of God in his human generation. Called Blessed by the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation, Saint Mary is rightly recognized by Christians as the Blessed Virgin, the Queen of Saints, and besought for her intercessory aid by all who long for special graces from God for their own growth in holiness. But teachings about St. Mary which go beyond what the Scriptures plainly contained are not to be required of any as necessary to be believed for eternal salvation in Her Son, Christ our Lord; at the same time traditional Marian spirituality may not be proscribed in the practice of one's private piety so long as it remains congruent with Apostolic teaching - and so long as it does not conflict with the ordinary devotions of the faithful in the pews.

The Saints of God. The Saints of God are the heroes of the Church. The names of some - whom the Church honors with all the Saints - are known only to the Lord and His heavenly hosts; the names of others have been universally recognized for their special holiness and fidelity, their loyalty, their courage and perseverance in adversity, and their exemplary service to God in His Church - especially men and women of New Testament times. Those who are so recognized may properly be held in reverent remembrance. While their veneration and the bespeaking of their intercessions are fully acceptable in ordinary Christian piety, excesses therein should not be allowed to obscure the duty of the faithful to worship the three persons of the Godhead directly through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ECUMENICAL CONCERN

Inherent in membership in any part of the Universal Church is the desire and prayer of all to be recognized by and in full visible communion with all other members of the sacred society. This, no doubt extends to non-Christian religious bodies as well. It is especially so in Christianity where there is agreement as to the essentials of Apostolic Faith and Order. Yet, sadly, manifold divisions in the Christian household abound as obstacles which obscure the true unity of God's people in His Son.

Thus members of The Holy Catholic Church are called to pursue consistent effort to make more visibly and spiritually real in it that mystical unity for which He so earnestly prayed, for this is the ecclesiastical vine with which He identified Himself and in which He urges all to abide.

To this end we seek the prayers and counsel of our brethren in communion with the Holy See of Rome, with the ancient Patriarchal Sees of the East, with the Union of Utrecht, with those provinces and jurisdictions which derive their Catholic and Apostolic continuity from the hallowed See of Canterbury.

To the same end we seek the prayers and counsel of all outside the Catholic and Apostolic Continuum whose insights into and experience of the Gospel Faith can enhance and deepen our common sense of glad thankfulness in the love of Christ for all men - that by and in the Spirit we may all be one in due course, as He with the Father and the Son is One.

In furtherance of these desires and resolves and as stepping-stones towards complete visible unity, we also seek interim understandings and agreements of mutual recognition with these ecclesiastical brethren. Further, when it can be, we seek concordats of mutual intercommunion with them based on the essential elements of Catholic and Apostolic Faith, Order and Practice.

THE UNITY OF CHRISTIANS

The foregoing sets forth the essential Precepts and Standards by which Anglo-Catholic Christians define and differentiate themselves from other constituencies of God's One Church, In setting them forth no judgment is intended of those whose understanding and sense of ecclesial vocation is different. As the Apostle Paul discerned, "God hath set the members - every one of them - in the body, as it hath pleased Him...they are many members, yet by one body."

When a person is Baptized that person is joined to Christ as a member of His one and only Body. In virtue of that oneness, the person is made one also with every other person who has been so joined to Christ. Whoever denies this unity, denies the Lord who promises and declares it. The faithful can take comfort that this spiritual unity, like the unity present in the nuptial mystery, transcends the obstacles to visible unity manifest in every sin-sick soul and in every ecclesiastical institution. For Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us, has put down sin, Satan, and death, and provides His triumph for the one society of His Redeemed - and a place at His eternal communion feast where heaven and earth are made One through the prayer he taught us to pray. Amen.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Apostolic Episcopate of the Anglican Branch of the Holy Catholic Church was brought to America by Bishop Samuel Seabury, consecrated in 1784 in Scotland by the Non-Juror Bishops, Kilgour, Petrie and Skinner. Two years later Bishops White and Prevoost were consecrated in London. Still later, The Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA was organized in July 1789. With the nation's spectacular growth PECUSA has flourished.

In 1948 PECUSA bestowed the Anglican Episcopate on the Philippine Independent Catholic Church. Formal Intercommunion was established between PICC and the Old Catholic Churches of Utrecht in 1965. The American line was supplemented in 1971 when three PICC Bishops were consecrated by Bishop Zielinski of the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC), Bishop Rinkel of Utrecht, and Bishop DeLos Reyes (PICC).

At its 1976 General Convention PECUSA, acting on its own apart from other Churches claiming Catholicity, decided to accept women into its ordained ministries. At the same time it adopted an entirely new Prayer Book to replace its historic Book of Common Prayer (1928). It effected wide-ranging revision of PECUSA's fundamental theological understandings. At the same time its polity became more authoritarian and imperial, less episcopal and pastoral. It had become a different denomination.

A concerted reaction came when an ad hoc Congress of 5,000 Concerned Churchmen met in 1977 in St. Louis. It resulted in the creation of four Dioceses whose Bishops (Doren, More, Morse and Watterson) were consecrated in January 1978 by Bishop Albert Chambers (PECUSA-Springfield, Retired) with Bishops Pagtakhan (PICC) and Pae (CofE/Korea - Letter of Consent). Before these new Bishops could establish an authentic Province rampant schisms began to divide the Body, willy-nilly, each fragment hoping to emerge as "The Continuing Church".

Observing this chaotic disarray, Father Robert Q. Kennaugh appealed to the PICC for a new bestowal of the Episcopate for a new attempt to bring an expressly Catholic "continuing Church" into being from the remnant of faithful churchmen in and out of PECUSA. As a result, Bishop Kennaugh was consecrated with Bishops G. Wayne Craig, and C. Ogden Miller in September, 1981 at Manila by PICC Bishops Pagtakhan, Rosetter and Mondala; the Holy Catholic Church, Anglican Rite Jurisdiction of America was born. Bishop Kennaugh was made Archbishop and his "Prologue", together with the Provincial Canons of 1979 (based on the traditions of Western Canon Law and originally promulgated by Bishops Mores and Watterson), were adapted and adopted as the charter principles of ARJA. Consecrated later by ARJA was Bishop Jose M. Delgado, HFP, of Puerto Rico, who retained the legal name and ARJA's corporate structure after the formal discontinuance of that Church in favor of the Episcopal Missionary Church.

After Bishop Watterson was received into the Roman Catholic Church his Diocese was merged into the Diocese of Christ the King. There in 1990 Bishop Morse called for the election of two Suffragan Bishops who were consecrated by him with Bishop Haden Jones (C of E, Venezuela Retired) and Bishop Albert Chambers (by Letter of Consent) in June 1990; one of these was Bishop George D. Stenhouse who later became Ordinary of PCK's Diocese of the Eastern States. In late 1992 PCK replaced the 1979 Canons with new Provincial Canons giving virtual universal jurisdiction to its Archbishop. On this issue, Bishops Morse and Stenhouse found that they differed fundamentally and irreconcilably.

Accordingly, Bishop Stenhouse withdrew from the PCK with a remnant of his Diocese which was renamed the Diocese of the Transfiguration. It affiliated as a Diocese with the Episcopal Missionary Church in February 1994, withdrawing from that affiliation when EMS adopted a new Constitution which abandoned the apostolic principles that the Diocese is the fundamental constitutional unit of the Church. Bishop Delgado and his jurisdiction withdrew from the EMC at the same time.

In February 1997 they held a joint Synod to re-form the Province envisioned both by ARJA and the original Morse-Watterson Canons of 1979, naming it the Anglo-Catholic Church in the Americas (ACTA). These Canons recognized Diocese as the Church's fundamental units and the Council of Bishops - not any one man - as having ultimate ecclesiastical authority in the province. So as to provide regularity and validity for its Episcopate, a third Bishop, Norman F. Strauss, was consecrated to be his Coadjutor by Bishop Stenhouse with Bishops Delgado and Laroque (ARJA). This inaugural Provincial Synod also adopted for itself the essential principles of the Kennaugh "Prologue".

ACTA's Council of Bishops, having unanimously accepted these "Precepts and Standards" as their own, commends them in the fullness of Charity to all the faithful in Christ Jesus.

NOTE: The Anglo-Catholic Church in the Americas merged with the Traditional Episcopal Church to become the United Anglican Church. These Precepts were transferred to that body.