



THE PERSONAL ORDINARIATE OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM



# **Growing Out**

Overview Report

***Realising the Vision of  
Anglicanorum Coetibus***

May 2015

## INTRODUCTION

The study outlined in this report entitled **Growing Up: Growing Out** was undertaken in order to assist the Ordinariate to realise in practice the vision laid out in the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*.

On 9 November 2009, Pope Benedict XVI published *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, providing for the erection of Personal Ordinariates as a means by which Anglicans could enter in groups into the full communion of the Catholic Church. It is clear from the Apostolic Constitution that what was being offered was not a short-term initiative to enable easy and swift transition into the Catholic Church, but rather the establishment of an ecclesial body with a permanent place in the Catholic Church. Provision is made for the preservation of “liturgical, spiritual and pastoral traditions of the Anglican Communion within the Catholic Church, as a precious gift nourishing the faith of the members of the Ordinariate and as a treasure to be shared.” (*Anglicanorum Coetibus* iii).

The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was erected on 15 January 2011 and Fr Keith Newton was appointed as its first Ordinary. It is important to note that whilst the Ordinariate was now erected and existed as an ecclesial reality, there was also a sense in which it had yet to be built. It was into this paradox, of both joining the Ordinariate and building it, that groups of lay faithful with their pastors entered from Easter 2011.

The first months and years of the Ordinariate have been a time of great excitement but also of uncertainty and most time and resources had to be expended on immediate issues: housing and money for priests; places for groups to worship; establishment of a clergy formation process. All of this has been necessary as Ordinariate clergy and lay faithful have stepped boldly into uncharted territory in order to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church and to do so in a way which honours and fulfils the vision of *Anglicanorum Coetibus*.

As the Ordinariate entered its fifth year it was felt important to take stock of how far the Ordinariate had travelled in the first four years of its implementation and to gather the thoughts and aspirations of its clergy and lay faithful about its ongoing development over the next 3–5 years. Using the evidence base from in-depth, semi structured interviews<sup>1</sup> with most of its clergy, seminarians, men in formation for the permanent diaconate and religious and with representatives of the lay faithful from most of its groups this report presents the important issues and common themes that emerged from these discussions and outlines some of the ways in which these may be taken forward.

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<sup>1</sup>: The questions posed in the interviews were based on a questionnaire (which can be found in Appendix III: *Survey Questions* of this report). The questions were modified following a pilot study undertaken in three areas in June 2014 and the main set of interviews were undertaken between September 2014 and April 2015.

As the project team (made up of three experienced Ordinariate priests and a member of the lay faithful with experience in strategic planning) visited groups, there was a real sense in which we became aware that we were walking on “holy ground.” Even in the smallest groups there was an excitement and joy as people told their stories of the past few years. In many places and in many different ways excellent work is being done. The sharing of treasure referred to in *Anglicanorum Coetibus* is happening as diocesan Catholics join the Ordinariate in worship and members of the Ordinariate join in the life of the wider Catholic community. Throughout our visits we experienced an appreciation and affection for the Ordinary but also a clear concern that he is overworked and under supported. Similarly, without exception, there was a clear sense that the groups were well cared for by their priests but a concern as to how supported their priests were. Most groups remain enthusiastic but there is also, inevitably, a little weariness and realisation that we have reached the stage where further development of the structures of the Ordinariate is necessary in order to share the vision of Pope Benedict XVI as we enter the next phase in our mission.

## GENERAL ISSUES RAISED

### Group profiles

- Generally groups were numerically smaller than when they started in terms of 'paid up' Ordinariate members (but often bigger than initially due to diocesan Catholics joining)
- Some way of recognising diocesan affiliates was requested (e.g. associate level scheme)
- Housing a priest away from his group was seen as hindering group growth

### Top priorities for groups

- To acquire building space or own building to undertake outreach and catechesis and to live a full liturgical life
- To develop a sense of mission (but success not to be judged on numbers alone as "we are a catalyst for people joining the Catholic faith and are likely to remain small in number")
- To hold more regional events and have more interaction with other groups
- To grow spiritually and maintain distinctiveness (although some want to integrate more)
- To support priests (especially the sick and retired) and raise the profile of the Ordinariate

### Top priorities for Ordinariate as a whole

- To develop a clear vision and communicate it to all members ("the vision of *Anglicanorum Coetibus* and the fidelity of Ordinariate priests to that vision is just not there"; "people do not understand it")
- To identify the factors which make for flourishing groups<sup>2</sup> and develop priorities based on trying to ensure these are in place
- To provide pastoral care for priests and their families and to support vocations
- "To provide more help to Mgr Keith who is overworked and isolated"
- "Regular meetings between the Ordinariate and diocesan bishops should be scheduled to improve communication and help develop written secondment agreements"
- To develop Ordinariate 'centres' from which outreach can be undertaken

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2: Factors important for groups to flourish were seen as (a) having a place of their own "to be" (b) for priests to live near their groups (c) good relationship with diocesan hierarchy (d) priest not being overburdened with other diocesan or chaplaincy work (e) critical mass (f) ability to be distinctive (g) people not content with just fulfilling their Sunday obligation

- To build upon the proven effectiveness of the Co-ordinators meeting (and its link to the priests' plenary sessions) as a means of getting work done on the ground
- To develop pastoral areas

### **Issues of distinctiveness**

- “We are about developing communities and not just sacrament filling stations”.
- Large proportion of lay faithful engaged in learning and the life of Ordinariate groups
- Distinctiveness “should not be seen as just big events at Warwick Street, it is so much more”

### **Relationship with the diocese and diocesan Catholics**

- Mutual exchange of gifts is happening and the Ordinariate has already impacted upon the lives of large numbers of diocesan Catholics
- Dependent on if the bishop and local Catholic hierarchy understand/desire the Ordinariate or not (some are very supportive and others less so)

### **Percentage of working week devoted to Ordinariate work and other work**

- The percentage of a priest's working week devoted to Ordinariate work varied widely from 5% to 100%
- For many priests the pressures of other work which helped them support themselves financially meant their work for the Ordinariate came last (when they were tired)

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING: GENERAL**

1. For the flourishing of groups the following factors should be considered and form the basis of all plans and discussions especially with third parties:
  - a. To enable pastors to live in the closest possible proximity to their groups.
  - b. To ensure that each group has adequate use/ownership of buildings in order to lead a full and distinctive Catholic life.
  - c. To develop the mutually beneficial bonds between the groups in a pastoral area.
  - d. That all secondment/working agreements reflect and honour the priests' primary responsibility to the Ordinariate.
2. All priests to take seriously their obligation to each other through their participation in the local pastoral area and their attendance at the Chrism Mass and plenary sessions.
3. To build on the proven effectiveness of the Co-ordinators meetings as the fertile and innovative forum where the Ordinary takes counsel with his priests. To further facilitate this counsel and

strategic planning it is recommended that the new structure includes the following (see diagram overleaf and job descriptions at the end of the report)

- a. The Priests' Plenary
  - b. Pastoral Council
  - c. The appointment of advisors for specific work areas
  - d. In service of the Co-ordinators meeting the Deans will meet with the Ordinary to monitor the implementation of the above and help formulate the agenda.
4. The Deans to liaise with the co-ordinating pastors to deliver local presentations of this report and its implications.
  5. The Ordinariate to liaise with The Director of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham to suggest ways in which the Ordinariate can support and participate in regional Walsingham Roadshows.
  6. To develop a twinning scheme between groups.
  7. To continue to inform the wider Catholic Church about the purpose and vision of the Ordinariate (e.g. by identifying appropriate fora via which the **Called to Be** series can be delivered).
  8. Consider a scheme for association to, rather than membership of, the Ordinariate. To produce a leaflet which sets out the expectation of associate members in the missionary activity of the Ordinariate.