

April 5, 2018

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“And I have given them the glory that you gave me so that they may be one, as we are one.”

Jesus’ prayer for unity in the Gospel of John reminds us of how much we share in the building of God’s kingdom. We also know that the Christian and even Catholic faith contains many unique traditions that reflect the different cultures and countries of our world. There is room for this in our Universal Church.

The purpose of our joint letter is to clarify a new example of this diversity of Roman Catholic faith traditions that is now present in the Temecula Valley. Within the geographic boundaries of the Diocese of San Bernardino is a small community that comes from the Anglican tradition but has sought communion with the Roman Catholic Church. This community — Holy Martyrs of England and Wales — belongs to the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter, a non-territorial diocese established in 2012 for Roman Catholics with any Anglican background or whose faith has been renewed by the Ordinariate’s evangelizing mission. Parishes and communities of the Ordinariate are fully Roman Catholic, while retaining elements of their worship traditions and spiritual heritage in their union with the Catholic Church.

Through a series of actions over the past 20 years, the last three popes have created a path for Anglicans to enter the Catholic Church, either individually or, more recently, as a faith community. The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter was established by Pope Benedict in 2012. In 2015, Pope Francis named Most Rev. Steven J. Lopes as the Ordinariate’s first bishop.

We know that cultural and liturgical traditions are an important element of our experience of God and this Personal Ordinariate allows for the continuance of the Anglican patrimony within the larger “family” of the Latin Rite of the Church. This unique patrimony is best observed in the liturgy drawn from the rich history of English Catholicism, articulated in the Prayer Book tradition of Anglicanism.

An Ordinariate Catholic Community, Blessed John Henry Newman, was established in Orange County in 2012. Last year it became known that several families from southwest Riverside County who come from this tradition were traveling to Irvine each week to attend Mass at Blessed John Henry Newman. Based on this observed interest, Holy Martyrs of England and

Wales was established as a mission of Blessed John Henry Newman in the greater Murrieta area.

Efforts to evangelize and publicize this new community may have led to some confusion about who is eligible to be a canonical member of the Ordinariate. Those seeking to belong to the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter must meet one or more of these criteria:

- A former Anglican who is now Catholic
- An Anglican or Methodist who is seeking to become Catholic
- The spouse of a former Anglican who is Catholic
- An unbaptized Christian
- A baptized Catholic who is not fully initiated in the Church
- A fully initiated Catholic who no longer practices their faith

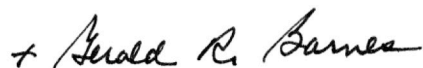
Fully initiated Catholics who belong to a parish in the Diocese of San Bernardino are not eligible to be members of the Ordinariate but are welcome to worship and participate while remaining members of and subject to the Diocese of San Bernardino and not the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

While it is important to understand these differences that determine our communities of faith in this context, we, as bishops, pledge our mutual prayer and support for each other and for the Catholic communities we serve in the Temecula Valley and beyond. In understanding better, the origins of this new community, there is no need for division or suspicion of any kind.

We greet this new dynamic in the Temecula Valley as an opportunity to both recognize and practice deeply held unique traditions of faith, and to celebrate our shared place in the Roman Catholic Church.

May God continue to bless the faith journey of our Catholic communities in southwest Riverside County and may we continue to seek the intercession and protection of Our Blessed Mother Mary.

In Christ,



Most Reverend Gerald R. Barnes
Bishop of San Bernardino



Most Reverend Steven J. Lopes
Bishop of the Personal Ordinariate
of the Chair of St. Peter