

WHY Choose the Anglican Catholic Church?

YOU HAVE A CHOICE! One of the truly unusual things – and perhaps one of the more frightening things – about living in America is the wide degree of choice we possess in so many things. We can choose our mates, our schools, our political party, our style of dress, our diet ... and on and on. And we can choose our religion.

If you were raised in England, the chances are that you will be an Anglican, if in Germany, a Lutheran, if in Switzerland, a Reformed churchman. History and heritage determine these choices.

But in America, we are wondrously free to choose. Even if one is, from infancy, a Christian, it is still possible to be a Roman Catholic, an Orthodox Christian, a Methodist, a Pentecostal, a Baptist, or nothing in particular.

SO WHY BE AN ANGLICAN CATHOLIC? Certainly it is not particularly easy to be one. It requires, among other things, preparation in order to be confirmed. It requires the sacrifice of many conventional conveniences of Christian life, such as grand buildings, giant organs, beautiful stained glass, huge church schools, and the like, simply because this Church is a newly constituted one, struggling to build itself, its people, and its facilities.

It demands time and commitment and generosity. It involves having to explain what you are to friends and neighbors who have never heard of the Anglican Catholic Church. And yet, there are good reasons to choose it. Let's look at a few.

THE CHURCH HAS DEEP ROOTS. To say it is a new organization is to tell only part

of the story. Its present structure may date from 1978, but its roots lie deep. Its antecedents are the Episcopal Church, the Church of England, the Western Church of the Early Church and the Apostolic Fathers. It is, self-consciously, an historic church.

And that is good, because nothing should be so distrusted as something “new” in Christianity. Christianity is an historic religion and a realization of this connection with the past is the ballast which keeps the Church honest and truthful and faithful.

When you row a boat, you face the stern. You face where you have come from. And to steer a true course, you maintain an alignment with the landmarks in the past. This is no less true in the life of the Church. Its present and its future are always true, always in alignment with its past, and that is the best assurance that what it teaches is, in fact, true – as the truth was revealed in Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC. The Anglican Catholic Church does not owe its existence to the theological inspiration of a Calvin or a Luther or any other single teacher. Its faith was formed in the Apostolic Age and refined in the early centuries of the undivided Church.

Its theology is that of the first seven Ecumenical Councils and it holds this theology in common with the great churches of Rome and the East. It has not chosen to emphasize one part of the faith over another, no matter how useful a single part may be. It preaches an individual living faith in Jesus Christ – but it stresses a life lived out in the given of the real Church, the community of saints.

It exalts the Lord Christ above all – yet it recognizes the proper honor paid to his Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. It

stresses a strict morality – yet it provides ready confession and absolution to the penitent sinner. In short, it holds the whole Faith, the Faith once delivered to the saints.¹ And it does not feel at liberty to improvise on that Faith.

THE CHURCH IS HOLY. The first mission of the Church is the worship of Almighty God. And it is in this context that the holiness of individual members is realized. Our worship is elegant, respectfully formal, essentially timeless in its form and attitude. That does not make it an historic relic or a sterile ritual. Rather it is a structured worship that allows the individual mastery over its elements and the ability to pray the liturgy on a deeply personal basis.

Yes, our prayers are largely “written down” – so that we may use them as familiar and personal avenues to God. Nothing to our mind is more productive of passivity in worship than to have someone else pray for you in ways and words you are hearing for the first time and which cannot be your own (or with which, in fact, you may disagree!) Our liturgy provides the foundation for personal holiness, for the continuing process of each member to stretch and reach and grow in God's grace.

THE CHURCH IS SACRAMENTAL. It is often said that our society is too materialistic. Perhaps, in many ways, this is true. But it also exhibits a profound disdain for the material. Think for a moment of all the things we use

¹ St. Vincent of Lerins (d. 445): “Now in the Catholic Church itself we take the greatest care to hold that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all [*Quod ubique, quod semper, quod omnibus creditum est.*]” We shall hold to this rule if we follow *universality* [*i.e., oecumenicity*], *antiquity*, and *consent*.

once and then throw away and you will be convinced that we do not value the material or especially respect it, however much we may seek it.

But the Catholic Church has always respected the material world as the loving creation of God Himself. And it is through this material world that God reaches us with His love and power, for He has no other means.

Thus we employ material elements (water, bread, wine, oil, married life) as channels of that love and power which He has ordained. Weekly, if not more often, we meet our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, where He allows us to feed on His Body and Blood, His Real Presence, strengthening our souls and imparting eternal life.

THE CHURCH IS SMALL. Many of our congregations are smaller than we would like! But the Anglican ethos, although productive of great cathedrals, focuses most consistently on the relatively small parish church -- because this is the laboratory of love wherein people learn to know and care for one another. Big is not necessarily better when it comes to the care of souls.

THE CHURCH IS TRADITIONAL. By this time, you will have gathered that we are not interested in being “blown by every wind of doctrine.”² Trees deeply rooted do not succumb to passing breezes.

We are profoundly unhappy that so many of our Christian brethren have decided to take as their examples of life the passing whims of the popular culture. We are not trendy. We believe in an historic Faith which is a “still point of the turning world.”³ The Church is a rock,

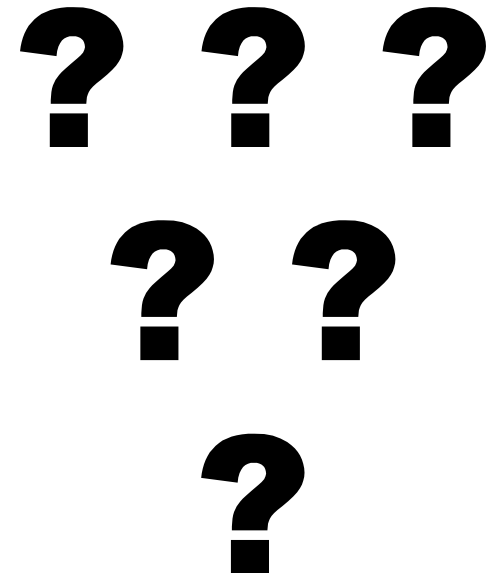
a sure foundation on which we can build our own lives and the lives of our children.

THE CHURCH IS FRIENDLY. Our Saviour was the supreme example of God’s eternal love for us and His particular commandment to us was to “love one another.”⁴ We try to do this. Sometimes it’s hard, of course. But we work at this business of loving; we work at it hard. And we love you. Even before we’ve met you. And we want to share that love when you come to visit us.

WE HOPE YOU WILL CHOOSE to be a part of our growing Christian community. We think that you will find in the Anglican Catholic Church that seriousness of purpose and joy in living that will best meet your deepest needs. We are certain that, among us, you can grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. Come and meet with us

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Why Choose
Who the
How Anglican
Where Catholic
When Church
What



² Ephesians 4:14.

³ Eliot, T.S. “Burnt Norton.” *Four Quartets*. II.

⁴ John 13:34.