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PRESS RELEASE

CATHOLIC PRIESTS WELCOME REPORT ON WOMEN BISHOPS

The Society of Catholic Priests warmly welcomes the report of the Revision Committee and congratulates them on the way in which they have taken on a difficult task on behalf of the whole church. We believe that their proposals will provide a way forward in order that we can move towards the ordination of women to the episcopate within our church.

As a catholic society within the Church of England and the Anglican Communion we are concerned for those traditionalist catholics in our church who feel that they cannot support the ministry of ordained women. Nevertheless, as a Society, we 'believe that as a witness to the universal nature of the priesthood of Christ the church should ordain to serve as deacons, priests and bishops in the church of God all those whom the church discerns as being called by God to such offices regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability or sexual orientation.' (Constitution of the Society of Catholic Priests 3.1). For that reason we rejoice that the Revision Committee has presented a way forward that by maintaining 'the authority of the diocesan bishop will avoid any changes in the historic understanding of that office and of the episcopate more generally.' (Report of the Revision Committee para 459).

Canon Andrew Nunn, Rector General of the Society of Catholic Priests, commenting on the report and its implications said, 'Whilst we are not wanting any of our sister and brother traditionalist catholics to leave the Church of England yet we believe that the Revision Committee has provided a way forward for us to achieve everything for which the members of our Society have been praying since 1994. We encourage the House of Bishops to take seriously the call to them to commit themselves to putting in place a Code of Practice which will provide for the whole people of God and enable our church to move forward in this exciting way'.

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Note for Editors:

The Society of Catholic Priests was founded in 1994 for priests of the Church of England from the catholic tradition and now numbers almost 600 men and women members in the European Province and also members in North America and Australia. The Society has recently founded the Company of Servers for catholic laypeople. Further details can be found at www.scp.org.uk and www.companyofservers.org