

## A Message from the Society's Patron

Anglican clergy identifying themselves as within the Catholic tradition used to have all sorts of 'tribal' habits, in dress, speech and style of life, to set them apart from those they thought of as less enlightened. No-one is going to regret that we have begun to grow up a bit in that respect. As the profile of ordained ministry in the Anglican Church has changed, many of the old markers have gone; and not the least important change has been the admission of women to the priesthood, a development welcomed by many who hold firmly Catholic convictions about the work of our redemption and the sacraments in which this work comes to life in us.

But to think of yourself as a Catholic in the ordained Anglican ministry still involves reflection and discipline, attention to how you live and pray and how you support one another in ministry. The Society of Catholic Priests exists because clergy in the Catholic tradition who are happy to affirm recent developments in the life of our church feel the need for common disciplines of prayer and thinking that will help them resist some of the managerial or functional language about ministry that has become popular of late - but without reinventing the old tribalism.

If you believe that ordained ministry in the Anglican Church is part of the continuing witness of the whole Christian and Catholic tradition, Eastern and Western; if you believe that the priestly task is to be what Austin Farrer called a 'walking sacrament' (not just a leader or co-ordinator or even teacher); and if you also

believe that the specific shape of this priesthood can properly develop as the Church moves on, to include those among the baptised who have regularly been excluded, SCP exists to help you flourish as a deacon, priest or bishop in the Anglican Church.

✠ **Rowan Williams** *Archbishop of Canterbury*



## The Society

The Society of Catholic Priests was founded by a group of priests from the Southwark Diocese who felt that they could no longer remain within the existing fraternal organisations for priests. The Society was formed in 1994 with the object of promoting the formation and support of priestly spirituality and Catholic evangelism.

## Membership

Membership is open to all priests who accept:

- that we belong to the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church ordaining men and women to serve as deacons, priests and bishops in the Church of God;
- the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist;
- the use and practice of the seven sacraments of the Church.

Continuing deacons are welcome as deacon members and transitional deacons as associate members. Isolated or housebound priests are encouraged to have a link with a chapter.

## Rule of Life

Members of the Society are committed to the following rule of life:

- Daily Offices
- Eucharistic centred spirituality
- Use of a Spiritual Director
- Use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Prayer for the sisters and brothers of the Society
- Offering confidential pastoral care of each other.

The Society is a federation of some 30 Chapters with a current membership of about 550. The diocesan bishop normally acts as Visitor for the local chapter. Each group meets at least six times a year for a concelebrated Mass, fellowship and discussion. A central focal point for the Society is the annual conference, which members are encouraged to attend if they possibly can.

## Fostering Vocation

The Society is working actively with Affirming Catholicism to encourage all people to discern their calling under God. We desire to affirm Catholic Christians in their discipleship in the world and in the Church. Our work together encourages parishes and individuals to consider deeply ministerial priesthood as one of the vocations to which Christ may be calling some to explore.



## The Society Prayer

Father,  
we thank you that you have called us  
to your service,  
to feed your people by word and sacrament.  
By the power of your Spirit,  
keep us faithful to you and to those in our care.  
Keep united in the bonds of peace and love  
the members of our Society,  
that by sharing in Christ's priesthood  
here on earth,  
we may come to share in the joys  
of his eternal kingdom,  
where he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

**If you are interested in joining SCP  
or would like further details,  
please contact:**

### **The Rector General:**

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### **or the Membership Secretary:**

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*A society for male and female priests  
within the Anglican Tradition  
seeking to promote priestly spirituality  
and Catholic Evangelism*