

5  
mm

(Paragraph 2 Confidential)

The Apostolic Delegate duly came to see the Archbishop this afternoon at 4 o'clock and I introduced him. He stayed nearly an hour. The visit had been arranged this morning at His Excellency's request by Fr. Bernard Kenney and me on the telephone. There were two main subjects of conversation: i) a letter from the Pope to the Archbishop of Canterbury and (ii) a discussion of the "Westminster Succession".

1. The Apostolic Delegate delivered a letter from Pope Paul VI to the Archbishop of Canterbury dated November 30th. This answered the Archbishop's letter of the previous July on the Ordination of Women, written after the debate in the General Synod, and it also took up the informal Anglican/Roman Catholic discussion of the matter in Rome early in November. The Pope welcomed the ecumenical fellowship to which the Archbishop's letter had borne witness and the beginning which had been made in consultation. He hoped that consultation would continue. He did not disguise the fact that Anglican Ordination of Women would be an additional obstacle to Anglican/Roman Catholic rapprochement, but equally he anticipated that the joint quest for unity would continue.

The Archbishop referred to correspondence with Bill Purdy about Cardinal Willebrands' views on the Ordination of Women. The Cardinal had denied that he had said in the United States of America that Anglican Ordination of Women would imperil the work of ARCIC. He had not said it and it was not true anyway. Yet the Cardinal had not disguised the fact that the Ordination of Women would not be welcome in Roman Catholic circles.

I mentioned that the informal consultation in Rome had concluded that Anglican Ordination of Women would not make a greater obstacle to Anglican/Roman Catholic reunion than obstacles already present: as the 1896 Roman Catholic verdict on Anglican Orders was still extant - "that they were absolutely null and utterly void" - they would surely not be made worse in Roman Catholic eyes by being opened to women! There was general laughter at this, but the Apostolic Delegate saw the point. He thought that the Roman Catholic Church would indeed like to give detailed study to the subject, but he himself speaking personally did not see any fundamental objection to it. He was also glad that there should be further Anglican/Roman Catholic consultation which might include other traditions too.

2. The Archbishop thanked the Apostolic Delegate for wanting to consult him on the Westminster Succession. There was a review of the names which had been being considered. The Apostolic Delegate particularly asked the Archbishop about Bishop Clark, the Abbot of Ampleforth and Fr. Michael Hollings, thinking he would probably know them. The Archbishop welcomed all of these names, though he knew Fr. Hollings less well personally. I remarked that the Archbishopric of Westminster was obviously paramount but that ARCIC would certainly feel the loss of Bishop Clark if he moved and could not continue as Co-Chairman. The Apostolic Delegate hoped to submit his

...contd.../.

own recommendation to the Pope very shortly, and he felt that the Archbishop would be pleased with the outcome.

The Apostolic Delegate said that his recommendation would either be considered by the Pope himself for decision, in which case there might be an announcement by the end of January, or it would be passed to the Congregation of Bishops<sup>who</sup> would consider it before it came back to the Pope for final decision, in which case there might not be a decision much before Easter.

  
M.M.