

Cardinal says US ordinariate for former Anglicans to be created Jan. 1

A new ordinariate - functionally similar to a diocese - will be created Jan. 1 to bring Anglicans into the U.S. Catholic Church, announced Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl during the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 15.

Cardinal Wuerl also said 67 Anglican priests have submitted their dossiers seeking ordination in the Catholic Church, and 35 of those have received initial approval from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

That means they can move to the second stage of approval, which includes a criminal background check, psychological evaluation and recommendations from the Catholic bishop where he lives and from his Anglican ecclesiastical authority, he said.

The actions followed the November 2009 issuance by Pope Benedict XVI of an apostolic constitution, "Anglicanorum coetibus" authorizing the creation of an ordinariate to bring in Anglicans, or Episcopalians as they are known in the United States, who seek to leave their tradition and join the Catholic Church but retain certain elements of the Anglican faith.

The announcement in the final hour of the public portion of the annual meeting in Baltimore brought immediate logistical questions, such as the relationship between the ordinariate - which will cover the entire U.S. - and the dioceses in which the former Anglican priests will live. The physical location of its offices has not been announced.