

# Vatican says Anglican document delay not due to married priests issue

VATICAN CITY – The Vatican has denied that the delay in publishing the apostolic constitution on Anglicans seeking admission to the Catholic Church has been caused by an internal Vatican debate over admitting married priests.

The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, said Oct. 31 that Pope Benedict XVI's document detailing the new plan was expected to be released during the first week in November.

On Oct. 20, the Vatican announced that "personal ordinariates" – similar to dioceses – would be established to oversee the pastoral care of those who want to bring elements of their Anglican identity into the Catholic Church with them.

At that time, the Vatican said the apostolic constitution establishing the new arrangement was being briefly delayed by translation and technical reasons.

Subsequent Italian press reports, however, blamed the delay on problems regarding the celibacy issue, in particular whether married Anglicans could be trained as seminarians.

In announcing the plan, Vatican officials made it clear that Anglican priests who are married may be ordained Catholic priests, but that married Anglican bishops would not be allowed to function as Catholic bishops. They also indicated that married Anglican seminarians would be allowed to be ordained.

The Vatican clarification confirmed that married former Anglican ministers would be admitted to priestly ministry, as an exception from canon law on a case-by-case basis.

It said the question of married seminarians was considered "purely speculative," and that criteria for a dispensation from celibacy would have to be worked out jointly by

the personal ordinariate and the local bishops' conference, and would be submitted for approval by the Vatican.