

ARNOLD HARRIS  
MATHEW AND THE  
OLD CATHOLIC  
MOVEMENT

IN ENGLAND

1908-52

JOHN KERSEY



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# MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

The present work consists of a revised reprint of material from my earlier work *A History of the Old Catholic Movement in England* (European-American University Press, 2010) with an intention of providing a more accessible historical volume aimed at the general rather than the specialist reader. At its heart is a biography of Arnold Harris Mathew, and the work then goes on to consider some of the major extensions of his movement, specifically the Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain and the Liberal Catholic Church. In addition, a profile of the Old Catholic Orthodox Church is included. The period considered is demarcated for convenience by the death of Bernard Mary Williams in 1952, which marked a period of significant change for the Old Catholics and indeed which poses a considerably more complex task for the historian, given that it is during the 1950s and 1960s that churches which had hitherto been united divided – and indeed sometimes reunited - in a number of ways. Nevertheless, where necessary and practicable in brief terms, certain later events have been outlined for clarity's sake.

English Old Catholicism is a tremendously diffuse movement in which the outsider can find it difficult to discern structure or commonality. Between 1908 and 1910, that structure was provided through the formal alliance of the Old Catholic Church of Great Britain with the Union of Utrecht of the Old Catholic Churches on the Continent. The Union appointed Arnold Harris Mathew, a former Roman Catholic priest who had also served as a curate in the Church of England, as Old Catholic Regional Bishop of Great Britain. However, the Union was moving ever closer towards Canterbury

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as Mathew was moving closer towards a Romanist position in keeping with the original mission of Old Catholicism. These and other factors caused a breach whereby Mathew declared his autonomy from Utrecht in 1910.

Between 1910 and 1915, although the English Old Catholics were no longer in union with Utrecht, they were nevertheless a homogenous group under Mathew's common leadership. In 1915, as a result of a split within the church, two main groupings emerged; one, which sought to develop a proto-Uniate Roman rite, with its principal differences from the Roman Catholic Church being the acceptance of a married priesthood and a vernacular liturgy, and the other adopting those aspects but adding to them a background context of Theosophy and other esoteric traditions. These two divisions can be referred to as Old Roman Catholic and Liberal Catholic respectively. Both divisions claim to be the true successors of Mathew to the exclusion of other claimants.

Organisationally, the Old Catholic movement is both a structural and a theological entity. Structurally, it is a decentralised church that manifests as a series of small groups, most of which take on an autocephalous and autonomous identity based on their ultimate origins within the Roman Catholic Church. This leads variously to groups which are proto-Uniate in character, seeing their mission as closely aligned to Rome, as well as groups that express a wider ecumenical identity. The disparity between the small size and relative poverty of these communities and their sometimes highly ambitious plans for structure and expansion is notable and occasionally strains credibility; however, inasmuch

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as the Old Catholic movement has from time to time been the refuge of the vainglorious and ambitious, we must remark on how much more so have been the larger churches, particularly with their ties to State patronage in the form of the Vatican City or indeed the English government.

Theologically, Old Catholic groups have much in common in terms of their basis in faith and practice, and particularly in terms of their adoption of a Catholic hierarchy and liturgy (all groups here described have used the Roman Rite or a variant thereof). There is less variation in what each church teaches than in terms of the context of that teaching, and the freedom permitted to the individual in matters of interpretation. Equally, even what to an outsider may seem minor points of difference are enough to constitute the basis for a separate community, and the flexibility of Old Catholic structure permits such communities to be created relatively easily with a good prospect that each will survive in some form. If we occasionally and rightly reflect that more could be done to promote unity within communities that are united by more than divides them, then we should reflect all the more on the fact that all that has divided the Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain from Rome for much of her existence are the two points of a vernacular liturgy and a married priesthood, and even if Rome has compromised on the first point, there is limited prospect at present that she will do so on the second, with certain isolated exceptions.

The decentralisation of the movement imposes a series of unusual requirements. Firstly, in order to have a means of continuity and access to the full range of the



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sacraments, a community cannot exist without the ministrations of a bishop. However, because Holy Orders are conferred in perpetuity, and are not dependent upon adherence to a particular communion, a bishop can move from one community to another with relative ease, or start his own community, without necessarily in so doing being guilty of conscious schism, since all communities are seen primarily as centred upon Rome and their identity as “church” is carefully circumscribed to account for this. This is not so different from “church planting” (work in which Old Catholics under Joseph-René Vilatte were actively engaged in the United States in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century) as commonly found among the Baptists or the Pentecostals. We have become used to Catholic and Anglican communities with the priest at their centre, but the “Ignatian” model of the bishop as the heart of the parish is in fact much older, and is the first model of church organisation that has come down to us.

Are such communities truly independent? Rarely so, and certainly not independent from an identity as a part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, nor as communities that look actively towards Rome for much of their doctrinal and liturgical basis<sup>1</sup>. There is in fact a very significant unity between communities for those

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<sup>1</sup> We are not concerned in this work with the largely postmodern and revisionist school of thought that maintains that “independence” per se is desirable and that Old Catholic communities should cut their ties with Rome. This is dominant in certain independent sacramental communities in America, but there is no historical or indeed present justification for the imposition of such a viewpoint on the Old Catholic movement as a whole.

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who look closely at such matters, and that unity is in terms of faith, practice and policy. We would not dream of denying the unity of Baptists or Pentecostals simply because there are differences between their various communities that are the outcome of their particular local character, or of the approach of the minister concerned. So it is with the Old Catholics. And there is significant dogmatic agreement too; every community described in this work, for example, has accepted the Nicene Creed, although communities have certainly varied according to the extent of freedom permitted in its interpretation, and most have also accepted the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

What difference there is is largely attributable to the strong influence that particular bishops can have on their communities and therefore the way in which those communities will take on a particular episcopal character modelled after the bishop's own approach. This freedom gives rise to a much greater potential for clashes of personality than is normally the case, since most bishops operate from a traditionally hierarchical point of governance, and again it is the structural flexibility of the Old Catholic movement that means that the clergyman who leaves a church, particularly if he is a bishop, is not without the prospect of a future ministry. The relative poverty of the movement, with few communities owning buildings for public worship, also brings about a position where mobility is more about the individuals concerned than about church property. Even where the clergyman concerned has a chapel or oratory in his possession, it has generally been owned by him outright rather than held in common in a church trust, and so as his ministry moves from one Old

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Catholic group to another, his place of worship can move likewise.

If the English Old Catholic movement has become known to the wider public, it has been generally portrayed in an unsympathetic light. This is partly due to inter-church politics, in which the Old Catholics have been perceived by the larger churches as a potential threat to their positions. In the first years of Old Catholicism in England, with Anglican Holy Orders having been ruled “completely null and utterly void” by Rome, there was a very real possibility at one point that the Old Catholics would provide a third stream between Rome and Canterbury, and thus provide the means whereby Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholics in support of a married priesthood might create a powerful body that would threaten the power of both churches.

The other reason for such an unsympathetic portrayal is due to the circumstances of the movement in the 1950s and 1960s (as discussed in detail in my earlier two-volume study *A History of the Old Catholic Movement in England*), by which time it had lost its initial aristocratic base and had become the preserve of men of a working class background. Of these men, a number were ex-offenders, who had turned to the ministry on their release from gaol and had shown evidence over a period of time of their intention to reform their lives. Not all such men were able to keep on the straight and narrow after their ordination.

From the 1960s onward, the English Old Catholic movement has been beset by a number of grave scandals, and a number of its clergy have perpetrated serious acts of a criminal nature. Through their generally immoral

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behaviour, they have been the cause of adverse public comment that has brought shame upon their movement. These issues are most certainly not restricted to the Old Catholics, for clergy abuse scandals have rocked the Roman Catholic Church in recent years, and the Church of England has not found herself without reproach in the matter. Yet we should not seek to expiate the damage that has been done. The Old Catholic movement cannot move forward without fully acknowledging, and indeed repenting, of its sullied past in this respect. If the present volume does not discuss these issues as its predecessor did, it is not because it fails to perceive both their seriousness and their integral nature to the history of the English Old Catholics, but rather because of the need to maintain a single-volume work at a manageable level.

At first sight, the decentralisation of the Old Catholic movement offers a get-out clause with respect to such matters. The easiest route appears to be disassociation from a clergyman or group who are responsible for wrongdoing. This is when we begin to hear the plea that group X may call themselves Old Catholics – but actually they are schismatic/heretical/disreputable and (here is the crucial clause) *nothing to do with us*. English Old Catholic groups have become, dare one say, notorious for their rejection of ecumenism amongst each other, with one generally-valid precept being that the closer two groups are in their origin, the less likely they are to be in communion with each other. Furthermore, attacks on rival groups are invariably couched in terms of doubts as to their Apostolic validity, with many groups making it their policy to re-ordain incardinating clergy even when their orders ultimately

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derive from a common source. Naturally, there are honourable exceptions to these practices.

The fact is, though, that any such dissociation of one group from another is only genuinely understood by those within this particular ecclesiastical subculture – in other words, by other Old Catholics, or by others in the independent sacramental movement and elsewhere who understand something of their nature. In practice, there can be no meaningful dissociation in the eyes of the public from groups which are outwardly far more similar than they are unlike each other, particularly when no work such as this has previously existed to provide a taxonomy of the developments of the past forty years in particular. And examination will show that almost every group has at some stage had to face the unpleasant truth that a member of its clergy has failed to live up to the high standard expected of him.

But this point can and should be extended to a wider interpretation. Just as ultimately the English Old Catholics are a *movement* consisting of distinct churches, whether or not those churches choose to cooperate, so their movement is not separable from the Utrecht Union which gave them birth and to which they were once allied, and indeed from the wider perspective of the Christian clergy of England, in whichever denomination they serve. The English Old Catholics have defied all attempts to destroy their movement. They have been a part of the English ecclesiastical landscape for over one hundred years, and there is no sign that they are on the wane – quite the reverse, in fact. They are not “someone else’s problem”, but a complex and difficult phenomenon for the Church as a whole to deal with, concerning which in the words of Fr. Kenneth

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Leech, “... the issues raised...will not go away; and we need a more thoughtful, less hostile, and more discriminating approach to a subculture that, however odd and marginal, deserves to be treated with respect, compassion, and intelligence.”<sup>ii</sup>

The larger churches generally choose to wash their hands of the Old Catholics, or to point at their failings so as to characterise them as marginalised or excluded from the mainstream, often using derogatory phrases such as “*episcopi vagantes*”, an old term which means “wandering bishops”. As will be shown, such an epithet is by no means generally applicable, as many Old Catholics have maintained a relatively settled and stable ministry. The days of the bishop who was abjectly poor and reduced to a mendicant existence are largely a phenomenon of the past, and even then to sneer at such figures reeks of Anglican class snobbery. Leech says, “Most of these bishops do not, in fact, wander very far. In England, for example, places such as Bournemouth, Islington and Crystal Palace, which were centres of their activity in the 1950s, remain so to this day.”<sup>iii</sup>

This has not stopped the Church of England in the past, however, and the main work on the movement, Brandreth’s scathing “*Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church*” (1947) is a hostile polemic presented as a report to the Church of England for the express

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<sup>ii</sup> Leech, Kenneth, *Oversight, but no see*, *Church Times*, 17 March 2000, accessed at <http://copies.anglicanonline.org/churchtimes/000317/feat.htm> 1 January 2004.

<sup>iii</sup> Leech, *ibid.*

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purpose of discrediting the Old Catholic movement<sup>iv</sup>. This and the largely satirical approach of Roman Catholic writer Peter Anson, “Bishops at Large” (1964) (which was based in part on Brandreth’s research) have outlasted in print the significant rebuttals and protests that they brought forth from the Old Catholic movement at the time, and one can only hope that the present work provides some measure of balance in re-assessing this history.

When the larger churches attempt to repudiate the Old Catholics they do so aware that such a protest and indeed such an overtly denominational approach to church affairs is an attempt – and in some cases a desperate attempt – to deny their very real connexion with situations for which they bear significant historical and pastoral responsibility but over which they can now exercise no control.

The English Old Catholics did not suddenly appear out of thin air because a few men took it into their heads to exercise their ecclesiastical ambitions. Their movement was the outcome of very real crises in both the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions, and a response to those crises that was generally intended as an entirely sincere and co-operative attempt at their solution. Those Anglican clergy who sought out Mathew and his

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<sup>iv</sup> The second edition of this work is considerably ameliorated from the first, reflecting Brandreth’s changed views and greater knowledge on the subject after correspondence with many of its subjects, notably Mar Georgius. It is still not a favourable survey, but it is not an unfair or salacious book in the way that the first edition is grossly so. Those who continue to reprint the first edition in the full knowledge that Brandreth withdrew many of the comments in it should reconsider this position, as by doing so they perpetuate an injustice that the author himself came to regret.

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successors to “re-validate” their Holy Orders were not men embarked on a foolish errand. They were concerned that their entire witness before God and His people was in jeopardy because of the failure of the Church of England adequately to address the pronouncement of Rome on Anglican Orders. Nor has this debate gone away in the ensuing years.

It is in response to that powerlessness concerning the long-term consequences of these crises that, just as the Old Catholic groups themselves do, the larger churches feel themselves compelled to say that a given situation involving the Old Catholics is *nothing to do with us*. To any student of history, such a denial cannot be other than unconvincing, any more than would be the case regarding the more recent Continuing Anglican or Traditional Catholic movements, both of which often share an Apostolic heritage with the English Old Catholics.

We shew in this work, which excludes nothing known that is of significance regarding its subjects, be that good or bad, that attempts to deny the validity of the orders of Old Catholic clergy are false, and that where, as is mostly the case, they are made with an awareness of the facts, they are deliberate lies. Mainstream churches do not lie lightly. They only do so when they are faced with something perceived as so much of a threat to them that the truth itself must be obfuscated and denied. However, the fact is that virtually all of the clergy described in this book have been in Apostolically valid orders, and thus, irrespective of their conduct, character or education, have been beyond doubt in possession of valid



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sacraments even according to the definitions of validity outwardly adopted by their critics.<sup>v</sup>

Our problem then is how to reconcile the fact that we are dealing with men who possess genuine sacramental power with the fact that many have through failings of character or lack of education presented a less-than-credible ministry. The latter point is answered when we recollect that Our Lord did not choose His disciples from among the well-educated Pharisees, who had been through “approved routes of training”, but from fishermen and others who would have been of the working class of their day. Much of the attack on the Old Catholics from this point of view is nothing more than the ugly spectre of the rich kicking the poor in the teeth. It is not so long ago that an Anglican bishop would have been chosen exclusively from the ranks of the leading Public Schools, and that a moneyed background was a great advantage to a Roman Catholic priest. Nevertheless, we should also recall that particularly from the 1950s onwards, a number of Old Catholic bishops took great care in the most difficult and trying of circumstances to ensure their clergy received an adequate training, with formal examinations set to a standard equivalent with the final examinations of the seminaries and theological colleges.

The first charge of failings of character, however, is less easy to dismiss. In our earlier book, we did not flinch from recording these tragic events and persons, and at times, these details have made for a decidedly grim

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<sup>v</sup> Brandreth, in his 1961 edition, also came to this conclusion. The question of whether such men holding valid orders should be admitted to ministerial status in the larger churches, should they seek such, is entirely separate from any question of validity.

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chronicle in terms of the events of the 1960s onwards. In the present volume, though these failings are not as obvious in their consequences; nevertheless one cannot regard such figures as Mathew and Williams as being in any way well-suited for the role they were to be compelled to perform, while acknowledging their dedication to duty and vocation as wholly commendable.

To some extent, the Old Catholics have, while not necessarily deliberately concealing the truth about their past, hitherto not actively sought to acknowledge it in a way that befits the responsibility towards God and the public that they hold as a religious body. What historical chronicles that have been published from within Old Catholicism have been generally marked by a pattern of omission and misleading dissociation that, while understandable given the fragmentation of the movement, is nevertheless a partial picture that fails to live up to a standard of complete honesty.

This book endeavours to be honest, and presents the truth as I understand it in an unvarnished manner. It is not in any way intended to be salacious, and we should also remember that in any history based on secondary sources, events that have been the subject of public record may assume a disproportionate relationship to the lives of their subjects when taken as a whole, due to the tendency of the media to report events of note – such as crime - rather than simply to profile the continuous, low-key business of good work being done. We should also remember that however serious a man's crimes, God is his ultimate Judge, and not his peers; still less those who would seek to use his failings to attack the movement of which he is a part.

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The best thing that has happened to the Old Catholic movement in recent years is generational change. Those who have come into the movement have in a number of cases not been tainted by the scandals of previous years, and have seen in Old Catholicism, and particularly its development in the United States, a potential for ministry that is of genuine value and that offers a solution to a number of problems that face the larger churches of today.

The larger churches are faced with an increasingly costly portfolio of buildings to maintain, an etiolated clergy pension fund and a shortage of ordinands, particularly men. In these situations, the flexibility of Old Catholicism and its capacity to absorb rapid change means that it is capable of reinventing Christian ministry in a modern and relevant context. It is to be hoped that such prospects mark the potential for a brighter future for Old Catholicism, in which the past demons of the movement can be faced openly and honestly. Only then will those concerned have the basis to move on and create an Old Catholicism that lives up to its potential for service.

### KEY SOURCES

Against the background of circumstances which have at best been unfriendly and often openly hostile, our movement has been blessed with a number of significant scholars without whose pioneering work this book would not have come into existence, and to whom I sincerely acknowledge a great debt of gratitude in my own research.

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The Apostolic Episcopal Church has proved a repository of scholarship into the history of Free Catholicism under the leadership of several able Primates. Upon succeeding to its Primacy myself in February 2015, I became custodian of its not inconsiderable archive and was able to use this as the basis for revision of a number of points.

Reference has been made to the work of Dr Bertil Persson, Primate of the AEC 1986-98, whose biographical research into Mathew has proved invaluable, in addition to his work on the background and early history of the Order of Corporate Reunion.

Archbishop Francis Spataro, Primate of the AEC 1998-2015, represents another aspect of this scholarship through his work with the Vilatte Guild and Vilatte Extension Academy and the many historic documents which he has very kindly made available to me over the years. I am also very grateful for his continued support and wise counsel on historical and contemporary matters.

Mar Georgius of Glastonbury, who also served as a bishop of the AEC, must also be recorded as one of the most significant scholars in this area. More than any of his numerous contemporaries, he was concerned with leaving behind a permanent record of scholarship concerning the independent churches and his own movement. His works, principally mimeographed and long out of print, form a highly informative, opinionated and entertaining account of that world and also provide ample evidence of his gifts as a writer.

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In writing on the early years of the Liberal Catholic Church, the work of Fr. Gregory Tillett, now of the British Orthodox Church and formerly of the Vilatte Guild, has been important. His life of C.W. Leadbeater, “The Elder Brother”, while strongly unfavourable to its subject, has brought important information to light and became my basic resource in my survey of Leadbeater and the early years of the LCC.

The works of the Revd. Henry Brandreth and Peter Anson are also significant sources, but their perspectives are intentionally hostile to our movement and therefore merit a more considered discussion as to their background and the extent to which their perspectives can be accepted. This discussion is pursued in a separate and forthcoming monograph.

## ON THE INCLUSION OF GROUPS IN THIS WORK

This book rejects the use of the term “Old Catholic” by the uninformed as a generic term to cover all small independent churches, whatever their position on faith and their history, preferring Mar Georgius’s term “Free Catholic” as a catch-all, but intending nothing pejorative by that term in contrast to his position of later years.

For our purposes, English Old Catholicism is expressed *precisely* through three precepts, any or all of which may be present in a given group:

- The church is Old Catholic in policy; ie. it subscribes to the pre-Vatican I faith position of the Old Catholic movement in Europe pre-1908, or a close variant thereof.

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- The church is a descendant of the hierarchy established by Joseph-René Vilatte, consecrated as Metropolitan of the Old Catholics in America by the Syrian Orthodox Church in 1892.
- The church asserts that it is a descendant of the movement/church established by Arnold Harris Mathew, the first Old Catholic Regional Bishop in Britain, as its primary historical identity.

A further category is provided by those groups standing in the historic Apostolic Succession which, while fitting readily into neither of the above categories, use “Old Catholic” in their name, or claim to be Old Catholic in character. There is also increasing crossover here with groups that are “Traditional Catholic”, ie. pre-Vatican II as well as the Old Catholic position of pre-Vatican I. Descendant communities of all of these groups, including some which are not easily classifiable and some which come into the realm of Continuing Anglicanism, are discussed in our earlier book.

Not included are those composite groups such as the Catholicate of the West and the Apostolic Episcopal Church, nor the Vilatte-succession churches which are considered in a separate book. In practice, there is some connexion between all of these and Old Catholic groups, particularly in the merger of their successions in various ways, but enough separation on matters of history, faith or practice to justify their non-inclusion or separate treatment.

## REFERENCING AND STYLE

The system of referencing used in this work endeavours to acknowledge the source of all quotations and of

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particular items of research that were used in its preparation. If the author has omitted any necessary reference at any point, it is through oversight rather than intentionally, and this will gladly be corrected in a subsequent edition upon request.

The letters of Mathew have been reproduced by many writers on him and in a number of cases these citations have reached a second generation. In the present work, most letters of Mathew are sourced either from *Anson*, *Brandreth* or *Wedgwood*, and the Pastoral Letter on Membership in the Theosophical Society and the Order of the Star in the East from Mar Georgius's "In the Shadow of Utrecht". There are still unpublished letters of Mathew in the archives of various churches; these archives are not open to the public, and so it has not been possible to consult them. Several manuscript letters of Mathew are held in the archive of the Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain and have been kindly made available to the author.

Some of the bishops discussed peripherally in this work have been consecrated in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. There are differences in the styles adopted in East (Chaldean) Syriac (*Maran Mar*) and West (Antiochean) Syriac (*Moran Mor*). To avoid unnecessary confusion, particularly in the case of Antiochean bishops who then used the Chaldean form (such as Vilatte), and so on, the Chaldean form is used throughout.

One aspect of this book's use of titles should be explained. By tradition, when a bishop is consecrated in the Eastern Orthodox heritage, he is thereafter known by his title "Mar (Lord)" followed by his name in religion, and not by his secular name. In the uncertain

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conditions of the Western missions, this practice has not always been followed. However, it is maintained in this work, both as a matter of theological correctness and as a sign of respect for the office that these men have occupied.

PROFESSOR JOHN KERSEY

London, July 2015



## THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT ON THE CONTINENT

**T**he story of the Roman Catholic Church at Utrecht begins with St Willibrord's consecration by Pope Sergius I in 696AD as the first bishop for the Netherlands. St Willibrord established his see at Utrecht, while also erecting the dioceses of Deventer and Haarlem. Thereafter, we should note among the progeny of Utrecht Pope Hadrian VI, who succeeded in 1522, Geert Groote, founder of the Brothers of the Common Life, and Thomas a Kempis, author of "The Imitation of Christ."

In 1145, a petition having been presented by the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II and Heribert, Bishop of Utrecht, Blessed Pope Eugene III granted to the See of Utrecht the right to elect its own successors to that See in times of vacancy. This made the See of Utrecht autonomous, and this position was affirmed by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Further, in 1520, a second papal grant "Debitum Pastoralis" from Pope Leo X to Philip of Burgundy, who was the 57<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Utrecht, provided that neither he nor any of his successors, nor any of their clergy or laity, should be tried by a tribunal of the Roman Catholic Church, and any such tribunal called in defiance of this grant should be *ipso facto* null and void.

The Reformation saw the Roman Catholic Church under attack in the Netherlands, and the Holy See in due course suspended and dissolved the dioceses north

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of the Rhine and Waal. The Dutch republican government was Calvinist in orientation and confiscated those churches that had not already been overrun by the Protestants. This left around one third of the Dutch population north of the Rhine who remained steadfastly Catholic. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Popes appointed one bishop at a time to the position of Apostolic Vicar for territories of the Dutch Republic, based in Utrecht and serving a vast number of Catholics who were worshipping in conditions of secrecy with the assistance of German and Belgian missionaries.

In 1691, the then-Apostolic Vicar, Petrus Codde, was accused of the heresy of Jansenism by the Jesuits. Jansenism was a strain of belief that was close to Calvinism; it emphasised predestination, divine grace, original sin and human depravity. Pope Innocent X condemned this as heresy in 1655. To investigate the case of Codde, Pope Innocent XII appointed a Commission of Cardinals (which act was in violation of “*Debitum Pastoralis*”) in 1694, which completely exonerated Codde of all charges.

Despite this decision, Pope Clement XI, who had just acceded to the Holy See, summoned Codde to Rome in 1697, and put him on trial again before a second Commission. Again, Codde was acquitted. In response, Pope Clement XI issued an order suspending Codde in 1702, deposed him in 1704, and appointed a successor to the Apostolic Vicariate.

Not surprisingly, Codde was seen as the victim of great injustice. Since his charges refused to accept the new Papal appointment, Codde continued to discharge the

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Vicariate's responsibilities until his death in 1710. Thereafter a period ensued where the Pope continued to appoint Apostolic Vicars, but a significant proportion of the people refused to accept them.

In 1723, the Dutch clergy elected Cornelius van Steenoven as Archbishop of Utrecht. Steenoven had been consecrated without a Papal mandate by a missionary bishop, Dominique Marie Varlet, who had been appointed by the Pope to the titular see of Babylon but in practice never went to the Middle East<sup>vi</sup>. The 1145 grant of Pope Eugene III meant that Utrecht could elect and consecrate an archbishop without Papal mandate, but nevertheless Rome excommunicated Steenoven and his successors in the See of Utrecht. Once installed, Steenoven also appointed and consecrated bishops for the Sees of Deventer, Haarlem and Groningen, all of which had lain vacant since the Reformation.

These clergy and laity who followed Steenoven and his successors were known as the Old Catholics, in contrast to the Vatican appointees as Apostolic Vicars who competed with them for jurisdiction. Old Catholicism was a minority movement, with most Catholics continuing to turn to Rome and the largely missionary clergy working in Holland.

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<sup>vi</sup> This consecration was performed by one bishop acting solo, and not by the customary three. Both it and consecrations descending from it have been accepted repeatedly by Rome as valid. In Roman canon law, in cases of necessity, one bishop may consecrate validly (Alexander VII, *Onerosa*, 4 February 1664, provides for this, either with two priests as assistants, or without any assistants). See Many, S., *Praelectiones de Sacra Ordinatione* (Paris: Letouzey 1905), p 519. There are many other such cases outside the remit of this work.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

### FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL; THE SEPARATION OF THE OLD CATHOLICS FROM ROME

In 1853, Pope Pius IX altered the balance of relations with the Old Catholics by establishing his own rival episcopal hierarchy in the Netherlands. This pushed the Old Catholics to the margins. However, the First Vatican Council of 1870 redressed the issue to some extent when large numbers of Catholics in Austria, Germany and Switzerland rejected the dogma of papal infallibility. In 1871, a convention at Munich brought these dissenters together, under the informal leadership of Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger (1799–1890)<sup>vii</sup>, who had already been excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church after rejecting papal infallibility. The convention resolved to form a body that they regarded as the true expression of the Catholic Church and through contact with Utrecht chose the name Old Catholic to emphasise their distancing from the innovations of the First Vatican Council.

The Old Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht supported the dissenters by ordaining and consecrating clergy for them. The second convention of the Old Catholics elected their first bishop. The church attracted support from the German Imperial government, which under Bismarck, and especially during the 1870s, was increasingly opposed to the Roman Catholic Church.

The Old Catholic Church grew, and in time formed a network through the four countries of Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Holland that was eventually

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<sup>vii</sup> Döllinger did not become a member of the Old Catholic Church as such, but he did receive the last rites from an Old Catholic priest.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

formalized as the Utrecht Union of Old Catholic Churches, that is to say, a union of the co-operating Old Catholic Churches that were organized on a national basis.

ARNOLD HARRIS MATHEW, OLD  
CATHOLIC BISHOP IN THE BRITISH  
ISLES<sup>viii</sup>

**A**rnold Harris Ochterlony Matthews (he would revert to his family's original name Mathew from 1894 onwards) was born on 7 August 1852 in Montpellier, France, to an aristocratic family which claimed the succession to the Earldom of Landaff in the Peerage of Ireland<sup>ix</sup>. Mathew's claim to this title was recorded in both Burke's and Debrett's Peerage<sup>x</sup>, and in

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<sup>viii</sup> Many refer to Mathew as the first Old Catholic bishop in the British Isles. However, an Old Catholic hierarchy was established in England with the consecration of Henry Marsh Marsh-Edwards and Henry Bernard Ventham by Mar Timotheos (Vilatte) in 1903, some five years before Mathew's consecration. These consecrations were independent of the Utrecht Union; Vilatte's Old Catholic jurisdiction derived from a mandate of the Syrian Orthodox Church. From this came the Independent Catholic Church, which lasted until around 1915 as an active organization, and was intimately connected with the Order of Corporate Reunion.

<sup>ix</sup> Bernard Mary Williams in *Archbishop Mathew: A Short Biographical Sketch* (incomplete typed MS) says that "the family is one of the most ancient in the county of Glamorgan. Sir David Mathew was created Grand Standard Bearer of All England by Edward IV."

<sup>x</sup> See *Debrett's Complete Peerage and Titles of Courtesy 1927*, entry for the Earldom of Llandaff, p 554 "This title (claimed since 1894) was assumed 1898 by the *Most Rev. ARNOLD HARRIS MATHEW, D.D.*, claiming to be 4<sup>th</sup> Earl. He *d.* Dec. 1919, not having officially proved and established his right to the dignity or to vote at the Election of Irish Representative Peers, and the title does not appear on Ulster's Roll." [Further details of Mathew's wife, children, relations and exact claim to the title then follow]. In addition, these facts are recorded in the relevant editions of *Whitaker's Peerage, Baronetage*,

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Who's Who, although he never proved his right to the title before the House of Lords. Debrett not only accepted Mathew's episcopate, but also gave credence to his claim to the Earldom, both during his lifetime and for at least eight years after his death, and well after the Sixth Lambeth Conference of 1920 which we will discuss later.

Mathew also inherited the Italian title of Marchese Povoleri de Vicenza, Verona e Nogarote, through his paternal grandmother, though he used the courtesy title of Count Povoleri<sup>xi</sup> only until 1894, when he succeeded his father in the representation of his claim to the Earldom of Landaff.

Mathew's father was a Roman Catholic and his mother an Anglican. He was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church in 1852, and in 1854 was conditionally baptized by an Anglican clergyman for what were described as "family reasons". As a youth he attended both St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church in Cheltenham, and the Anglo-Catholic St Mary's Church, Prestbury, and recognised little that separated them in objective terms.

Destined for the Anglican priesthood according to the wish of his mother, he was educated at Cheltenham College and the Universities of Bonn and Stüttgart. He

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*Knightage and Companionage*, such as that of 1907 (p 410), which reads "LANDAFF, EARLDOM (Irel. 1797), deemed *extinct* from 1833, but now assumed (from 1898), as 4<sup>th</sup> Earl, by Arnold Harris Mathew, of Chelsfield, Kent. His son styles himself Visc. Mathew."

<sup>xi</sup> He additionally Italianized his forenames as Arnaldo Girolamo. His sister Jessie Eliza Marion Povoleri bore the Povoleri title as one of her forenames, as did her son Feargus Joseph Dominic Povoleri O'Connor (born 1886).

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

trained initially as an Exhibitioner of the Anglican College of the Holy Spirit, Cumbrae. This institution had been founded with Anglo-Catholic intentions, but by Mathew's time had abandoned that path. Since Mathew felt that this was not conducive to his understanding of faith and worship, he decided in 1875 to reconcile with Rome and, having been conditionally baptised by a Benedictine priest at Belmont Cathedral Priory, transferred to St Peter's Diocesan Seminary, Partickhill, Glasgow, in 1876.

He was ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church on 24 June 1877 following an accelerated training in philosophy and theology in which he had distinguished himself. That same year, Charles Eyre, Titular Bishop of Anazarba, who had ordained Mathew priest, recommended him to Pope Pius IX, who awarded him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.<sup>xii</sup>

After ten months as curate of St Andrew's Cathedral, Glasgow, Mathew entered the novitiate of the Dominican Woodchester Priory in Gloucestershire, taking the name in religion of Brother Jerome. He made his profession in June 1879, but later that year left the Priory when he discovered that homosexual activity, to which he was opposed in the strongest of terms, was taking place between two of the brethren. At the commission of Mgr. James Chadwick, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, he became priest-in-charge of a newly established mission at Dunston-on-Tyne,

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<sup>xii</sup> The practice of recommending particularly outstanding work for such an award has fallen into desuetude, but in those days it was not uncommon for the Pope to grant academic degrees directly on the recommendation of a bishop.



## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Northumberland. Here, in a former hay loft, he established a school, partly at his own expense<sup>xiii</sup>, and an attached chapel<sup>xiv</sup>, dedicated to St Philip Neri.

Again, Mathew's stay here was not long. In early 1881, he moved to Plymouth, where the bishop, Mgr. William Vaughan appointed Mathew as Assistant Priest at the cathedral of St Mary and St Boniface. Here he earned a name for himself as a preacher and demonstrated a great affinity for animals (zoology was to be a lifelong interest).

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<sup>xiii</sup> The school developed into St Philip Neri Roman Catholic primary school, which opened in 1882 and is still active today. Website: <http://stphilipneriprimary.org> (retrieved May 2013)

<sup>xiv</sup> The church of St Philip Neri is still in use today, though not in the same building as that erected by Mathew. History and information: [http://webwanderers.org/2006/03/st\\_philip\\_neri\\_roman\\_catholic.html](http://webwanderers.org/2006/03/st_philip_neri_roman_catholic.html) (retrieved May 2013), "Before 1882 Roman Catholics in Dunston had to travel to St. Joseph's in Gateshead to hear mass, a distance of two miles or more. The Priest at St Joseph's, Father Matthews, tried to hold services nearer to Dunston by hiring first a room in Tynedale Terrace and then a hay loft in Bolam Street which served the dual purpose of school and church. In 1882 plans were drawn up for a School which would open the same year. Lack of funds meant that the planned presbytery could not be built and the Priest continued to live in Tynedale Terrace until a house was taken in Brompton Place in 1884. In 1884 the present Presbytery was built for £764.00 making a total debt of £2410.00 for School and Presbytery, which was a very large sum for a relatively small congregation. Owing to the siting of St Philip Neri many locals fail to notice the Presbytery, which is a spacious house with a pleasant 'hidden' garden between itself and the church. The dual-purpose building served until 1905 when the temporary Church was built. This was followed in 1909 by an extension to the school building and the opening of the infant school as a separate department. In 1934 after nearly thirty years, the present St Philip Neri replaced the 'Temporary' church building. In recent years, although plans have been discussed for a new church on a new site, it remains in the same place."

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

On one occasion he is said to have combined the two vocations by bringing an animal – either a tiger cub or a monkey – into the pulpit to illustrate his sermon.<sup>xv</sup>

A visit by Dom Adam Hamilton, OSB, to Mathew led to discussion about finding a home for the monks of Pierre-qui-Vire, who were temporarily staying in Ireland having been driven out of France. It was Mathew who suggested to Dom Adam that Buckfast Abbey was up for sale and might provide a suitable destination, and thus it has proved up to the present day.

Mathew left the cathedral at Plymouth for a curacy at St Teresa, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, from 1884-85. This led to further appointment in 1885 as mission priest at Trowbridge, Wiltshire, where Mathew built a church<sup>xvi</sup>. In 1888 there followed an appointment as Missionary-Rector of St Mary's Church, Bath<sup>xvii</sup>, a new church established to relieve the pressure on Downside Abbey.

The doctrine of papal infallibility was by now causing Mathew a great crisis of conscience, and contact with the modernist Fr. Hyacinthe Loyson (1827-1912) of the Eglise Catholique Gallicane, while staying in France, helped to crystallise Mathew's ideas.

Loyson had been ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church on 14 June 1851 by Leo François Sibour, Archbishop of Paris. On 20 September 1869 he left the

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<sup>xv</sup> *Anson*, p 159

<sup>xvi</sup> No record of this has been traced as yet; the main need in Trowbridge at that time was for the provision of worship for Catholic soldiers who were stationed at the barracks there.

<sup>xvii</sup> <http://www.stmarysbath.org.uk> (retrieved May 2013)

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Roman Catholic Church and married. Between October 1873 and August 1874 he was an Old Catholic priest in Geneva attached to the Union of Utrecht. In 1878 he founded the Eglise Catholique Gallicane<sup>xviii</sup> which was a continuation of earlier French alternatives to the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>xix</sup> Between 1878 and 1893, Loyson served

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<sup>xviii</sup> The church was under the nominal leadership of Anglican bishops from its outset. From 1879-82 it was under Robert Eden, Primate of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and then from 1883-87 under Henry Lascelles Jenner, formerly Bishop of Dunedin of the Anglican Church in New Zealand. Lastly, from 1888-93, it was under Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Bishop of Western New York of the Protestant Episcopal Church. On 3 March 1893, Loyson resigned from the church, at which point it split into two sections. One section united with the Eglise Catholique Française, while the other remained independent and broadly Old Catholic in alignment. It was this latter section that Joseph-René Vilatte, who had meantime been consecrated as Mar Timotheos, came to lead, and it was joined soon afterwards by the Revd. Paul Fatôme and his parishes in Corrèze, Saint-Cyr la Roche and Beyssac. The parishes of Persan (Seine-et-Oise) were incorporated in June. Mar Timotheos united the Eglise Catholique Gallicane with the Eglise Catholique, Apostolique et Française as a single body under his leadership.

<sup>xix</sup> Persson (*A Biographical Sketch on Joseph René Vilatte*, Solna, St Ephrem's Institute and Vilatte Guild Extension Academy of the People's University of the Americas, 2000, p 23, note 45) explains the background of these bodies as follows. The Eglise Catholique Française was founded on 15 January 1831 by the Revd François-Ferdinand Toussaint Châtel (1795-1857) (who became the Primate) and Bishop Thomas-Juste Poullard (1754-1833), both of the Eglise Constitutionnelle. It was close to the original Unitarianism in its beliefs. In 1843, the church was forcibly closed by the police. Châtel revived it as the Eglise Française Radicale in 1848, only for it to be closed by the police again in 1850. The 1801 Concordat had caused a breach between France and Rome on 1 July 1904, and in 1905 the separation of church and state was enacted by the Law of Separation. On 11 February 1906 Pope Pius X denounced the Law of Separation and his encyclical *Gravissimo* prohibited any compromise. In response, Durand-Morimbau initiated the Ligue des Catholiques de

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

as a priest for this church in Paris. In 1883 his contacts with Charles Chiniquy in the USA led to his convincing one of Chiniquy's students, the missionary Joseph-René Vilatte, to contact Edward Herzog<sup>xx</sup>, Presiding Bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Switzerland, and seek ordination in that communion. Vilatte was accepted by the Old Catholics, and became a close friend of Loyson in future years. On 3 March 1893 Loyson informed Gerard Gul, Archbishop of Utrecht, that he had resigned

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France (a fellowship of around 200 Old Catholic groups) with a *Sécretariat des Associations Culturelles Catholiques* in Paris, led by l'abbé Félix Meillon, which founded the *Eglise Catholique, Apostolique et Française* and invited Mar Timotheos to be its Archbishop-Primate. Many priests then joined the church, including Frs Darragon, Duhamel, Roussin, Ruelle, and Sterlin. After the restoration the church came to include the *Eglise Catholique Gallicane* when that body was also headed by Mar Timotheos from 1907 onwards.

<sup>xx</sup> (1841-1924) Ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church in Switzerland on 16 March 1867 by Eugenius Lachat, Bishop of Basel. In the autumn of 1872 he joined the Catholic reformation movement. In 1874, he was appointed professor in theology at the Universität Bern. On 18 September 1876 he was consecrated (solo, and without the consent of other Old Catholic bishops – which would become a precedent later cited by Mathew) by Josef Hubert Reinkens (1821-1896), Bishop of the *Alt-Katholische Kirche in Deutschland* (1873-1896). He was Bishop of the *Christkatholische Kirche der Schweiz/Église catholique-chrétienne de la Suisse* (1876-1924). He was author of books including *Ansprache bei Eröffnung der ersten christkatholischen Synode*, Olten 1875; *Gemeinschaft mit der anglo-amerikanischen Kirche*, Bern 1881; *Leo XIII. Als Retter der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung*, Solothurn 1888; *Über den römischen Ablass*, Zürich 1890; *Beiträge zur Vorgeschichte der christkatholischen Kirche*, Bern 1896; *Die kirchliche Sündenvergebung nach der Lehre des heiligen Augustin*, Bern 1902; *Der religiöse Standpunkt der christkatholischen Kirche*, Basel 1920.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

as a clergyman.<sup>xxi</sup> Loyson's outlook was profoundly ecumenical, even going so far as to embrace interest in other faiths, and this was doubtless an influence on the later path of Mathew's ministry.

Following his contact with Loyson, Mathew took the decision in 1889 to resign from St Mary's and from all duties in the Roman Catholic Church, citing his inability to accept papal infallibility. Seeking ways to continue ministry in accordance with his conscience, he first turned to Unitarianism (in its traditional rather than contemporary sense<sup>xxii</sup>). The Unitarian paper "The Inquirer" published on 13 July 1889 a notice on Mathew's

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<sup>xxi</sup> His books include *Appeal to the bishops of Catholic Christendom. Prefaced by a letter to a friend*, London 1871; *Lettre sur mon mariage*, Paris 1872; *De la Réforme catholique, I-II*, Paris 1872-1873; *Liturgie de l'Eglise catholique de Genève*, Neuchâtel 1873; *Catholic reform, letters, fragments, discourses*, London 1874; *L'Eglise catholique en Suisse*, Genève 1875; *Les principes de la Réforme catholique; ou, L'harmonie du catholicisme et de la civilisation conférences de 1878 au cirque d'hiver*, Paris [Société de la réforme catholique] 1878; *Programme de la réforme catholique*, Paris 1879; *Liturgie de l'église catholique gallicane, suivie d'un abrégé du catéchisme et d'un programme de la réforme catholique*, Paris 1883; *Ni cléricaux, ni athées*, Paris 1890; *Mon Testament*, Paris 1893; *Qui est le Christ? Pour les juifs, les chrétiens, les musulmans*, Paris 1900; *L'union religieuse et le dieu inconnu. Discours prononcé dans l'église de Notre-Dame de Genève, le 6 octobre 1901 pour le vingthuitième anniversaire de la réforme catholique*, Genève 1901; *The divinity of Christ*, London 1902.

<sup>xxii</sup> The original Unitarianism was not an interfaith approach, but rather a non-dogmatic Christianity which, although mainly Protestant in its approach, also attracted increasing elements of Ritualism within a liberal context. This can be seen particularly in the approach of Mathew's contemporary Ulric Vernon Herford and, related to him, the Society of Free Catholics under Joseph Morgan Lloyd Thomas.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

position, saying, “Mr Matthews (like Mr Addis<sup>xxiii</sup>) finds in Unitarianism the expression of his religious convictions, and it is pleasant to think that his high abilities as a preacher will in future be exercised, not to advance the Papal church, for which he has rendered such conspicuous service and made considerable pecuniary sacrifices, but be enlisted on the side of Liberal Christianity.”

On 17 July, Mathew responded in a letter to that journal, “Permit me to tender to you my most sincere thanks for your truly kind and sympathetic notice relating to my recent secession. I must ask your permission to express my deep sense of gratitude to Mr Suffield not only for his, I fear, too flattering expressions in his letter of last week, but also for the consolation he has afforded me at this most trying epoch of my life. Only those who, like myself, have experienced the anguish involved by such a step, can in any way understand one’s bitter sufferings. It is for this reason, Sir, that I find your own generous expressions of such great comfort.”

The prospects for Mathew among the Unitarians were not great, however. During his twelve or so months with them, he was not adopted by a chapel or given the opportunity of a permanent ministry. It is interesting to reflect on what might have been, had circumstances been more auspicious.

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<sup>xxiii</sup> Addis and Suffield were former Roman Catholic priests who had become Unitarians.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

At this point, according to Mar Georgius (de Willmott Newman)<sup>xxiv</sup>, he was prevailed upon by Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, Frederick Temple, then Bishop of London and later Archbishop of Canterbury, and Lady Sandhurst, who urged him to “make a trial” of the Anglican ministry.

Mathew could not be formally incardinated into the Church of England because he refused to sign “A Form of Renunciation of Roman Doctrine,” which was at that time promulgated by the Archbishop of Canterbury and to which the Archbishop compelled him to assent<sup>xxv</sup>. Mathew raised this issue with the Prime Minister, W.E. Gladstone, who wrote to him as follows,

“My dear sir, - I have received your letter with extreme concern. I know not what is the legal basis of the test which I understand to have been imposed upon you. I view it as in its nature open to objection on many grounds, with nothing to recommend it. With regard to your question. I am quite ready to testify that all such intercourse as I have had with you has impressed me in a favourable manner with respect to your character and abilities. The same is the case as to what I have heard of the results of inquiries concerning you, but it should be borne in mind that that intercourse has been slight and somewhat abstract. I might be of more use by bearing testimony to the high character of men whose confidence you have won on a higher basis – such as Mr

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<sup>xxiv</sup> Mar Georgius, *In the Shadow of Utrecht*, Catholic Apostolic Church, Belgium, 1954, p 2

<sup>xxv</sup> Edward White Benson (1829-96), who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1882 until his death.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Eyton<sup>xxvi</sup>. You are at liberty to use and cite what I have said.”

Gladstone then wrote again in full vindication of Mathew’s position,

“My dear sir, - Having made inquiries, I am in a condition to state with some confidence that (as I thought) there is no law requiring anyone to impose upon you the renunciation reported to me, but only a law of 1874 empowering the Archbishop to attach apparently any conditions he pleased to his own assent to your officiating – a power which, in this instance, His Grace [Archbishop Benson] has deemed it fit to use in a manner wholly beyond my comprehension.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

In 1892, as a result of the support of the Bishop of London (who was himself active in the cause of ecumenism), and the Rector, the Revd. Robert W. Eyton, Mathew was appointed curate at the strongly Anglo-Catholic Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, London, described by Betjeman as “the Cathedral of the Arts and Crafts Movement”, and was granted informal permission to officiate. This situation was most irregular, and had only come about because of Mathew’s influence and high social standing. Questions were asked in the House of Commons regarding the legality of the marriages he celebrated at

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<sup>xxvi</sup> Prebendary Robert W. Eyton (1845-1908), Rector of Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, London, from 1884 and Prebendary of St Paul’s Cathedral from 1885.

<sup>xxvii</sup> These letters were introduced into court during Mathew’s libel case against *The Times* in 1913, and quoted in the report of the case Bishop Mathew and a Papal Bull, *Manchester Guardian*, 16 April 1913, p 14.



## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Holy Trinity; these were affirmed as fully valid by the Anglican hierarchy.<sup>xxviii</sup>

That same year on 22 February at Holy Trinity, Mathew married Margaret Florence Duncan, a Canadian who was related to Gladstone<sup>xxix</sup>, and in 1895 the first of their three children was born<sup>xxx</sup>.

In 1894, Mathew's father died, and Mathew inherited his claim to the Earldom of Llandaff. Anxious as ever to ensure propriety, he consulted Sir Albert Woods, then Garter King of Arms, as to the action he should take. The consequence of Garter's advice was that he assumed the *de jure* title of Earl of Llandaff from 1898 onwards. Doubtless, Garter's involvement was a factor in the acceptance of his claim by such sources as Burke, Debrett and Whitaker; certainly no-one during Mathew's lifetime suggested that his claim was without basis or the act of an adventurer.

In 1895, the Rector of Holy Trinity, Prebendary Robert W. Eyton, was appointed as Rector of St Margaret's, Westminster. His replacement, the Revd. R.H. Gamble,

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<sup>xxviii</sup> However, if Fr. Creran in *The Month*, June 1953, is to be believed, Mathew was the pseudonymous author of a letter published in a local paper in which he opined that Frederick George Lee, Anglican priest and (which became public in 1877) bishop in the Order of Corporate Reunion "is undoubtedly a bishop, which is more than can be said of his neighbour at Lambeth Palace".

<sup>xxix</sup> She was the fifth daughter of Robert Duncan.

<sup>xxx</sup> Margherita Francesca. A second daughter, Mary Teresa Gertrude, was born in 1907, and a son, Francis Arnold Dominic Leo, styled Viscount Mathew, in 1900. His son was subsequently to serve as a Second Lieutenant in the Indian Cavalry.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

retained Mathew as an Honorary Curate and spoke well of him.

In 1899, Eyton was involved in a homosexual scandal and had to flee abroad<sup>xxxix</sup>. Mathew had been closely connected with Eyton, both as his curate and because Eyton had been the clergyman who had conducted his marriage, and he had maintained friendly contact with him following his appointment to St Margaret's. Mathew now feared that he would be dragged into the scandal, though he himself was not homosexual, and must also have felt thoroughly disillusioned with the Church of England, given that the *casus belli* here was the same as that which had led to his leaving the Dominicans.

Accordingly, he resigned his curacy at Holy Trinity Church and rejoined the Roman Catholic Church as a layman. In 1903, Mathew wrote to Pope Pius X seeking to regularize his marriage and to obtain an exceptional dispensation to return to the priesthood<sup>xxxix</sup>. He quoted in support the case of John Butler, Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork, who had resigned his office in 1786 when succeeding to the title of Baron Dunboyne. Lord Dunboyne became a Protestant and married, but then reconciled with the Roman church. The reply to Mathew, however, was a refusal to dispense him from his vow of celibacy which thus made his return as a priest conditional on his repudiating his wife, a condition which was unacceptable to him.

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<sup>xxxix</sup> He went to Queensland, Australia. His death was the result of mistaking liniment for cough mixture.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Such dispensations were notably to be exercised on behalf of Anglican clergy in later years when the Church of England voted to ordain women to the priesthood.

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During this period, Mathew resided at the estate he had inherited at Chelsfield in Kent, where he would attend Mass at the Chapel of St Joseph's and St Anne's Orphanage, Orpington. Mathew first put his energies at the service of his secular passion, zoology. He was instrumental in establishing the Zoological Gardens at Brighton<sup>xxxiii</sup> in 1898, and was one of the first advocates of keeping wild animals in enclosures instead of cages. He was responsible for introducing a number of insectivorous birds into New Zealand, and was appointed a life member of the Clifton Zoological Society.

He also began a successful career as an author, publishing books on Catholic subjects and beyond. Between 1898 and 1912, he worked on areas including Catholic biography, women's suffrage, the history of the Papacy in the medieval era (and in particular its corruption under the Borgia ascendancy), and those church communities separated from Rome, and published at least fifteen books, including a number of translations from the Latin and the French. These included "Christianity or Agnosticism" (1898), "A Guide to Bruges" (1903), "A True Historical Relation of the Conversion of Sir Tobie Mathew to the Holy Catholic faith" (1904), "The Life of Sir Tobie Mathew, Bacon's alter

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<sup>xxxiii</sup> The original company established by Mathew went bankrupt, but it was later reestablished. The zoo was in the grounds of Withdean Grange, which is now the site of Withdean Stadium, home to Brighton and Hove Albion football club. It eventually closed around 1955.

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ego<sup>xxxiv</sup>” (1907), “The Beginnings of the Temporal Sovereignty of the Popes” (1905), “The Catholic Scholar’s Introduction to English Literature” (1904), “Woman Suffrage” (1907), “Faith and Scripture” (n.d.), “The Life of Lady Abbess Knatchbull” (n.d.), “The Life and Times of Lucrezia Borgia” (n.d.), “The Life and Times of Caesar Borgia” (n.d.), “The Life and Times of Pope Alexander VI” (1912), “The Life and Times of Hildebrand – Pope Gregory VII” (1910), “The Adventures and Tragic End of Dixon Smithson” (n.d.), “A History of France” (2 vols) (n.d.), “A History of French Literature” (n.d.), “Francesca di Rimini in Legend and History” (translation) (1908), and “The Diary of John Burchard of Strasbourg” (annotated translation, 3 vols, 1911).<sup>xxxv</sup>

Mathew also produced an authorised translation of “The Churches Separated from Rome” by Louis Duchesne (1907). This work received the *nihil obstat* and *imprimi potest* of the Archdiocese of Westminster.

During this time, he also corresponded with the Roman Catholic modernist and former Jesuit George Tyrrell (1861-1909), with whom he collaborated on the third edition of Lea’s “History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church,” a work exposing to the full the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and enumerating all its various scandals in detail. This work was to have a significant effect on Mathew’s attitude towards Rome for a time.

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<sup>xxxiv</sup> Mathew accepted the theory that the works of Shakespeare were actually authored by Bacon.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Some of these works are now extremely rare, and copies of them are not held in the British Library.

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Tyrrell was raised an Anglican and converted to Roman Catholicism in 1879. In 1880 he joined the Society of Jesus, and was ordained priest in 1891. His assertion of “the right of each age to adjust the historico-philosophical expression of Christianity to contemporary certainties, and thus to put an end to this utterly needless conflict between faith and science which is a mere theological bogey” caused him to be formally sanctioned by Pope Pius X, and in 1906 he was expelled from the Society of Jesus.

By 1907 Mathew, like Tyrrell, had become a convinced opponent of the Papacy, and on 12 August wrote to Randall Davidson<sup>xxxvi</sup>, now Archbishop of Canterbury, “The Papacy, instead of being the “visible centre of unity”, I regard as the centre and origin of ecclesiastical discord and disunion, the fomentor of schisms, and the seat of ecclesiastical despotism and tyranny.”

Mathew felt that the time had come when it would be possible for him to resume his vocation in the Church of England, from which he had, after all, resigned of his own accord rather than under any pressure from the hierarchy. To this end, he had discussions with the Bishop of Rochester, John Reginald Harmer<sup>xxxvii</sup>, who discouraged him, and with Davidson. Davidson made Mathew's return conditional on an unspecified period of probation, a condition which Mathew rejected, stating that in that case he would remain outside the Anglican

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> (1848-1930); KCVO, First (and last) Baron Davidson of Lambeth, 1928. He was Bishop of Rochester 1891-95; Bishop of Winchester 1895-1903; translated to Canterbury, 1903.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> (1857-1944). He was Bishop of Adelaide 1895-1905 and Bishop of Rochester 1905-30.

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Communion. However, in response, Davidson indicated that he would be prepared to consider the question afresh in the event that it might be reopened in the future.

### MATHEW CONTACTS THE OLD CATHOLICS

In September 1907, Mathew began to correspond with Edward Herzog, a bishop of the Old Catholic Church in Switzerland, asking if there were prospects for an Old Catholic movement in England. There is nothing to indicate that Mathew was proposing that he should serve as bishop of that movement, although he felt that the consecration of a bishop for it was desirable, nor was he isolated in this appeal, which had in fact been ongoing from a number of connected groups for several years. Herzog's previously mentioned ordination of the French missionary Joseph René Vilatte to the priesthood shewed that he was sympathetic to the cause of those who were caught between Rome and Canterbury and who sought a valid Catholicism outside Papal obedience.

Mathew's reply from Herzog, received on 21 September, was not particularly encouraging. Herzog said, "Unfortunately we have not at present proofs that Catholics in England are disposed to reject the jurisdiction of the Roman Curia, but if Old Catholic associations were formed, if such associations were constituted an ecclesiastical union, represented by a Synod, and if this Synod recognized the principles we profess, [and] proceeded to elect a bishop, I should be very happy to participate in the consecration of this bishop. But I do not believe that it is allowed to start the work of which you speak by the consecration of a

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bishop. We do not wish to create bishops “*in partibus*”. This is the reply I have always given when Anglican priests put themselves forward.”

However, the two men continued what was to become an extended exchange of letters, and Mathew then wrote additionally to Mgr. Van Thiel, the Old Catholic Bishop of Haarlem, who was more cautious on the matter than Herzog.

Mathew accordingly signed the 1889 Declaration of Utrecht. His vision seems to have been that modernists and Anglo-Catholics (who feared the Report of the Ritual Commission, which was set up in 1904 to investigate allegedly illegal ritual and ceremonial in the Church of England) were no longer happy with Canterbury, and would be prevented from submission to Rome because they were married. An Old Catholic church in England that would not enforce clerical celibacy might provide them with the home they would be seeking, with the additional benefit that it would provide valid Sacraments in the eyes of Rome<sup>xxxviii</sup>.

Mathew therefore wrote to Davidson in December 1907, saying, “I think that a way to serve the Church of England as *une église amie* may be open to me, which will also, I hope, help forward the movement of Re-Union of those Churches which reject the modern Papal pretensions. I have been approached within the past few days by several Roman Catholics who wish to embrace the tenets of the Old Catholic Communities of Germany

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<sup>xxxviii</sup> Clerical celibacy had been abolished in all Old Catholic branches from 1874 save those in Holland, which would maintain it until 1922.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

and Switzerland and have implored me to assist them. If this can be done in harmony and friendship with the Established Church, I think a sphere of very useful labour is thus unexpectedly presenting itself, one also which it may be my duty to enter upon. Should this prove to be so the enquiries which have been made will have been very advantageous to our movement. I have long thought that if it were possible for a Bishop of the Church of England to accept the services of an Old Catholic Coadjutor, or Assistant, who could take part in Ordinations, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox objections to Anglican Orders would be effectually silenced without any sacrifice of principle whatsoever. Such an arrangement might be difficult. I do not know.”

In fact, this was exactly the plan adopted by the Anglicans following the Bonn Agreement of 1931, and the argument has since been put forward that the involvement of Utrecht Union bishops in Anglican consecrations has effectively validated Anglican orders to the point where all Anglican clergy are now in a joint Church of England and Utrecht succession. For the time being, however, it was rejected by Davidson.

The Roman Catholics that Mathew had referred to were a group unofficially led by Fr. Richard O'Halloran. O'Halloran had been appointed Rector of St Peter's Church, 12, Mattock Lane, Ealing, then a new mission, in 1895<sup>xxxix</sup>. O'Halloran himself had purchased the land on which the “tin tabernacle” church and presbytery were built, on a vague agreement that this would eventually be handed over to the authorities of the archdiocese.

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<sup>xxxix</sup> The mission had begun as a house church in Windsor Road, Ealing, in 1893.



## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

In 1901, Cardinal Vaughan, who had found O'Halloran a difficult character, proposed to turn the mission over to the Benedictines at Downside and send O'Halloran elsewhere. This was met with fury by O'Halloran, and his congregation was also loyal to him in the main. Being the owner of the title deeds, he refused to depart, and the Roman Catholic Church was powerless to evict him. His consequent suspension meant that his parish was effectively isolated from the mainstream, and in seeking Old Catholic leadership, O'Halloran was looking to regularise their situation by once more becoming part of a church hierarchy.<sup>x1</sup>

O'Halloran first approached Gerardus Gul, the Old Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht, in November 1901, when his troubles with Cardinal Vaughan had begun. He then approached Herzog in 1903, when he requested that he administer Confirmation to around twenty candidates from his church. Herzog consulted the Church of England about the situation, and receiving advice from Davidson not to become involved, declined to act.

The other Roman Catholics who had become involved in the approaches to the Old Catholics were two priests from Mathew's former diocese of Nottingham. The

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<sup>x1</sup> O'Halloran also for a time tried to set up a Benedictine community with Henry Bernard Ventham (Columba Mary) who had been ordained priest by Mar Timotheos (Vilatte). However, this ran into financial difficulties and closed after a few months. In 1915, O'Halloran registered a second building for the use of unattached Catholics. He died in 1925 and the Mattock Lane church was used successively by the Scouts and then the Questors Theatre, which purchased it in 1952 and is still based there.

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bishop there, Edward Gilpin Bagshawe, C.O. (1829-1915) had enjoyed an active expansion of the diocese, with many new missions opened to care for miners and a number of communities for nuns set up. His own principles tended towards socialism; at one point he sought to excommunicate members of the Primrose League (an organisation formed to support the Conservative Party and the British Empire). As far as clergy were concerned, he was known to be generous towards those who had encountered problems elsewhere, and administered the diocese in a liberal manner.

Herbert Ignatius Beale<sup>xli</sup> was one of these priests, and was formerly a Protonotary Apostolic. The other was Arthur William Howarth<sup>xlii</sup> (1867-1942), formerly Domestic Prelate to Pope Leo XIII.

When Bagshawe was forced to resign on account of infirmity in 1901, his replacement, Robert Brindle (a former army chaplain) took a hardline and militaristic approach to what he saw as the liberal excesses of Bagshawe's rule. He accused Beale and Howarth of various irregularities and the misuse of Mass stipends. To this, Beale and Howarth replied that Bagshawe had known fully of all these matters and had given his consent to them. Feeling themselves most unfairly accused, they attacked Brindle in the press. When Cardinal Vaughan became involved and attempted to discipline them, they stated publically that they would regard any penalties to be inflicted upon them as

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<sup>xli</sup> Beale was priest of St Edward's, Nottingham, from 1896.

<sup>xlii</sup> He was ordained priest on 21 December 1892 by Bagshawe and appointed to Corby in 1905.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

entirely null and void unless they had first been afforded a fair trial.

Since the authorities were not willing to proceed in this way, Beale resigned from his parish. He along with O'Halloran had been among the first to make approaches to the continental Old Catholics, visiting their bishops together with him, and initially had announced that he was starting an Old Catholic mission in England. In 1903 (*Daily Chronicle*, 5 February) he announced his reconciliation with Rome, but this came to nothing, and he continued to serve an independent chapel at Gunnersbury, west London, not far from O'Halloran's in Ealing. Howarth, meanwhile, continued to remain in his parish at Corby, near Grantham, and to protest his innocence of all allegations.

O'Halloran managed to convince Mathew that there were sizeable numbers of laity who were seeking Old Catholic leadership in Britain, and that the lack of a bishop was preventing their pastoral care. This was the context of the letter to Davidson quoted earlier.

Meanwhile, Gerardus Gul had in September 1907 consecrated the former Roman Catholic priest Frantisek Hodur for the recently-established Polish National Catholic Church, thereby providing further evidence that the Old Catholics were prepared to offer support to groups seeking alternatives to the Roman Catholic Church<sup>xliii</sup>.

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<sup>xliii</sup> The PNCC and the Old Catholic Church of British Columbia are the only Old Catholic churches in North America still acknowledged by the Utrecht Union, though both are no longer in communion with it.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Mathew wrote to Davidson's chaplain on 30 December 1907 outlining his thoughts and saying, "In view of the difficulty of arrangements for entering the Ministry of the Church of England, I have at length definitely decided to abandon the idea and to throw in my lot with the Old Catholics. We shall open a mission in this country for the benefit of those Roman Catholics who are unable to continue conscientious adhesion to the Vatican, and this we shall do in a spirit of perfect and cordial amity with the Church of England, and in no spirit of aggression, still less of proselytism...I am now in correspondence with the Archbishop of Utrecht, who will formally authorize the formation of a branch of the Church in Great Britain on the lines I have indicated."

It can be seen that Mathew was in no sense seeking to go behind the back of the Church of England; rather, in his appeal to that body for support and involvement, he was seeking to engage it in providing a solution for the difficulty he and others had perceived. There was a real prospect that if Ritualists continued to feel themselves persecuted, a movement such as that which Mathew proposed might find itself with a substantial following. This prospect was seen by Mathew as benign, but by others as a potential threat of a significant nature.

Davidson replied on 10 January 1908, in which he said that although he was "at all times glad to learn of any movement in the Church of Rome in the direction of sounder principles of doctrine and usage", he could not concede that movement's place as the representative of the true and historic Church Catholic because the Church of England claimed that position for herself. He

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

therefore perceived no need to create “another society claiming that position, even though it does so in a less exclusive and arrogant spirit than that which finds its centre and expression in the Vatican.”

The decision of Davidson not to become involved or to offer assistance (such as, for instance, providing a bishop of the Church of England to look after the Old Catholics) ultimately left O'Halloran's group with no choice but to select a bishop from among their own ranks. On 18 February 1908, a meeting chaired by O'Halloran and consisting of seventeen priests and sixteen laymen elected Mathew Regionary Old Catholic Bishop of Great Britain and Ireland. Mathew initially flatly refused to accept, but after persuasion consented to allow his name to go forward. Following this, O'Halloran sent a letter to Bishop Herzog the following day asking for Mathew's consecration. Mathew also notified Davidson, who made no objection.

In response to this, Bishop Van Thiel wrote to O'Halloran suggesting that he should travel to Ealing to discuss the matter. O'Halloran refused this request, and this refusal mystified Mathew and Bishop Demmel of Bonn. On 22 March Demmel wrote to Mathew, “I have doubts if the proposal to hold the consecration on April 8 will be adopted in Holland. I know that the Rev. O'H--- has received a somewhat unsympathetic impression from the Bishop of Haarlem; but it seems to me that it was always a mistake on the part of Monsieur O'H—not to allow him to come to Ealing. I have tried to find a reason for this refusal to the Bishop; but I am not convinced that the latter is altogether satisfied.”

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

The reason why O'Halloran was so chary of the Old Catholic bishops visiting his mission will become clear in the next section of this work; but for the time being Herzog advised Mathew to invite Van Thiel to stay with him at Chelsfield (at Van Thiel's own expense, since he was not a poor man), indicating that personal discussions in advance would help to make the process of the episcopal conference less cumbersome. However, in the event, Van Thiel made his enquiries by letter, and was satisfied with what he was told.<sup>xliv</sup>

The Dutch bishops met on the 26<sup>th</sup> and agreed to hold the consecration at Rotterdam on April 22. Then a letter arrived from Herzog asking if Mathew was married, the Dutch Old Catholics still maintaining priestly celibacy. Mathew replied that he was, and that he had three children. It was therefore decided, after some serious discussion, to allow an exception to priestly celibacy in his case.

Davidson had not commented on the consecration, but John Wordsworth, the Anglican Bishop of Salisbury, wrote a letter of strong protest to Van Thiel, casting aspersions on Mathew's character. The Utrecht Union bishops, however, who did not even recognise an Anglican bishop as being in valid orders at this point, chose to ignore this letter and make no reply to it. They proceeded with the consecration and made their own judgement that Mathew was a suitable candidate.

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<sup>xliv</sup> This omission of the opportunity for a personal visit places the responsibility for the investigation of the potential Old Catholic mission in England squarely with the Utrecht Union bishops. At any stage they could have withdrawn, had they not received or verified the information they were seeking.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

### CONSECRATION IN HOLLAND

Mathew and O'Halloran travelled to Utrecht to meet Gul, and on 28 April 1908 Gul, together with fellow Old Catholic bishops Johannes van Thiel, Nicolaus Spit and Johannes Demmel, consecrated Mathew according to the Roman rite in the cathedral of St Gertrude in Utrecht. The consecration was reported in the "Church Times" and in "The Guardian". By this event Mathew received the historic episcopate in the succession of the Roman Catholic Church, and thus, unlike the Anglicans, he was beyond any doubt validly consecrated and possessed of effective sacramental power. In 1908, the Roman Catholic Church accepted the validity of orders conferred by the Church of Utrecht, despite that church having been in schism from Rome for almost two hundred years.

In his sermon, Gul said that he was pleased to consecrate "a British subject, who would thus become a regional Bishop in the British Isles." He and his fellow consecrators issued the following Instrument to Mathew:

#### INSTRUMENTUM CONSECRATIONIS Reverendissimi Domini Arnoldi Harris Mathew IN EPISCOPUM

In nomine sanctissimae et individuae Trinitatis, Amen.  
Anno Domini MDCCCXCVIII, Archi-episcopatus sui XV,  
Feria III post Dominicam in Albis, die XXVIII mensis  
Aprilis, Illustrissimus ac Reverendissimus Dominus  
Gerardus Gul, Archi-Episcopus Ultrajectensis,

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TRAJECTI AD REHNUM in Ecclesia parochiali Sanctae Gertrudi dedicata, intra Missarum solemniam in Episcopum regionarium Ecclesiae Catholicae, quae est in Regno Magnae Britanniae, Reverendissimum Dominum Arnoldum Harris Mathew (comitem Landavensum) Presbyterum dictae Ecclesiae, in Synodo (ueterum) Catholicorum ejusdem Ecclesiae Episcopum electum, juxta ritum Pontificali Romano praescriptum, ordinavit et consecravit: assistentibus et co-operantibus Illustrissimis Dominis: JACOBO JOHANNES van THIEL, Episcopo Harlemensi, NICOLAO BARTHOLOMEO PETRO SPIT, Episcopo Daventriensi, et JOSEPHO DEMMEL, Episcopo Catholico Regionario Germaniae.

Electionis tabulae praedicti Reverendissimi Domini ARNOLDI HARRIS MATHEW in Episcopum intelligibiliter et distincte ante consecrationis solemnitatem in Ecclesia lectae fuerunt.

Acta sunt haec in praefato loco anno, mensae ac die supra dictis, praesentibus ibidem testibus infra signitatis:

(L+S) † GERARDUS GUL, Archiepiscopus Ultrajectensis  
(L+S) † JACOBUS JOHANNES van THIEL, Epus Harl.  
(L+S) † NICOLAUS BARTHOLOMEUS PETRUS SPIT, Episcopus Daventriensis.  
(L+S) † JOSEPHUS DEMMEL, Episcopus Germaniae

J.W. Joan V. Leynes; T.L.W.H. Bremmer, Notary Public; N. Prins; A.H. Dievenbach; S.J.W. ----?; J.J. de Vries; C. Wyker; G.C. van Schwick, parochus; P.W. Rinkel, parochus; B. Smits, parochus Ultrajectensis; F. Kennink, parochus Amersfoorti; G.L. Rinkel, par: Culemborgi; C.



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Deelder, par. ad. S. Gertrudem; J. Pellemcyck; A. Van der Poll.

Et omnia haec ita peracta fuisse et supra scriptas signaturas genuinas esse eorum quorum sunt nomina, quique in praesentia mea signaverunt et plures alias omnis conditionis personas hui consecrationi interfuisse attestor. Quorum ut certa sit ac testata fides, manu mea propria subsignavi et sigillo munavi.

T. Van SANTEN

Secretarius ad hoc.

### O'HALLORAN'S DECEPTION

It was soon after his return from Holland that Mathew found that O'Halloran had deceived him and that the lay following for Old Catholicism in Britain was much smaller than he had been told. The full story of O'Halloran's deception was revealed in an article in the "Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift" of July-September 1915. The document purporting to show the details of Mathew's election and those in support of him was a fiction created by O'Halloran for his own ends, and this too was the reason behind his refusal of any Old Catholic visit to Ealing lest the truth surrounding this matter be found out. The only basis for any assertion of mass support for Mathew's movement was a September 1902 article in the "Fortnightly Review" by the Revd. Arthur Galton, a former Roman Catholic priest who had joined the Church of England. Galton spoke of at least 250 Roman clergy who wished to break away and place themselves under a non-papal church similar to the continental Old Catholics. If these men were indeed to be found, they had not as yet adhered to Mathew's cause.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Acting honourably, Mathew immediately offered his resignation to the Utrecht Union bishops. Writing to Herzog in later years, on 6 August 1915, he said, "I immediately wrote to Mgr. Gul, Mgr. Van Thiel & yourself, and said I would resign my office at once if the Archbishop wished me to do so, as I had been completely deceived by O'H. who merely used me as a *patte de chat* to obtain the episcopate in his favour... Mgr. Gul wrote to me urging me not to resign but to 'go on', so did Mgr. Van Thiel, so did you yourself. I have all these letters. Therefore I obeyed & did my best."<sup>xlv</sup>

His fellow bishops refused to accept Mathew's offer to resign, and published a letter in "The Guardian" of 2 June 1908, as follows,

"Sir,

### AN OLD CATHOLIC BISHOP FOR ENGLAND

We, the Archbishop and Bishops of the Old Catholic Church of Holland, and the Old Catholic Bishops of Germany and Switzerland, having heard with much concern of certain events connected with our English Branch of the Old Catholic Church, wish to say that we have been in correspondence with a suspended Roman Catholic Priest in England since the year 1902.

This Priest visited the Bishops of Bonn, Berne, Haarlem, Deventer, and the Archbishop of Utrecht, and we

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<sup>xlv</sup> This and Mathew's other letters to Herzog are now in the Bischöfliches Archiv der Christkatholischen Kirche der Schweiz, Bern.

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believed him to be in perfect accord with us. He accompanied Bishop Mathew on his visit to the Archbishop of Utrecht. On April 7<sup>th</sup> in the present year, he, with others, signed the petition to the Bishops begging us to consecrate The Rt. Rev. A.H. Mathew.

All the documents were sent by this Priest to Bishop Herzog, accompanied by numerous letters urging upon us the immediate need of a Bishop, not only for the requirements of his own congregation, but for those of other clergy and congregations specified by him. We had no reason to suppose that we were mistaken in complying with his request. We wish now to state that our confidence in Bishop Mathew remains unshaken, after carefully perusing a large number of the documents bearing upon this matter, and we earnestly hope that his ministrations will be abundantly blessed by Almighty God, and that he will receive the cordial support of the British people and Church in the trying circumstances in which he has now been placed.

In the name of the Old Catholic Bishops of Holland, Germany and Switzerland,

The Secretary,

† J.J. van Thiel  
Bishop of Haarlem”

Of this, James Ingall Wedgwood (q.v.) was to say,

“This solemn declaration speaks for itself. It is difficult to think of the Bishops commending to another nation and Church – still less to the blessing of God – a man upon

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

whom remained the least vestige of so terrible a suspicion. They now say that his version of the affair is to be believed. If they have had cause (from their point of view) to regret the consecration, one can only answer that regrets, however keen, do not make facts; and no new facts have come to light since the original declaration.”<sup>xlvi</sup>

In addition, a letter from Bishop van Thiel to Bishop Wordsworth of Salisbury at this time indicates that Utrecht saw the potential for Mathew to gather a congregation in England, and referred to him as “very reliable and a considerable man of high repute.”<sup>xlvii</sup>

Mathew himself had written to “The Guardian” on 27 May,

“I now wish to say that having received this important office and mission, notwithstanding my express desire that another whom I believed to be more competent and more worthy to undertake both, should be chosen in my place, it appears to be my duty to use every possible endeavour that my ministry may be of service in the interests and welfare of mankind. I therefore earnestly beg for the cordial co-operation of all sincere Christians, in order that, in spite of my numerous shortcomings and my unworthiness, I may succeed in some degree in the accomplishment of the Divine purposes, particularly by seeking to bring about a better and more charitable understanding between some of the many contending

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<sup>xlvi</sup> Wedgwood, James I., The Lambeth Conference and the Validity of Archbishop Mathew’s Orders, in *The Collected Works of James I. Wedgwood*, ed. Howard, St Alban’s Press, California, 2004, p 234

<sup>xlvii</sup> Cited in *Yelton*, p.196.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

denominations into which the Christian people in this country have, unfortunately, become divided.”

Mathew had been left in an extremely difficult position where he was effectively responsible for creating a community from scratch that he could serve amid the counter-interests of Roman Catholics and Anglicans in Britain, neither of whose hierarchies were supportive.

In this situation, Mathew drew particular support from George Tyrrell. Tyrrell wrote him on 11 April, saying, “Though I am miles from Jansenism I have the greatest respect for the plucky little Utrecht community. But I thought that Utrecht would faint at the idea of a wedded bishop. Perhaps they are not immoveable in that matter. Naturally I look forward to you making a thorn in the side of the Papists, and this you can do far better with the authority of the Alt-Kath body behind you<sup>xlviii</sup>. I think you must use your pen in the cause a good deal, and translate the Alt-Kath literature for the benefit of the Anglicans from whom you are likely to draw recruits.”

Tyrrell wrote again to Mathew on July 25, pointing out the advantages of what he described as the “primitive “household” church and priesthood”. Tyrrell hoped that Mathew “might inaugurate a new and important era in Church history” through building a clergy entirely from men employed in secular professions. “Cut off the pecuniary advantage, and you cut off the rest of sacerdotalism, and all the doctrinal and other corruptions it entails.” In this, Tyrrell anticipated the

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<sup>xlviii</sup> We can see here the expressly political nature of the role Mathew was to be compelled to play, although Mathew himself was too unworldly to see its implications himself.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

worker-priest movement that would develop in the Roman Catholic Church in France after the Second World War, and that would prove similarly controversial with the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

O'Halloran did not take these developments well. He petitioned Mathew for consecration as a bishop, which Mathew very properly refused outright. Mathew wrote to Herzog on 6 May 1908, "I am having very great trouble with O'H - *entre nous*. On my return from Utrecht he came to see me, his manner totally changed, & a look of hatred and & jealousy in his eye. He asked me to 'at once consecrate him a bishop' for his own church, and he did not mean to admit any Old Catholics there &c..." As a result of Mathew's refusal, O'Halloran became active in spreading slander about Mathew, sometimes using false names in the process.

The Lambeth Conference of 25 July – 5 August 1908 was clearly exercised concerning Mathew's ministry, and in a sign that the political wind was moving against Mathew, passed the following resolution,

"With a view to the avoidance of further ecclesiastical confusion, the Conference would earnestly deprecate the setting up of a new organised body in regions where a Church with apostolic ministry and Catholic doctrine offers religious privileges without the imposition of uncatholic terms of communion, more especially in cases where no difference of language or nationality exists; and, in view of the friendly relations referred to in the previous Resolution, it would respectfully request the Archbishop of Canterbury, if he thinks fit, to bring

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

this Resolution to the notice of the Old Catholic Bishops.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury did indeed do so, and the response from Utrecht was that in future, they “would take care not to make trouble by encroaching on the order of a friendly Church.” The storm-clouds were gathering over Mathew, but at the same time Utrecht did not shew itself able or interested to suggest any political solution that would be of use to him.

In response, Mathew wrote in May 1909 to Davidson, saying, “I neither desired nor sought Episcopal Consecration. I was completely deceived and entirely misled by O’Halloran, a man who has deceived many besides myself...Although I was certainly consecrated under misapprehension, I have been anxious that my office should not be in any way abused.”

Before this, Mathew had endeavoured as best he could to make peace with the Anglican hierarchy. He had written to all the Anglican bishops assuring them that he considered their orders valid, and then on 1 October 1908 addressed a letter to Davidson complaining of Spencer Jones’ advocacy of Romanism in the Church of England.<sup>xlix</sup>

## MATHEW AS A BISHOP OF THE UTRECHT UNION

In January 1909, Mathew moved from Chelsfield and established an oratory in his large home at 151, Fellowes Road, South Hampstead, and there on 9 February he

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<sup>xlix</sup> *Yelton*, p. 196

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

ordained deacon and priest the Revd. W. Noel Lambert<sup>1</sup>, who was minister of an independent Congregational chapel in River Street, Islington<sup>1i</sup>. Mathew had notified Arthur Winnington-Ingram, the Anglican Bishop of London, of this proposed ordination, repeating that it was the object of his movement to work in complete amity with the Church of England, and to receive only Roman Catholics or Dissenters. The Islington chapel was placed at Mathew's disposal, and in June 1909 it was dedicated to St Willibrord as his pro-cathedral, with Lambert appointed Rector.

That same year, on August 15, he published "The Old Catholic Missal and Ritual", under the imprimatur of Archbishop Gerardus Gul, which brought the Old Catholic Mass in the vernacular to Britain. He also ordained a further priest at some point in the year<sup>1ii</sup>. He negotiated for the use of the Church of the Resurrection, Brighton, which was about to be declared redundant, but this came to nothing.

### FATHER TYRRELL REMEMBERED

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<sup>1</sup> He was consecrated by Mathew on 22 August 1917 for the OCR. He had been received into the Church of England by Winnington-Ingram (q.v.) without reordination probably in December 1910. He was exercising a priestly ministry in that church by 23 May 1913, but meantime had also reconciled with Mathew, who consecrated him for the OCR in 1917. He died in 1954, having been rector of Norwood, Middx., up to the time of his death.

<sup>1i</sup> Later River Place. This was first registered in 1864. A lecture room was added in 1872. As of 1903 the attendance at morning worship was reported as 19 and that at evening worship 86. The chapel was abandoned by May 1913. The building has since been demolished.

<sup>1ii</sup> This was probably James Columba McFall, who will be discussed subsequently.



## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

We have already mentioned Mathew's ally Fr. George Tyrrell. Tyrrell had been suspended from the Roman Catholic sacraments in 1907. He passed away in August 1909 and on his death was denied burial in a Catholic cemetery. A Roman Catholic priest who was present at his burial made the sign of the cross over the grave and was suspended *a divinis* as a result.

These were dangerous political waters for Mathew to intervene in, but intervene he certainly did. On 12 August, at the pro-cathedral of St Willibrord, the church was full to the brim with around sixty people for a low Requiem Mass celebrated by Mathew in Tyrrell's memory. We are told that Mathew expressed himself thus: "Father Tyrrell, outcast and condemned, worthy of nothing but the burial of a dog, to please the Italian Curia and its minions who imagine themselves to hold the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and to be able to lock its portals against whomsoever they will! To ourselves, in the Old Catholic Church, such fanaticism is as pitiable as it is profane and heretical. Hence we do not hesitate to regard our departed friend as among the blessed dead who have died in the Lord"...Basing his subsequent discourse on the parable of the "Good Samaritan," Dr Matthew said Father Tyrrell was a man who commanded universal respect and compelled the admiration of all with whom he came in contact... "He never sought dismissal from the Society of Jesus, but he was dismissed. He never desired severance from the Roman Catholic Church, yet he was excommunicated...He was above all a sincere man, and detested insincerity, falsehood, hypocrisy and dishonesty...To him the man who could either tell or act

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a lie, or even appear to do so, was contemptible in the extreme. He was a Catholic by conviction, and as he lived so he died. Left by the roadside...the priest and the Levite who should have brought him solace not only refused him the oil and wine of sacramental grace, for he was forbidden to approach the sacraments or to celebrate the Holy Mass, but was cast out and left to perish, his case being reserved to the Roman bishop, unless he chose to sacrifice his conscience, to declare his disbelief in what he had so earnestly believed, and to condemn as falsehood what conscience compelled him to believe to be truth. His inability to violate his conscience brought about his excommunication and suspension, and he meekly submitted to those iniquitous censures, the remaining flickerings of the spirit of the Inquisition, which a comparatively few years ago would have consigned him to the gibbet or the stake. Father Tyrrell was misunderstood. I have no hesitation in declaring to you from what I knew of him that he was an ardent and true Christian, and a sincere and faithful Catholic...He had a greater range of spiritual vision, and the supernatural loomed larger in his eyes than in those of the majority of his brethren. Who among them was his intellectual equal, or possessed an intelligence approaching his in subtlety and grace? Father Tyrrell, dying as a Christian and as a Catholic, had a right to Roman Catholic burial whatever his alleged mistakes might have been in his philosophical or theological opinions during life. But alas! so far has the Italian Curia departed from the spirit of Christianity, that not content with depriving this poor soul of the benefit of the grace of God during his mortal life, it pursued him even after death, and, but for the courageous Christian aid of a French Roman Catholic priest, the remains of the great

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and good Father Tyrrell would have been consigned to their last resting place without a prayer. Even a murderer, or criminal of the deepest dye, would not have experienced such inhumanity as this.”<sup>liii</sup>

Mathew was entirely justified in his comments, but such a passionate defence of Tyrrell could not but arouse the ire of the Roman Catholic Church, to whom this was simple defiance of the most direct and explicit kind. Mathew made his comments knowing full well that they would be reported and would come to the ear of the Roman Catholic authorities, but, having no need of their support at the present time, this clearly did not concern him. However, we should reflect carefully that in after years, when Mathew was seeking closeness to the Roman Catholic Church in his plans for a proto-Uniate Rite, that church must have remembered the sentiments he had expressed above, and her nature has never been entirely to let such actions pass without consequence.

## THE SOCIETY OF ST WILLIBRORD

Mathew was elected vice-president of the Society of St Willibrord on its foundation in Autumn 1908. This society was founded by the Revd. George Barber, curate of St James, Hampstead, “to promote friendly relations between the Anglican and Old Catholic Churches, and to prepare the way for the restoration of full intercommunion between them.” Percy Dearmer, who will be discussed later in the context of the Order of Corporate Reunion, was another key member. The Society was opposed by Davidson, who maintained that

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<sup>liii</sup> See The Late Father Tyrrell, *Manchester Guardian*, 12 August 1909, p 8

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given the existence of the Church of England, there was no need for a British Old Catholic movement. The Society was strengthened by the 1931 Bonn Agreement which brought Old Catholics into the Anglican Communion. Mathew would serve in this position until October 1909<sup>liv</sup>.

### THE OLD CATHOLIC CONFERENCE AT VIENNA

From 6-10 September 1909, Mathew participated in the Old Catholic Conference in Vienna. He gave a speech in which he proclaimed that the aim of Old Catholicism was the reunion of churches, and especially reunion with the Orthodox Churches of the East. The theme of Orthodox reunion was in fact to prove a driving force behind the latter part of Mathew's episcopal ministry, following significant antecedents in that regard in respect of the Orthodox missions to the West of Mar Julius of Iona (Jules Raimond Ferrette) and Mar Timotheos (Vilatte), both of whom acted at the behest of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Maran Mar Ignatius XXXIV Peter III/IV (1799-1894)<sup>lv</sup>, otherwise known as "Peter the Humble".

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<sup>liv</sup> Ref. Burley, John, *The Society of St. Willibrord*, in Huelin, Gordon (ed), *Old Catholics & Anglicans 1931-1981*, Oxford 1983 pp 62-85. Mathew resigned because he discovered that Barber was involved in homosexual activity, and thereafter Barber became a stringent enemy of Mathew and his movement. He died soon afterwards at his own hand in 1914, however, in circumstances which, according to *Anson* (p 177) "certainly prevented his arrest and imprisonment". In fact, Barber was a close associate of the circle of Oscar Wilde.

<sup>lv</sup> He was consecrated as Bishop of Taifat Alsrien Al-Qadima in 1846 by Moran Mar Ignatius XXXII Elias II, Patriarch of The Syrian Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East between 1838 and 1847, who later appointed him "Julius, Metropolitan of the World". Between

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Peter the Humble, when Bishop of Taifat Alsrien Al-Qadima, had wished for the reunion of Christendom, and accordingly sought to promote a “Reunion Movement” that would bring Orthodoxy to the West, gaining the support of his Patriarch for this mission. However, since his charge did not permit him to leave Syria, he was compelled to look for a man who would be able to fulfil such a mission on his behalf. When he met the former Presbyterian missionary and Roman Catholic priest Jules Ferrette (1828-1904)<sup>lvi</sup> in 1865, he felt that he had found someone worthy of this trust and capable of achieving its aims. In the event, Peter the Humble would be the progenitor of not one but two Western missions,

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1850 and 1875 he was Superior-General of The Orthodox-Catholic Guild of S. Columba of Iona. He became Syrian Orthodox Patriarch in 1875.

<sup>lvi</sup> He was born a Protestant Frenchman. In 1850 he was received into the Roman Catholic Church and into the Dominican Order at Flavigny as Brother Raymond. He then studied theology and philosophy at Paris, Grenoble and finally Rome. On 10 June 1854, he was ordained to the minor orders; on 23 December 1854 followed the subdiaconate, then the diaconate on 7 April 1855 and finally the priesthood (by Cardinal Patrizi) on 2 June 1855 in the Lateran Basilica. He was assigned to the Dominican Mission in Mesopotamia and Kurdistan between January and June 1856. He became convinced of the validity of non-Roman churches and increasingly accepted much of Calvinist theology, becoming convinced that Presbyterianism lacked only the Apostolic Succession to render it a complete expression of the true Church. In 1856 he had founded an Ordo Fratrum Praedicatorum Unionis in order to bring together Eastern and Western Christianity, and remained Magister General until 23 April 1879. In 1865 he sought admission as a priest in the Church of England, but the extreme delay of the authorities in considering his case prompted him to return abroad. On 2 June 1866 he was consecrated by Peter the Humble to establish an indigenous Orthodoxy in the West.

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each of which shared the common characteristic that it was not a local branch of the Syrian church, but an indigenous and autocephalous Roman Rite entity that was Orthodox in faith (though, unlike its parent body, accepting the seven Ecumenical Councils) and Western in character and mission.

Later, when Patriarch, Peter the Humble would explicitly advocate ecumenism on a scale that is astonishing for his time. He was invited to the 1892 Old Catholic Congress at Lucerne, but could not be present; nonetheless he sent a letter of support for the objects of the Congress. That same year, he wrote to the Apostolic Delegate of the Near East and told him he was willing to submit to the Holy See. He offered to give up his position as Patriarch in favour of a lesser role as Catholicos or Exarch of Syria in order to unite with other Orthodox, but the political pressure placed on him by the Turks precluded this.

The proposals of Peter the Humble were not merely ahead of their time, but, as history has proved, almost entirely without precedent or successor; a totally exceptional approach to the insular understanding of the Orthodox faith of his time and a progressive vision of the means by which that faith might be nurtured.

The Old Catholic Conference at Vienna was also important in that it shewed to Mathew for the first time that the majority of Old Catholic bishops were by now in fact tending towards Protestant theology, while he himself, being more in line with the Oxford Movement, was in fact in an isolated minority. Nevertheless, he was well regarded by Utrecht, with Herzog writing to van

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Thiel on 20 August 1908, "Mathew ist ohne Zweifel ein Mann, der sehr viel weiss und in weiten Kreisen geachtet ist." (Mathew is without doubt a man who knows a great deal and is widely respected.)

On 5 October 1909, Mathew participated as co-consecrator with Gul, Spit, Demmel and van Thiel in the consecration of Johann Michael Kowalski<sup>lvii</sup> as Archbishop of Felicianov for the Mariavite Church, then part of the Utrecht Union. The Congregation of Mariavite Priests had formed around Sister Maria Franciszka (Felixsa Kozłowska) (1862-1921), a visionary who was venerated by the congregation as a living saint. An attempt was made to bring the order into the Roman Catholic Church, but in 1904 the Pope rejected this and subsequently denounced and excommunicated both Sister Maria Franciszka and Kowalski. By 1909 the movement extended to some 20,000 laity in twenty-two parishes served by forty priests. It did not remain in communion with Utrecht, and has since continued an independent existence.

## THE REVIVED ORDER OF CORPORATE REUNION

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<sup>lvii</sup> (1871-1942). He was ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church on 24 April 1897 by Archbishop Francis Albin Symon. He became Minister General of the Congregation of Mariavite Priests in 1903. On Kozłowska's death in 1921 Kowalski became head of the church, and introduced a married priesthood and the ordination of women. The Mariavite church was one of the earliest to have women bishops with the first consecration of Isabel Antonina Kowalska-Wilucka in 1929, who would later marry Kowalski and become his co-adjutor. Kowalski was driven out of the church in 1935 and re-organised with his followers as the Mariavite Catholic Church. He fell foul of the political authorities and died in the concentration camp at Dachau.

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The Order of Corporate Reunion was established amid the developments in nineteenth-century Anglicanism that gave rise to the Oxford Movement and the consequent debate over the validity of Anglican orders, a debate that reached a head with the issuing of the Bull “*Apostolicae Curae*” by Pope Leo XIII in 1896. This Bull, which was the outcome of a petition by both Anglicans and Roman Catholics requesting an investigation of the issue, declared Anglican orders to be “absolutely null and utterly void”, an official position which remains that of the Vatican to this day.

Under these circumstances, some Anglicans resolved to ensure that their church had access to Holy Orders which were undoubtedly valid and that would remove the related obstacles to corporate reunion between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

A Pastoral Letter was published in “*Reunion Magazine*” of 1877 (reprinted in “*The Tablet*” of 23 January 1909). This letter was planned as early as 1875 and had been initially addressed to Henry, Cardinal Manning. The eventual letter read in part:

“Every faithful Christian must surely be distressed and bewildered at the spectacle afforded by the evil state into which the National Church of England has been brought by departure from ancient principles and by recent events. A long course of change, usurpation, and revolution has moved all her old land-marks. The evil is continually working; no man being able to foresee whereunto it will grow, or what will be the end thereof. Two things are certain, however: on the one hand, that



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all semblance of independent existence and corporate action has departed from the Established Church, so that she is given up, as it were, bound hand and foot, and blindfolded into the toils of her enemies; while, on the other hand, these enemies are waiting to rob her of her privileges and possessions, and are even now debating how to divide the spoil.

We affirm, that in the Providence of God, the evil itself has opened the door to a remedy. For the Bishops of the Church of England, having yielded up all canonical authority and jurisdiction in the spiritual order, can neither interfere with, nor restrain, Us in Our work of recovering from elsewhere that which has been forfeited or lost - securing three distinct and independent lines of a new Episcopal Succession, so as to labour corporately, and on no sandy foundation, for the healing of the breach which has been made. In thus associating ourselves together, we solemnly take as the basis of this Our Order the Catholic Faith as defined by the Seven General Councils, acknowledged as such by the whole Church of the East and the West before the great and deplorable schism, and as commonly received in the Apostles' Creed, and the Creed of Nicaea, and the Creed of St Athanasius. To all the sublime doctrines so laid down, We declare our unreserved adhesion, as well as to the principles of Church constitution and discipline, set forth and approved by the said Seven General Councils. Furthermore, until the whole Church shall speak on the subject, We accept all those dogmatic statements set forth in common by the Council of Trent and the Synod of Bethlehem respectively, with regard to the doctrine of the Sacraments...

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Thanking Almighty God most humbly for the restoration of Brotherhoods, Sisterhoods, and Guilds, We solemnly affirm that the Monastic Life, duly regulated according to the laws of the Catholic Church, is a most salutary institution, in perfect harmony with the spirit of the Gospel; and is full of profit to those who, being carefully tried and examined, make full proof of their calling thereto. Our services will always be at the disposal of such - upon whom We invoke the Divine blessing.

As regards the chief aim of this new Order - Corporate Reunion - it is needful to remark finally, that, while We have to deplore the divisions existing amongst the churches, We cannot unchurch any having a true succession. Therefore, We pray for all, We remove all stumblingblocks in the way of union amongst the baptized, whom We hail and regard as brethren, while, on disputed points of Church opinion not yet defined by lawful Authority, We appeal to a free General Council, with earnest prayers to God for its speedy assembly and guidance by the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

Who were the men who lay behind this letter, and where did the new Episcopal Succession they referred to come from?

Frederick George Lee (1832-1902)<sup>lviii</sup>, an Anglican priest, was consecrated in Venice in June 1877 by Abbot-General

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<sup>lviii</sup> His publications include *Essays on the Reunion of Christendom*, 1867, *The Validity of the Holy Orders of the Church of England maintained and vindicated*, 1869, *A Dictionary of Ritual*, 1871, *Pastoral Letter by the Rector, Provincials, and Provosts of the Order of Corporate Reunion*, 1877, *A Glossary of Liturgical and*

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Ignas Guregh<sup>lix</sup> (Ignatius Ghiurekian) (1834-1921) of the Ordo Mechitaristarum Venetiarum (“Mekhitarists”). He had been ordained priest in the Church of England on 21 September 1856, by Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873), Bishop of Oxford. In 1879 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia, USA. On 11 December 1901 he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

The events of 1877 were the culmination of some years of planning and work towards the aim of Reunion. Lee had on 6 September 1857 with Ambrose Philipps de Lisle and George Nugée been a co-founder of The Association for Promotion the Union of Christendom, for which he edited the “Union Review” between 1863 and 1869. The APUC is the direct forerunner of the OCR.

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*Ecclesiastical Terms*, 1877, *Hymns for Several Occasions*, 1880, *Order out of Chaos: Three Sermons*, 1881, *The Need of Spiritual Authority*, 1882, *Sights and Shadows*, 1894. He was editor 1877-79 of the magazine of the OCR, *Reunion Magazine*. See Brandreth, Henry R T, *Dr Lee of Lambeth: A Chapter in Parenthesis in the History of the Oxford Movement*, London 1951. In addition, Brandreth wrote to Bertil Persson that Lee tended to keep private his publications on spiritualist matters, despite the fact that it was these that had won him a number of friends for the OCR, including Arnold Harris Mathew. These were *The Other World*, Vols. 1-2, London 1875, *More Glimpses of the World Unseen*, London, 1878, and *Sights and Shadows*, London, 1894.

<sup>lix</sup> He was ordained priest in The Armenian Catholic Church on 17 January 1854. Elected as the 6th Abbot-General of The Mekhitarists in Venezia, 2 August 1876. Titular Archbishop of Trajanopolis and Rhodope, 8 May 1877. Consecrated by Alessandro Cardinal Franchi, Titular Archbishop of Thessalonika, 20 May 1877.

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Dr. John Thomas Seccombe (1835-95)<sup>lx</sup> was a medical officer and magistrate who had been consecrated by Mar Julius of Iona (Ferrette). He had settled in Terrington St Clement, Norfolk, in 1864, and was ordained priest and consecrated by Mar Julius on 18-19 November 1866.

Thomas Wimberly Mossman<sup>lxi</sup> SSC (1826-89), Anglican rector of West Torrington, Lincs., was ordained priest by John Kaye, Bishop of Lincoln, on 26 May 1850, and admitted a member of the Society of the Holy Cross in 1856. Between 1859 and 1885 he was rector of East

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<sup>lx</sup> His publications include *Science, Theism and Revelation, considered in relation to Mr. Mill's Essay on Nature, Religion and Atheism* (London 1875). He was translator of *The Holy Canons of the Seven Oecumenic Synods, translated from the original Greek* (preface: Jules Ferrette) (London 1867), and Platon [Petr Georgievich Levshin, Archbishop of Tver, Metropolitan of Moscow], *The Great Catechism of the Holy Catholic, Apostolic and Orthodox Church. Translated from the Greek edition by J. T. S.*

<sup>lxi</sup> His publications include, *A Glossary of the Principal Words used in a figurative, typical, or mystical sense in the Holy Scriptures, with their significations gathered from the sacred writers, or from the works of the ancient fathers* (London 1854); *Sermons* (London 1857); *Ritualism in its relation to Re-union* (in Lee, F G, *Essays on the Reunion of Christendom*) (1867); *The Followers of the Lamb. A sermon [on Rev. XIV. 4]* (London 1867); *A history of the Catholic church of Jesus Christ, from the death of Saint John to the middle of the second century; including an account of the original organisation of the Christian ministry and growth of episcopacy* (1873); *Epiphanius; the history of his child and youth, told by himself. A tale of the Early Church* (London 1874); *Freedom for the Church of God: an earnest and affectionate appeal to my High Church brethren*, (London 1876); *The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (a sermon on the OCR)*, (1879); *The Relations which at present exist between Church and State in England. A Letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone*, (London 1883); *A Latin Letter (with an English translation) to his Holiness, Pope Leo XIII*, (London 1884).

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Torrington and vicar of West Torrington, Lincs. In 1866 he founded the Brotherhood of the Holy Redeemer. He was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree honoris causa by the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, USA, in 1881. In 1885 he was received into the Roman Catholic Church by Henry, Cardinal Manning, the Archbishop of Westminster.

In June 1877 he was consecrated by Luigi Nazari di Calabiana<sup>lxii</sup> (1808-93), Roman Catholic Archbishop of Milan, who may have been assisted by others. It was the Archbishop of Milan who was instrumental in encouraging the creation of the OCR.

It is probable that all three bishops exchanged consecrations at some point, to ensure that each carried all three combined lines of succession and that any objection to any one line could be ameliorated by the others. Much secrecy attended these initial events, and for some time afterwards the names of the consecrators were, apparently at their insistence, not revealed.

Mossman wrote an account of events in the “SSC Report of Committee on the Order of Corporate Reunion”, p 9-10, carefully avoiding revealing the true extent of his own involvement,

“I can only speak profitably of what I am able to testify of my own personal knowledge. The most important part

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<sup>lxii</sup> Ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church by Colombano Chiavarotti, Bishop of Torino, 29 May 1831. Consecrated by Ugo Pietro [Hugo Petrus] Cardinal Spinola, who was assisted by Bishop Dominicus Lucciardi and Bishop Ioannes Carolus Gentili, 6 June 1847. Archbishop of Milan 27 March 1867 - 23 October 1893.

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of this is that a Consecration has undoubtedly taken place. I have been frequently asked what is meant by 'three distinct and independent lines of Episcopal Succession' in the First Pastoral of the Order of Corporate Reunion. Let me distinguish carefully between what I have been told and what I know. What I have been told is, that three Anglican clergymen have been consecrated Bishops from three distinct sources. That may be true, or it may be the reverse. What I know is, that one Anglican clergyman has been consecrated a Bishop by a Catholic Bishop; and by a Catholic Bishop I mean one who is now at this present time, and who was when he performed the act of consecration, in full communion with either the See of Rome, the Patriarch of Constantinople, or the Archbishop of Canterbury. It will thus be seen that the Bishops of all so-called heretical or schismatical bodies are excluded *vi terminorum*. More than this I am pledged not to reveal at present. I know it will appear very strange to many that such a thing could have taken place. I am not sure that I should have been able to believe it myself, had not the documents which attest the consecration, signed and sealed by the consecrating Prelate himself, attested by witnesses, and other corroborative evidence, been placed in my hands for examination in the most frank and unreserved manner possible."

At the first Synod of the Order of Corporate Reunion on 3-4 July 1877, Lee took on the ecclesiastical style of Thomas, Bishop of Dorchester, Rector of the Order of Corporate Reunion and Pro-Provincial of Canterbury, Mossman became Joseph, Bishop of Selby and Provincial of York, and Seccombe became Laurence, Bishop and Provincial of Caerleon.

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George Nugée (1819-82)<sup>lxiii</sup>, Secretary of the APUC and Father Superior of the revived Order of St Augustine, was adopted as Provost. Nugée was ordained priest by Charles James Blomfield, Bishop of London, on 30 May 1847. He was founder of the Order of St Augustine in 1865, and became the first secretary of the APUC. In 1858 he was founder of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin. He was Rector of Widley and vicar of Wymering, Cosham and Portsmouth between 1859 and 1872.

The Pastoral Letter was formally read on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral in London on 8 September 1877. In the following years, the bishops of the OCR consecrated and conditionally re-ordained other Anglicans, and it is said even the Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Temple<sup>lxiv</sup>. However, the OCR did not manage to gain

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<sup>lxiii</sup> His publications include: *The Spirit of Romanism*; a sermon [on Hosea IV. 17], (London 1847); *The Lame Man healed at the Temple Gate: a sermon [on Acts III. 4-8] on Church Dispensaries*, (London 1852); *The Holy Women in the Gospel:... A series of seven lectures, delivered in... Lent, 1854*, (London, 1856); *Conversion: a Sermon preached...in aid of the London diocesan Penitentiary [on 1 Tim. I. 15]*, (Oxford 1857); *A Letter to the Lord Bishop of London on the subject of a London Church Mission for assisting the Parochial Clergy in seeking out the Lost*, (London 1865); *A Conference of Theologians, suggested as a further step towards promoting the Reunion of Christendom* (in Lee, F G, *Essays on the Reunion of Christendom*), (1867); *St. Austin's Mission Handbook of prayer and praise for the people*, (London 1875). *England and the Jews; their destiny and her duty*, (London 1881).

<sup>lxiv</sup> Temple said "If you want an undoubted bishop, he lives just over my garden wall, Lee, the vicar of All Saints, practically all the strands of apostolic succession meet and unite in him." Quoted in *Anson*, p 80. The Revd. Trailies wrote in the *Trowbridge Chronicle* of 29 November 1886 "the Order of Corporate Reunion is under Dr. Lee, who is undoubtedly a Bishop, which is more than can be said by

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the official support of the Church of England, and so with the death of its founders it entered a period of inactivity while the questions it had been set up to address continued to be matters of pressing disquiet for High Church Anglicans.

On 26 December 1882, Lee, Mossman and Seccombe consecrated the Revd. Henry Arthur Stanton (1839-1913) of the Church of England. On 15 August 1894, Lee, Mossman and Seccombe consecrated the Revd. Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare<sup>lxv</sup> (1856-1924), who was a priest of the Armenian Orthodox Church of Ejmiatsin. The same day they consecrated the Revd. Percy Dearmer<sup>lxvi</sup> (1867-1936) of the Church of England. Dearmer was ordained priest in the Church of England in 1892. He was chaplain to the Red Cross in Serbia during World War I. Between 1919 and 1936 he was Professor of Ecclesiastical Art at King's College, London. He was a member of the committee of the Society of St Willibrord (and may well first have encountered Mathew there). In 1924 he participated in an ecumenical Communion service with Bishop Ulric Vernon Herford

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anybody of his neighbour at Lambeth Palace." Temple was also bishop of a secret ecumenical organisation, the Evangelical Catholic Communion (not the same as the church led by Mar Jacobus (Herford)), between 1870 and 1883.

<sup>lxv</sup> According to Armenian scholars he was "a distinguished armenologist" (Persson, *The Order of Corporate Reunion*, Solna, St Ephrem's Institute, n.d., p 47) Among his many books were *The Key of Truth. A manual of the Paulician Church in Armenia* (1898), and *Rituale Armeniorum, being the administration of the sacraments and the breviary rites of the Armenian Church* (1905)

<sup>lxvi</sup> Author of many hymns and works including *The Parson's Handbook* (1899), *Reunion and Rome* (1910), editor, *The English Hymnal* (1906), *Songs of Praise* (1925), *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928).



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of the Evangelical Catholic Communion. Between 1931 and 1936 he was a Canon of Westminster Abbey.

On 1 November 1909, Mathew was consecrated *sub conditione* in secrecy by Dearmer, Stanton and Conybeare for the Order of Corporate Reunion. This was not (*pace* Brandreth, Anson etc.) a new organisation, but the revival and continuation of the original Order by means of the transmission of its Apostolic Succession.

Mathew's role as promulgator of the revived OCR placed him at a pivotal point in the debate concerning the validity of Anglican orders that had followed the publication of "Apostolicae Curae" in 1896. Mathew now published several works on Anglican validity that demonstrate a detailed understanding of the issues involved, which had resulted from a close study of sixteenth-century Church history. His work "Are Anglican Orders Valid?" (March 1910) which was the text of a lecture he had delivered at Carshalton, concluded the issue in the negative, in line with the view of Pope Leo XIII that the omission of sacrificial references in Anglican ritual rendered Anglican sacramental intent defective. Mathew stated that many Anglican priests had approached him and requested reordination, but that he had hitherto not acceded to their requests.

The organ of the Swiss Old Catholics, "Der Katholiek", reported as follows in its issue of 9 July,

"It is to be understood as a matter of course that we must leave Bishop Mathew the responsibility for what he says and does. We ourselves have not denied the validity of Anglican Orders, and we seek for our adherents among

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the Catholic members of our own confession. Bishop Mathew's organisation may be a welcome haven for many Roman Catholics in England, who, although dissatisfied with Papal jurisdiction would be indisposed to subscribe to the 39 Articles."

Mathew's former ally in the Society of St Willibrord, the Revd. George Barber, used this controversy to stir up trouble between Mathew and Utrecht, and his pressure together with that of the Anglican hierarchy forced Van Thiel, then Secretary of the Utrecht Union, to go significantly further in his letter of 5 August to "The Guardian",

"Sir, Having seen in your issue of July 29<sup>th</sup> Mr Barber's letter on the Society of St Willibrord, I wish to say that Mr Barber is quite right in stating in his letter of last week that Bishop Mathew is in no sense a representative of the Church of Holland in England. Bishop Mathew is simply one of the Old Catholic Bishops, and, as such, he is in relation with the Old Catholics of Holland, and also, of course with the Old Catholic Churches of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, the Polish Catholic Church of America, and the Catholic Church of the Mariavites in Poland.

In consequence of that, I wish to state that the Old Catholics in Holland and elsewhere could not be considered in any way responsible for Bishop Mathew's eventual particular attitude or opinions, because he only represents his own clergy and himself in England.

† J.J. Van Thiel  
Bishop of Haarlem"

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It should be noted that Mathew's view on Anglican Orders was exactly that taken by his fellow OCR members. Increasingly, however, a fault-line was developing between Mathew's loyalties to the Old Catholics and to the OCR, and it was the OCR and the mission of Reunion that was in the ascendancy. We should note Van Thiel's letter carefully at this stage, because it forms a significant background to Mathew's Declaration and its intent, to be discussed shortly.

In April 1910, Mathew organised the Pro-Cathedral of St Willibrord in Islington on proper lines, and after a Pontifical High Mass on 28 April appointed as Canons the Revds. W. Noel Lambert, Francis Herbert Bacon (1885-1932), Cuthbert Francis Hinton, James Columba McFall<sup>lxvii</sup> (who was not present) and John Briggs Seaton. At this service, Canon Lambert, who had been elected and installed as Dean, presented a new episcopal ring to Mathew on behalf of his supporters. Mathew read a paper on the difficulties of fasting communion, which he decided was to be upheld. Bacon was appointed Archdeacon, and an approach was made to a solicitor in the hope that he would act as legal advisor to the Church and assist in the formation of a Trust so that it could hold property.<sup>lxviii</sup>

In May, Mathew was to have been invited to a Royal Levée at the behest of King Edward VII, as representative of the Old Catholic Church in Britain. However, the

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<sup>lxvii</sup> McFall then wrote to Mathew requesting the title of ArchPriest. This was refused at the Chapter meeting of 9 July 1910.

<sup>lxviii</sup> This was Mr F. Fenton of 4, Paper Buildings, Temple, who was a contact of Bacon.

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King passed away on the 6<sup>th</sup> of that month, and as a result, Mathew wrote to Queen Alexandra expressing his condolences.

### FIRST CONTACTS WITH THE ORTHODOX; THE CONSECRATION OF THREE BISHOPS

Mathew's disillusionment with the increasing modernism of the Old Catholics caused him to look towards the Orthodox Churches. Contact with the Russian Orthodox Church may have dated from the middle of 1909, but this was disapproved of by Mgr. van Thiel, who remonstrated with Mathew, presumably for acting without Utrecht's knowledge and consent.

In 1910, Mathew through an intermediary, Francis Bacon, had made initial contact with the Syrian Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East. This church, having passed on from the ecumenical efforts of Patriarch Peter the Humble, was in the hands of his more conventionally Orthodox successor, but as will be recounted, this was nonetheless to prove a productive relationship.

That same year, Mathew went on to consecrate three, or perhaps four, bishops. The first, Ralph Whitman<sup>lxix</sup>, who was said by some to have been consecrated on 8 June, was something of a mythical figure, and there is doubt as to whether he actually existed or was a later invention by an opportunistic clergyman, since he nowhere appears

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<sup>lxix</sup> All we know of him comes from the account of Ernest O'Dell Cope in the 1940s. The claims of Cope and his associates are dealt with in our earlier work *A History of the Old Catholic Movement in England*, vol 1, European-American University Press, 2010, pp 457 foll.

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in Mathew's Register and there is no independent record of the consecration. Whitman, it is said, was consecrated in secrecy for service as Bishop of Llanthony in Wales, and in a mission to somehow revive the Abbey of Fr. Ignatius there, but soon afterwards emigrated to Canada.

On 13 June at Corby followed the corroborated consecrations of the Roman Catholic priests Herbert Ignatius Beale<sup>lxx</sup> and Arthur William Howarth<sup>lxxi</sup>, in order to ensure that the Old Catholic Church in Britain did not risk the loss of the Apostolic Succession in the event of Mathew's death without having first appointed a co-adjutor. What was of equal if not greater importance, although Mathew could not admit this publicly without causing problems for those such as Dearmer who were still discharging the duties of the Anglican ministry, was the preservation of the episcopal succession of the OCR.

As was customary, Mathew sent notification to the Vatican that he had performed the consecrations; this notice was likewise generally not responded to by

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<sup>lxx</sup> In 1913 he again reconciled with Rome, having spent some time with the Benedictines on Caldey Island, but in March 1915 was received into the Church of England without reordination. He was latterly Rector of Great Sutton in the diocese of Chelmsford, the advowson of which was held by W. Noel Lambert (q.v.) This parish was later served by Thomas R.C. Williams (q.v.)

<sup>lxxi</sup> Following his consecration, he was excommunicated by Pope Pius X on 11 February 1911. He reconciled with the Roman Catholic Church subsequently. Between 21 December 1919 and 8 August 1933, according to information supplied by Diederik D.J. Quatannens and Bertil Persson, he was Archbishop-Primate of the Uniate Western Catholic Church, the church that formed the inner work of the OCR, and was Universal Primate of the OCR.

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custom. Certainly the Roman authorities were aware of events, though, for on 30 August the “Manchester Guardian” reported,

“A Nottingham telegram states that a stir has been caused in Roman Catholic quarters in the Nottingham diocese by the decisive action of Bishop Brindle regarding two priests, Father Beale, of St Edmund’s, Nottingham, and Father Howarth, of Corby, Grantham, who have been suspended from ecclesiastical powers and faculties following upon their recent claim to consecration as bishops by an authority which is not recognised by the Church of Rome. Both Father Howarth and Father Beale refused to recognise the Bishop’s suspension whilst the matter is under the personal consideration to the Pope, to whom appeal has been made. However, the trustees, of whom the Bishop is one, caused St Edmund’s to be closed on Sunday night, and although it was then too late to take action at Corby official information was yesterday afternoon forthcoming from the Cathedral authorities at Nottingham that a similar course will be adopted there without delay pending a settlement of the question.”<sup>lxxii</sup>

Howarth regarded the Bishop of Nottingham and other Roman Catholics as his persecutors, not without justification, and in 1919 published privately an account of the whole affair entitled “A Protest against the Tyranny of the Roman Inquisition and of His Holiness Pope X.”

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<sup>lxxii</sup> Roman Catholic Priests Suspended, *Manchester Guardian*, 30 August 1910, p 12

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Unwisely, Howarth now took the view that his consecration could be used as a means to revisit these issues with the balance now turned in his favour through a personal appeal to the Holy See for adjudication of the issue. He accordingly wrote to Pope Pius X in July 1910<sup>lxxiii</sup>, saying, "It was of the utmost importance, therefore; that I should seek protection from this threatened injustice [by which he meant the actions of the Bishop of Nottingham]. It seemed to me that the only adequate protection against my powerful enemies was to accept the plenitude of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, so that no injustice of the Inquisition could prevent the free exercise of my Priesthood or take away from me the power of safeguarding its duration. 'Man's extremity is God's opportunity,' and at this juncture Divine Providence offered the means of my obtaining unquestionably valid Episcopal Consecration. After prayerful consideration I decided to accept the protection of the Episcopate, and I was consecrated a Bishop according to the Rite in the Roman Pontifical.

In the event of my coming to Rome it must be distinctly understood that my Episcopal Orders will be treated in every way with due honour and respect, and that the etiquette for the reception of Bishops at the Vatican will be strictly observed in my case."

This letter could not have been expected to have been received without incident, since it made the conflict between Howarth and the Roman hierarchy impossible to ignore and compelled the Vatican to decide the matter one way or the other. Howarth, in turn, seems to

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<sup>lxxiii</sup> There is no indication that Mathew knew of the contents of this letter at the time.

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have believed that such was the strength of Mathew's valid episcopate and position within the Utrecht Union that it would automatically place Howarth on equal terms with the Bishop of Nottingham in the eyes of Rome. A further letter from Howarth to Cardinal Rampolla declined "to recognize any lower ecclesiastical tribunal than the Holy Father in person to deal with the matter placed before him."

Whether Howarth's reasoning was politically naïve or merely hotheaded it is difficult to say. What is interesting to consider is that, had Howarth not forced the issue, the events that followed would in all probability have unfolded quite differently. As things were, the Bishop of Nottingham suspended him from all faculties in his diocese by letter of 26 August 1910, and this bishop seems also to have been a leading agent in the Vatican's eventual response to the matter which we shall come to shortly.

On 9 July a Chapter Meeting was held at Mathew's home in Fellowes Road, Hampstead. On that occasion, various matters concerning the manner and frequency of liturgical observations were decided upon. In addition, Mr F. Fenton, a solicitor who had been approached by Bacon, had accepted the position of Registrar of the Chapter. Fenton reported that, "after careful study he found that while R.C. processions of the Host in the public streets are forbidden by law statute, yet these prohibitions do not apply to Old Catholics, who have therefore the right to hold them and are entitled to police protection for these."<sup>lxxiv</sup>

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<sup>lxxiv</sup> Burton vol 1, p 4



## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

On 4 September 1910, Mathew was invited to assist Kowalsky together with Gul and van Thiel in the consecration of two new bishops for the Mariavites, Leon Maria Andrzej Golebiowski as Bishop of Lodz and Jakub Roman Prochniewski as Bishop of Plock, but distance and expense precluded his participation.

Sometime in the last months of 1910, Mathew also consecrated Karl Wilhelm Böllmann<sup>lxxv</sup> for the OCR. Böllmann had co-founded an Old Catholic parish in Aachen, Germany in December 1905, and led this on his own until August 1910. He had been ordained priest by Mathew on 19 September 1910 and on Advent Sunday established an oratory dedicated to St Boniface at 89 Elsham Road, Kensington. Later in December 1910 he was received into the Church of England without reordination, and held services at St Mary's, Charing Cross Road, London, while also caring for foreign Old Catholics in London, and thus his orders were recognised by both the Anglicans and the Utrecht Union. In 1915 he was interned.

On 31 August, an interview with Mathew had been published in the Manchester Guardian. Everything seemed to be going well.

“The action of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham in suspending two priests from ecclesiastical powers and faculties, following upon their claim to consecration as bishops by Bishop Mathew of

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<sup>lxxv</sup> *Pace* Anson and Mar Georgius he was never a Lutheran pastor. See Persson, *A Biographical Sketch on A.H. Mathew*, Solna, St Ephrem's Institute, n.d., p 14, note 24.

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the Old Catholic Church, caused a Press Association representative yesterday to interview Bishop Mathew on the subject at his house at Swiss Cottage. Bishop Mathew explained that the Old Catholic movement in this country had been in progress for the last two and a half years. The English movement was associated with the Old Catholic movement in Holland, which had been in existence for the last 1,230 years, and which had been separated from Rome for over 200 years...The Old Catholic Church did not wish to have any dispute or quarrel with the Roman Catholic Church or any other body, but simply wished to provide for people of any of the Churches who were not satisfied with what they had got and found what they wanted in the Old Catholic Church. As a matter of fact, Anglican clergymen and Roman Catholic clergy were looking forward to the help the Old Roman Church could give them...

“I expect,” said Bishop Mathew, “we shall before long be received into union with the Greek Orthodox Church. The Greek Church have their own rites and ceremonies, but they will not interfere with our customs and rites – the rites of the West”

Asked whether the Old Catholic Church was making progress in this country, Bishop Mathew said there were about five to six hundred people attached to them and about a dozen clergy, but they had a number of people preparing for ordination.”<sup>lxxvi</sup>

But events were not to prove so promising. Hearing of Mathew's consecration of the bishops Beale and

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<sup>lxxvi</sup> The “Old Catholic Movement”: Interview with Bishop Mathew, *Manchester Guardian*, 31 August 1910, p 3.

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Howarth mentioned above, the Utrecht Union protested that they had not been consulted, that the consecrations had been performed solo and in secrecy, and that Beale and Howarth were technically subordinate to the Holy See. These objections were published in "De Oud-Catholiek" of 1 December 1910. However, Mathew was never excommunicated by Utrecht<sup>lxxvii</sup>.

On 2 December, the Chapter met at Fellowes Road and James Columba McFall resigned all connexion with the Church, returning all his papers and by letter being strongly critical of Bacon's conduct as Archdeacon. The Chapter approved the erection of a Hierarchy consisting of four bishops and the Archbishop, and voted to permit Mathew to select the four men concerned.

### AUTONOMY FROM UTRECHT

This brought to a head the crisis of relations between Mathew and Utrecht. On 14 December, Mathew circulated a letter among his clergy asking for their opinions as to what his response should be, and suggesting that the time had come to give action to Mgr. Van Thiel's earlier implications that the British Old Catholics should exercise their independence. Dean Lambert and Fr. Böllmann were both of the view that this would mean a formal breach with Utrecht, to which they were opposed, and accordingly both departed to

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<sup>lxxvii</sup> The Society of St Willibrord, which stated that he had so been, erred in its reading of the relevant documents, and subsequent writers, such as C.B. Moss, have repeated this error. See Persson, *A Biographical Sketch*, p 25.

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join the ministry of the Church of England<sup>lxxviii</sup>. However, the rest of Mathew's clergy supported him in the move towards full autonomy. Seaton was promoted to Dean to replace Lambert on 7 January 1911.

The report of "The Guardian" of 30 December 1910 on the reception of the two priests into the Church of England is significant in terms of the view of that communion on the validity of the orders he had received, "It will be remembered that on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> 1909, the Rev. Noel Lambert, who was then Minister of a small Congregational chapel in River Street, Islington, was ordained by Bishop Mathew as a priest of the Old Catholic Church...Mr Lambert has within the last week or two been received into the Church of England, along with an ex-Lutheran [*sic*] whom Mathew had also ordained, and the Church of St Willibrord, the name given to the chapel upon his ordination, has now become subject to the Bishop of London...There being no question of the validity of the Orders received from Bishop Mathew, Mr Lambert will not require re-ordination." Crockford thereafter showed Lambert as being "in Old Catholic Orders".

On 29 December 1910, Mathew issued his response to Utrecht's censure: a "Declaration of Autonomy and Independence" in which he itemised what he saw as the Utrecht Union's descent into Protestant practices with

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<sup>lxxviii</sup> This left Mathew without any church buildings, and for a time he transferred the headquarters of his movement to his home in Fellowes Road, Hampstead, where he maintained an oratory. Since Mathew's wife (who was an Anglican) objected to this, Bishop Bacon's oratory at 33 Esmond Road, Bedford Park, London W., was used in its stead.

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which he disagreed. The Declaration was published in “The Guardian” on 6 January 1911, and in full reads as follows,

“We the undersigned Bishop, on behalf of our clergy and laity of the Catholic Church of England, hereby proclaim and declare the autonomy and independence of our portion of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are in no way whatever subject to or dependent upon any foreign See, nor do we recognize the right of any members of the religious bodies known as ‘Old Catholics’ on the Continent, to require submission from us to their authority or jurisdiction, or the decrees, decisions, rules or assemblies, in which we have neither taken part nor expressed agreement.

We had supposed and believed that the Faith, once delivered to the Saints, and set forth in the decrees of the Councils accepted as Ecumenical no less in the West than in the East, would have continued unimpaired, whether by augmentation or by diminution, in the venerable Church of the Dutch Nation.

We anticipated that the admirable fidelity with which the Bishops and Clergy of that Church had adhered to the Faith and handed it down, untarnished by heresy, notwithstanding grievous persecution during so many centuries, would never have wavered.

Unfortunately, however, we discover with dismay, pain, and regret that the standards of orthodoxy, laid down of old by the Fathers and Councils of the East and West alike, having been departed from in various particulars by certain sections of Old Catholicism, these departures,

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instead of being checked and repressed, are, at least tacitly, tolerated and acquiesced in without protest, by the Hierarchy of the Church of the Netherlands.

In order to avoid misapprehension, we here specify nine of the points of difference between Continental Old Catholics and ourselves:

1. Although the Synod of Jerusalem, held under Dositheus in 1672, was not an Ecumenical Council, its decrees are accepted by the Holy Orthodox Church of the Orient as accurately expressing its belief, and are in harmony with the decrees of the Council of Trent on the dogmas of which they treat. We are in agreement with the Holy Orthodox Church, regarding this Synod. Hence, we hold and declare that there are Seven Holy Mysteries or Sacraments instituted by Our Divine Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, therefore all of them necessary for the salvation of mankind, though all are not necessarily to be received by every individual, e.g. Holy Orders and Matrimony. Certain sections, if not all, of the Old Catholic bodies, reject this belief and refuse to assent to the decrees of the Holy Synod of Jerusalem.
2. Moreover, some of them have abolished the Sacrament of Penance by condemning and doing away with auricular confession; others actively discourage this salutary practice; others, again, whilst tolerating its use, declare the Sacrament of Penance to be merely optional, therefore unnecessary, and of no obligation, even for those who have fallen into mortal sin after Baptism.

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3. In accordance with the belief and practice Of the Universal Church, we adhere to the doctrine of the Communion of Saints by invoking and venerating the Blessed Virgin Mary, and those who have received the crown of glory in heaven, as well as the Holy Angels of God. The Old Catholics in the Netherlands have not yet altogether abandoned this pious and helpful custom, but, in some other countries, invocation of the Saints has been totally abolished by the Old Catholics.
4. Although it may be permissible and, indeed, very desirable, in some countries, and under certain circumstances, to render the Liturgy into the vernacular languages, we consider it to be neither expedient nor tolerable that individuals should compose new liturgies, according to their own particular views, or make alterations, omissions and changes in venerable rites to suit their peculiar fancies, prejudices or idiosyncrasies. We lament the mutilations of this kind which have occurred among the Old Catholics in several countries and regret that no two of the new liturgies composed and published by them are alike, either in form or in ceremony. In all of them the ancient rubrics have been set aside, and the ceremonies and symbolism with which the Sacred Mysteries of the Altar have been reverently environed for many centuries, have, either wholly or in part, been ruthlessly swept away. The Rite of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament has also been almost universally abolished among the Old Catholics.

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5. In accordance with the primitive teaching of the Church of the Netherlands, which prevailed until a very recent date, we consider it a duty on the part of Western Christians to remember His Holiness the Pope as their Patriarch in their prayers and sacrifices. The name of His Holiness should, therefore, retain its position in the Canon of the Mass, where, as we observed at our consecration in Utrecht, it was customary, and remained so until a recent date in the present year (1910), for the celebrant to recite the name of our Patriarch in the usual manner in the Mass and in the Litany of the Saints. The publication of a new vernacular Dutch Liturgy in the present year causes us to regret that the clergy of Holland are now required to omit the name of His Holiness in the Canon of the Mass. Happily, only a small number of other alterations in the text of the Canon have, so far, been introduced. These include the omission of the title, 'ever Virgin' whenever it occurs in the Latin Missal. Such alterations pave the way for others of an even more serious nature, which may be made in the future, and, as we think, are to be deplored.
6. Following the example of our Catholic forefathers, we venerate the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass as the supreme act of Christian worship instituted by Christ Himself. We grieve that the Old Catholic clergy, in most countries, have abandoned the daily celebration Of Mass, and now limit the offering the Christian Sacrifice to Sundays and a few of the greater Feasts. The corresponding neglect of the Blessed Sacrament,



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and infrequency of Holy Communion, on the part of the laity, are marked.

7. In accordance with Catholic custom and with the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, we hold that the honor and glory of God are promoted and increased by the devout and religious use of holy pictures, statues, symbols, relics, and the like, as aids to devotion, and that, in relations to those they represent, they are to be held in veneration. The Old Catholics have, generally speaking, preferred to dispense with such helps to piety.
8. We consider that the Holy Sacraments should be administered only to those who are members of the Holy Catholic Church, not only by Baptism, but by the profession of the Catholic Faith in its integrity. Unhappily, we find persons who are not Catholics are now admitted to receive Holy Communion in all Old Catholic places of worship on the Continent.
9. The Old Catholics have ceased to observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence, and no longer observe the custom of receiving Holy Communion fasting.

For these and other reasons, which it is unnecessary to detail, we, the undersigned Bishop, desire, by these presents, to declare our autonomy and our independence of all foreign interference in our doctrine, discipline and policy. *In necessitas unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas.*

Bishop Arnold Harris Mathew

December 29, 1910

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### The Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury”

Mathew meanwhile answered his critics by citing the consecration within the Utrecht Union of Herzog by Reinckens in 1876, which had likewise occurred solo and without the formal consent of other bishops. He also made reference to the decision of the continental Old Catholics to allow Anglican priests (whom Mathew, as an OCR prelate, now regarded as in invalid orders, in a reversal of the position he had held two years earlier) to celebrate Holy Communion in their churches. These were further points of contention that marked the strained relations between the Union and himself.

It is important to realise that Mathew did not intend his Declaration to be an act of complete separation from the Utrecht Union as such, but instead a loosening of already relaxed ties to enable him to fulfil a wider mission<sup>lxxix</sup>. The Utrecht Union, however (perhaps unsurprisingly given Mathew’s initial remarks and the overall tone of his proclamation), did not understand, or perhaps chose not to understand, this context and saw Mathew’s Declaration as a straightforward act of severance of relations<sup>lxxx</sup>. Doubtless in this they were influenced by the fact that Mathew’s theological position now represented one which, although it had clear antecedents within the Utrecht Union, was now almost completely isolated as the Union moved towards

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<sup>lxxix</sup> See his letter to “The Guardian” of 17 February 1911.

<sup>lxxx</sup> Meeting in 1913, they declared that Mathew had ceased to be a member of the Utrecht Union as of 29 December 1910, the date of his Declaration, and thereafter they would not recognise his episcopal actions.

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modernism and eventual union with the Church of England.

### INDEPENDENCE, NOT SCHISM

In his study of Mathew, Mar Georgius writes, “So long as [Mathew] remained in the Union of Utrecht, it would have been impossible for the Old Catholics to have entered into their present relationship with the Church of England without his consent, which most assuredly would never have been given. Whether in the ultimate result the Continental Old Catholics would not have severed relations with him in order to secure the material advantages which their present relations with the Anglicans have brought them is another question. But, even if they had severed connection, Mgr. Mathew would still have been in a more favourable position than that in which he actually found himself, because he could have legitimately pointed out that the severance did not come from his side.<sup>lxxxii</sup>”

Mar Georgius here touches upon the issue that has been a point of difficulty for Mathew’s followers over the years; since Utrecht, despite its differences, made no attempt to impel Mathew to conform regarding those points of contention, to what extent was Mathew justified in his Declaration of Autonomy and Independence? Indeed, was such not the sin of schism? For Mathew’s successor Bernard Mary Williams, the answer was assuredly no, and this answer, together with the reinforcement of those anti-Utrecht aspects Mathew himself articulated can be seen to have as surely brought

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<sup>lxxxii</sup> Mar Georgius *In the Shadow of Utrecht*, Catholic Apostolic Church (United Orthodox Catholicate), Hove, Belgium, 1954, p ii.

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about his extreme ultramontane leadership of the ORCCGB as any other factor. Equally, Mar Georgius felt that Mathew was precipitate in his actions regarding Utrecht; he should have waited until Utrecht had officially adopted an heretical position before acting in such a manner.

To understand the situation fully, we must recall that the Utrecht Union was not a single church, but as its name implies, a union of churches of the Old Catholic faith. Mathew was, to quote the earlier statement of the Utrecht Union, “in no sense a representative in England of the Church of Holland but simply one of the Old Catholic bishops.” His declaration of independence was thus less of a breach than it was an acknowledgement of the effective *status quo* since his consecration. It is not the case that Mathew’s *jurisdiction* was impaired by the action, since that jurisdiction was already present in his consecration for the British Isles and remained so for as long as he continued to be its Old Catholic bishop. If the Declaration marked a point of difference, that point was theological, not administrative.

## TOWARDS A PROTO-UNIATE RITE; THE OCR DEVELOPS

It was at this time that Mathew’s church adopted the word “Roman”, and became the Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain<sup>lxxxii</sup>, that further point of

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<sup>lxxxii</sup> Sometimes also called the Catholic Church of England or English Catholic Church. However, *pace* Wedgwood, these names were not used exclusively, and the ORCCGB name was in use well before Wedgwood adopted it for his movement in 1915. The terminology “Old Roman Catholic” had previously been used by

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difference being indicative both of separation from Utrecht and of the increasingly ultramontane direction of the movement.

In 1911, Mathew succeeded Henry Arthur Stanton, SSC, as Primate of the Order of Corporate Reunion, which was at that time stagnant and in need of the revival which Mathew brought about. The Synod of 27 May 1912 resolved to form a “society such as the OCR” and deputed Bacon and Hinton for that purpose. Accordingly, in “The Torch” of 19 June 1912, the following article appeared,

“Since the extinction of the O.C.R. by the death of its three Bishops, the Rt Rev. Fredk. George Lee, of All Saints’, Lambeth, the Rt Rev. Thomas W. Mossman of Torrington, and the Rt Rev. Dr Seccombe, who were all of them consecrated to the Episcopate by the Most Eminent Cardinal Archbishop of Milan in his domestic chapel, no definite step has been taken in the direction of Corporate Reunion with the Holy See. The letter of ‘Sacerdos Hibernicus’ in The Torch Monthly Review of May 15th, created a profound interest, and brought together a body of persons who decided to revive the O.C.R.

Facing the facts that the Roman Church has repeatedly denied the validity of Anglican Orders, and that the Ordinations of the Church of England are not recognized by any church claiming to be Catholic, the promoters of the Revived Order felt that all doubt must

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other clergy of Utrecht descent, including Mar Timotheos (Vilatte), and was certainly not the exclusive preserve of Mathew or his clergy.

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be set at rest so far as the Orders of its clerical members were concerned, and they appealed to Archbishop Mathew of the Old Roman Catholic Church, asking if he would accept the position of Honorary Prelate of the Order, and in that capacity give conditional ordination to such members as had received Anglican Ordination. His Grace has replied expressing his willingness... and to conditionally ordain such members as are Clergy of the Established Church and who, having received conditional Baptism and the Sacrament of Confirmation, sign a Profession of the Catholic Faith.

The Archbishop stipulated that it must be made perfectly clear to all concerned, that his services, in connection with this delicate and important matter will be given on the express condition that no fee or reward of any description shall be offered to or will be accepted by him.

The Order has now started on its way and seeks to enrol members. Mere Ritualists are not invited, but earnest minded Catholics who sincerely desire to help forward the work of Corporate Reunion with the Holy See will be cordially welcomed.”

It is interesting that this account gives no space to Mathew's conditional consecration by the OCR prelates. Possibly the secrecy that had attended this event precluded public discussion, or would simply have introduced an unnecessary element of controversy.

Meantime, Mathew's priests had elected four of their number to the episcopate. The idea seems to have been to grow the church through consecrations, with each

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bishop assigned a see and expected – as Mathew had himself done – to build up a following there. The concept of missionary bishops was not new, though Mathew's own experiences should have indicated to them that it would be difficult for such an approach to make headway, particularly as it must inevitably be seen as a jurisdictional incursion by the Anglicans.

Accordingly, on 7 January 1911, Mathew consecrated Francis Herbert Bacon as Titular Bishop of Durham, Cuthbert Francis Hinton<sup>lxxxiii</sup> as Titular Bishop of Hereford, Frederic Clement Christie Egerton<sup>lxxxiv</sup> as Titular Bishop of Norwich and William Edmund Scott-Hall<sup>lxxxv</sup> as Titular Bishop of Winchester. These bishops now formed the Episcopal Synod of the Old Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain, and proceeded to elect Mathew as Metropolitan and Old Catholic (or Anglo-Catholic) Archbishop of London.

Mathew also inaugurated a short-lived Benedictine monastery at Barry in Glamorgan, Wales, that closed within a year through lack of funds<sup>lxxxvi</sup>. There were two

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<sup>lxxxiii</sup> In 1914, having travelled to the United States, he joined the Episcopal Church Diocese of Fond-du-Lac as a priest without reordination.

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> He was originally a schoolmaster. On 21 November 1912 he was reconciled with the Roman Catholic Church and took up a military career. Mar Georgius indicates he was still alive in 1954 and had published a book on the Portuguese dictator Salazar.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> He maintained a chapel at one time in the parish of St Thomas, Oxford, while working as a schoolmaster in a Roman Catholic school (*Brandreth*, 1962, p 34, n. 4). He was received into the Roman Catholic Church at some point prior to June 1913.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> This was on 2 February. He installed Dom Gilbert Vincent, OSB, as Abbot.

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or three novices, among them one James Thomas Aycliffe Williams, in religion Bernard Mary (1889-1952), who would be of great significance to Mathew's later ministry. Mathew was also interested in the possibility of founding a nunnery as a result of contact with two or three sisters who had left the Anglican Benedictine community at West Malling in 1907. These sisters formed the Benedictines of SS Mary and Scholastica first under Mathew and then Bernard Mary Williams<sup>lxxxvii</sup>.

On 21 January 1911, Mathew had sent his customary notification of the four consecrations to the Vatican. Usually such notifications were not responded to, but on this occasion the reaction was different. The response of the Vatican on 11 February was to issue a Bull excommunicating Beale and Howarth, as well as Mathew for having performed the consecrations of 7 January without a Papal Mandate<sup>lxxxviii</sup>. The Bull was strongly condemnatory of the three, but as is usual in such cases, the very act of excommunication acknowledged explicitly that their orders were valid and that they had indeed been consecrated to the Episcopate. Mathew immediately wrote to Cardinal Merry de Val to protest against this action.

Mathew sued "The Times" in libel on 11-16 April 1913, claiming that they had no right to publish this Bull and

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<sup>lxxxvii</sup> By 1923 there were two sisters: Mary Everilda (Mother Superior) and Mary Scholastica (nun).

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Doubtless the Holy See chose to comment particularly on the consecrations of Beale and Howarth, and not on those of the other bishops, because Beale and Howarth were both Roman Catholic priests in a compromised disciplinary position, and thus more secure targets than those who had left the Roman Catholic Church as laymen.



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that the terms used to describe him were both libellous and inaccurately translated<sup>lxxxix</sup>. Why he had waited two years after the article's publication to bring his case is impossible to tell. However, he may have been given encouragement from the success of an earlier complaint against another paper. We are told that,

“in December 1912, “The Times” published in its advertisement columns an apology from the “Saturday Review”. In this the paper expressed regret that in March, 1911, a correspondent, Lady Sykes, had referred to the plaintiff as a “pseudo-archbishop” and unreservedly withdrew what had been said and apologised.”<sup>xc</sup>

Although Mathew's position might thus have been argued to have had some merit in terms of analogous interpretation, he lost the case, in which he was opposed by F.E. Smith (later the first Earl of Birkenhead), the leading barrister of his generation<sup>xc1</sup>.

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<sup>lxxxix</sup> Mathew complained that the phrase *nefario crimini* in the Bull was translated by The Times as “wicked crime” whereas he maintained it should have been rendered “impious fault.” He also objected to the translation of the technical term used by the Vatican into the phrase “pseudo-bishop”, the reference to his wife as a “concubine”, and the phrase “sacrilegious misdeed”. The defence pleaded justification, privilege and fair comment.

<sup>xc</sup> Bishop Mathew and a Papal Bull, *Manchester Guardian*, 16 April 1913, p 14.

<sup>xc1</sup> Arthur Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, appeared for the defence and here as elsewhere did his best to blacken Mathew's name. The defence also called Fr. David Fleming of the Roman Catholic Church, who was strongly opposed to Mathew. The judge, Lord Darling, shewed little sign of taking the case in any way seriously.

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Some account of the proceedings can be gained from the summing-up by Mathew's barrister, Roskill, in the report.

"Mr Roskill, replying on the whole case for the plaintiff, contended that there has been no publication in this country of a Papal Bull in the vernacular since 1570, and why, he asked, should the "Times" have committed a partisan act in this case? The "Times" had made a mistake in the past in accepting documents, and knew the risk. Any person coming into court during the cross-examination of the plaintiff must have come to the conclusion that the Roman Curia was fighting the case – that there was someone behind the "Times". It had been alleged that the plaintiff had been guilty of a sacrilegious act in celebrating marriages in 1891-2 at Holy Trinity, Sloane Square. But he had permission of Bishop Temple and of Canon Ayton (both since dead) to officiate, and his only irregularity was that he had not, in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 1874, his licence in writing...Mr Roskill then addressed himself to the question of malice, and argued that the defendants had held up to public contempt a man whom they had denounced as a liar and a worldling. To call the plaintiff a pseudo-bishop was to call him an impostor, whereas it was established, no matter what Rome said, that the consecration at Utrecht was perfectly valid in this country.

The Judge: All that the defendants allege in justification is that the plaintiff is a pseudo-bishop, inasmuch as he is not a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church.

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The jury, after deliberating over two hours, returned a verdict for the defendants. As a rider they added: “We deprecate the publication of any form of Bull by the Bishop of Rome affecting the status of individuals.”

In reality, had Mathew been the worldling he was alleged to have been, he would have realised that the courts would inevitably support the position and interests of the Established Church and of Rome, inasmuch as those did not conflict, and that there was little chance he would obtain justice.

This public defeat was extremely damaging to Mathew’s reputation, and the court costs accounted for the larger proportion of his remaining funds. However, he was undaunted, and more convinced than ever that he must continue his work.

Mathew again wrote to Cardinal Merry de Val on 14 May, following a similar letter to the Bishop of Newport and Menevia of 11 February, to seek papal authorisation for a British Uniate Rite to “Catholicise the Protestant and unbelieving in the British Empire”. Mathew wrote, “It would be very desirable that a Uniate body should be formed, and that it should be directly subject to the Holy See – at any rate for some time.” He pointed out to Cardinal Merry de Val that the Vatican’s action in excommunicating him had placed him in a particularly difficult position since he was, in proposing a Uniate Rite, actively seeking reconciliation with Rome.

According to Mar Georgius, the Roman Catholic authorities in response informed Mathew that there was never any prospect of any English-speaking Old Roman

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Catholic Uniate Rite, and indeed that Old Roman Catholics were regarded merely as schismatics who should submit to the Holy See without condition. The only prospect for an English Uniate Rite was for a Rite of Eastern origin, different from the Latin Rite.<sup>xcii</sup> It was doubtless this determination that is likely to have prompted Mathew to direct his energies towards union with the Orthodox in the ensuing years.

### UNION WITH THE ORTHODOX; THE ANGLICANS MAKE TROUBLE

After initial correspondence, a meeting took place at the Manor House Club in Bredon's Norton, Worcestershire, on 5 August 1911, between Mathew and the representative of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, Gerassimos Messara, Prince-Archbishop of Beirut. Mathew was accompanied by his bishops and on this occasion celebrated the Liturgy and gave Holy Communion to Archbishop Gerassimos. Stringent attempts had clearly been made (as much by the Orthodox as by Mathew) to keep this meeting and its attendant discussions from Anglican ears.

During the meeting, Archbishop Gerassimos issued a document constituting an Act of Union with the Patriarchate<sup>xciii</sup>. The Patriarchate agreed that the faith of the ORCCGB was in full conformity with that of the

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<sup>xcii</sup> Mar Georgius, *In the Shadow of Utrecht*, p 14

<sup>xciii</sup> Among those present were the Baroness d'Uxkull, Bishop Scott-Hall, Colonel Haggard and Professor Socrates Spiro Bey who was Professor of Arabic in the University of Geneva. The photograph taken at the meeting shows Mathew with several of his clergy, presumably the bishops of his jurisdiction.

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Eastern church, and Mathew swore an oath of fidelity to the Patriarch. The Act of Union read as follows,

“5<sup>th</sup> August 1911

Monseigneur,

Colleague and brother in Jesus Christ, with open arms and in the love of our Saviour, I receive you among us, and I accept your oath of fidelity to His Beatitude the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, for those who hold our faith and ask to be united with us, have never been prevented from joining us.

Praying God to bless you, and all those who come with you, we bless you in the name of His Beatitude the Patriarch of the Holy Synod of Antioch.

Your colleague and brother in Jesus Christ,

† Gerassimos Messara  
Prince-Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Orthodox  
Church of Beirut.”

This was accompanied by a sadly unfulfilled promise that Archbishop Gerassimos would obtain from the Patriarch a formal Act of Union setting out terms.

Ten days after this Mathew published with Bishop Bacon “The Articles of Belief of the Old Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland of the Western Orthodox Church”, followed by “A Catechism of Christian Doctrine”.

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To gain some kind of context on why this act in particular was such a provocation to the Church of England, we should remember that at this time and for some years afterwards, the Anglican church, having made limited headway with Rome, was seeking to position itself as an equivalent to the Orthodox “national” churches in Britain and gain the approval of the Orthodox in so doing. Any suggestion of other Orthodox incursions into what they saw as their territory was treated as an invasion to be discredited and repelled. In short, because Mathew had now succeeded where the Anglicans had yet to cover equivalent ground, he had placed himself directly in their line of fire.

Some idea of the furious Anglican response to these events may be divined from the fact that Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury, dispatched Arthur Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, to Syria for the express purpose of offering money to the Patriarch of Antioch so that he would repudiate his Act of Union with Mathew. According to Mathew's co-adjutor, Bernard Mary Williams<sup>xciv</sup>, the considerable sum offered by Winnington-Ingram to the Patriarch was found to be insufficient, and the Act remained intact at least until Mathew's death<sup>xcv</sup>: “Whether the backsheesh, which

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<sup>xciv</sup> See *Two Works by Bernard Mary Williams*, ed. Kersey, European-American University Press, 2008.

<sup>xcv</sup> When a group of Old Catholic bishops (outside the Utrecht Union) approached the Patriarchate in the 1980s, they were informed that the Act was now regarded as having lapsed, since there had been no contact between the churches in the intervening period (on account of the fragmentation of the OCCGB). The Patriarch himself had died in 1925. *Burton vol 1*, p 5, says “The intercommunion thus established has never been rescinded. Bishop Wedgwood accepted this as part of the [Liberal Catholic] Church's

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seems to have been considerable, fell short of His Beatitude's expectations or not, we do not know. What we do know with absolute certainty is that no repudiation of this Act of Union was ever made."<sup>xcvi</sup> Even Barber was, much to his chagrin, forced to acknowledge that the union existed, although this did not stop him from continuing to try to undermine it.

It was also suggested that the Syrians themselves, in what was sadly not an atypical act for them in that era, had demanded significant bribes from Mathew as a condition of issuing any further documentation in support of him. In the event, neither money nor documentation was forthcoming. If the Act of Union was not actually repudiated, neither did it become the active or fruitful partnership that had been hoped. Indeed, a notice in "The Guardian" in April 1912 claimed to speak with the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch in stating that neither Mathew nor Scott-Hall had been received into his church.

Davidson's behaviour was but one incident in what amounted to a hate campaign waged by the Anglican hierarchy against Mathew, which correctly feared that there was a high enough risk that the large Anglo-Catholic contingent among the clergy would readily jump ship and join Mathew's cause if he were not to be publically discredited. The "Brighton Troubles" of 1910 had seen several Anglo-Catholic priests and many laypersons in that town leave the Church of England and

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responsibility." However, as far as can be observed, this has not been an aspect of the work of the LCC in any active sense.

<sup>xcvi</sup> Williams, B.M., Supplement to the Diocesan Chronicle, May 1949, p 4

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reconcile with Rome, and this had a small but significant domino effect elsewhere in the following months. Further clergy, however, were not enamoured of union with Rome in its present state, but at the same time had become “semi-detached” from the Anglican hierarchy, regarding their bishop merely as a machine for administering Holy Orders and Confirmation. These could easily have found Mathew’s leadership sympathetic.

Mathew’s approaches to the Russian Orthodox Church were aborted because of the intervention mounted by John Wordsworth, the Anglican Bishop of Salisbury (who had protested to Utrecht at Mathew’s consecration) and several Anglican priests, who asserted lies concerning Mathew in a bid to discredit him<sup>xcvii</sup>. Wordsworth was a key figure in the promotion of Anglican-Orthodox relations, together with Fr. Henry Fynes-Clinton, Secretary-General of the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union, and Fr. George Barber of the Society of St Willibrord. The last had initially been favourable to Mathew, but turned against him in a vehement manner after two events. The first was when Mathew confronted him on the subject of his homosexual activity, of which he strongly disapproved, and the second was when a meeting with Dr Davidson on 14 May 1909 convinced him both of Davidson’s antipathy to Mathew and that Barber would do his career in the Church of England no good by supporting

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<sup>xcvii</sup> Mar Georgius (*op. cit.*, p 23) writes, “Archbishop Mathew was somewhat naïve, otherwise he would have realised that the only safe way to communicate with Anglican prelates is through Solicitors, as this prevents distortion and “misunderstanding”, to put it charitably.”



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him. Consequently, Barber exercised his faculties as an assiduous spy and collector of gossip, and became Davidson's chief informant for a time, although Davidson did not regard him as entirely reliable. Wordsworth, Fynes-Clinton and Barber now made common cause to oppose Mathew's mission and any Orthodox headway it might make.

Against this, however, Mathew had an ally in the Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar, W.E. Collins, who was also Anglican President of the Society of St Willibrord. Unfortunately, Collins and Mathew lost touch during 1910 and in the intervening time there seems to have been no shortage of third parties willing to give Collins the benefit of their unfavourable perspectives on Mathew's actions. Within a short time, Collins was dead of tuberculosis.

In fact, the dialogue with the Russians, initiated for a second time in some secrecy in 1910, was initially hopeful. The Russians sent a case of valuable ikons to Mathew as gifts, and gave Mathew's petition for union (on similar terms to those that were being proposed at the same time by the Swiss Old Catholics) serious consideration. When this became known to Fynes-Clinton and Barber they were driven into a flurry of intrigue and lobbying as they attempted to cast aspersions upon Mathew by writing to almost any figure of influence they could muster. If they did not eventually produce a repudiation of Mathew from Moscow, they at least managed to stall the consideration of his petition indefinitely.

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More successful were Mathew's overtures to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and Patriarch Photios (via his Pan-Slavist supporters Baroness Natalie d'Uxkull (1852-1935) and Mme Olga Novikoff<sup>xcviii</sup>). In these approaches to Orthodoxy another key figure was Mme Novikoff's brother General Alexander Kiraiev (1838-1910), who had long been engaged in dialogue between the Old Catholics and the Orthodox<sup>xcix</sup>. Kiraiev was in favour of immediate recognition and intercommunion between the two groups.

This was forthcoming on 26 February 1912, the Patriarch writing,

“To Monseigneur ARNOLD HARRIS MATHEW,  
ARCHBISHOP AND METROPOLITAN (of the Catholic  
Church of England) OF LONDON, EARL OF LANDAFF,

Health and Salvation in Our Lord!

We are very happy to announce to you that We have thanked God our Saviour for your categorical declarations that you regard the Pope of Rome as the first of the Patriarchs of Christianity, without, however, recognising him greater rights than the Orthodox Church acknowledges, that you omit the Filioque clause, and that you do not accept money for celebrating Masses.

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<sup>xcviii</sup> These women, together with Kiraiev, were working to revive the Moscow Patriarchate as a replacement for the Oecumenical Patriarchate at Constantinople. They regarded Moscow as “the Third Rome.”

<sup>xcix</sup> This dialogue had been ongoing at least since the Bonn Reunion Conferences of 1874 and 1875.

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We agree with you as to the observance of your autonomy, and of the Latin Rite in actual use, so long and so far as they agree with the Holy Dogmas and with the canonical ordinances of the Seven Oecumenical Synods, which form the basis of the Orthodox Faith. On this basis we shall, with pleasure, facilitate arrangements with you, or with your Emissaries, this basis having no other foundation than that which has been laid, Who is Jesus Christ; and with a good heart and in joy We glorify the Divine Grace and Power.

We embrace you and We enfold you in Our arms in fraternal love in one only Saviour, in one only Faith, in one only Baptism, in one only God and Father of all, Who is above all and through all and in us all.

And may our Father in Heaven, the God of peace, Who has raised from the dead the great Pastor of the Sheep, our Saviour Jesus, accomplish in you, in every fashion, all good works in accordance with His will. May He perform in us that which is pleasing to Him through Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. And may we be made perfect in Jesus Christ. Amen.

ALEXANDRIA, the 13-26 February 1912.

The Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria

† Photios”

Again, this union remained intact until Mathew's death, but Anglican influence prevented it from becoming anything more than a paper agreement.

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### LATER MINISTRY OF MATHEW

The Chapter meeting and Synod of 27 May 1912 was able to note a move forward in that the church had become the recipient of the generous gift of both a church building and a house from the Baroness von Uxkull. The church was St Mary Magdalene, 72A, Carlton Hill, St John's Wood, London, and the house 70, Carlton Hill. A Deed of Settlement for these properties was approved at the further Synod meeting of 8 June 1912. The Trustees were Mathew, Hinton, Lambert and Seaton.

The church in question was built by the Presbyterians in 1851. It ceased to be used for religious purposes in 1922 and was converted into a private dwelling and artist's studio in 1924. Between 1933 and 1974 it was used as a film studio before reverting to its prior status as a private dwelling.

With the reconciliation of Canon Lambert, the church had also regained a further building for worship, in the form of the Church of Our Lady and St Willibrord at River Street, Canonbury, London. Lambert was also in the process of being accepted for ministry in the Church of England at this time. Both he and McFall were reappointed as Canons, while Scott-Hall was dissociated from the movement by a resolution of the Synod following an investigation of his conduct in his absence. By contrast, it was recorded that "The Archbishop desired to make public not only the withdrawal of the suspensions against bishops Bacon and Hinton but that

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all allegations were withdrawn also and that he had acted upon mistaken information.”<sup>c</sup>

The same Synod resolved to consider whether the conferral of degrees in theology by the Church was desirable. This action would have been permissible in English law at the time and would have been a further indication of Mathew’s standing in parallel with the Anglican and Roman Primates who did likewise. However, nothing seems to have come of this<sup>ci</sup>.

From 1912 to 1919, Mathew was also Provisional Bishop of a new body in France called the *Eglise Catholique Française*, and consecrated Albert René Laurain de Lignières<sup>cii</sup> as Metropolitan of this church in 1912. This body published a work entitled “*Le Réveil Catholique*” in Paris in 1914 which included a photograph of Mathew. The appeal of the church was again to non-ultramontane Catholics who wished to resist Papal and particularly Jesuitical influence. It abolished mandatory clerical celibacy, discouraged the veneration of images and advocated public worship in the vernacular. Its single chapel was in the *Passage Elysée des Beaux Arts* in Paris. The growth of this body was halted by the outbreak of the First World War and subsequently de Lignières

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<sup>c</sup> Burton, vol 1, p 6

<sup>ci</sup> However, in the 1950s, Charles Brearley, Primate of the Old Holy Catholic Church and a bishop in succession from Mathew, would claim that his (Old Catholic) University of Sheffield (sic) had been founded by Mathew in 1916. There is no evidence of any continuous history of such a body until Brearley’s claims, nor would he have been in any obvious way the successor to it.

<sup>cii</sup> He had previously been consecrated in 1909 by Henry Marsh Marsh-Edwards, who had been consecrated by Mar Timotheos (Vilatte). He was consecrator of the occultist Jean (Joanny) Bricaud.

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affiliated his work with the Eglise Catholique Gallicane, which has previously been discussed.

On 13 June 1913, Mathew consecrated Victor J. Alexander de Kubinyi (1873-1966)<sup>ciii</sup>. de Kubinyi was originally a Roman Catholic in the USA and left that church in 1911. In 1912 he founded the Hungarian National Church (Magyar Nemzeti Egyház Amerikában) at South Bend, Indiana, USA. On 7 December 1913 he and his mission were received into the Protestant Episcopal Church Diocese of Northern Indiana without reordination by John Hazen White (1849-1925), PEC Bishop of Northern Indiana between 1895 and 1925. On 15 November 1918 he left the PEC. He was consecrated subconditionally on 3 May 1925 by Carmel Henry Carfora (q.v.) of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, and became a bishop of Église Chrétienne Catholique Traditionnelle/The Traditional Christian Catholic Church.

In that capacity in 1932 his church entered intercommunion with the Apostolic Episcopal Church, a Chaldean Uniate mission in New York under Mar John Emmanuel (Arthur Wolfort Brooks). On 27 November 1932 he was again consecrated subconditionally by Brooks' consecrator Antoine Lefebvre [Lefberne] (1862-1953), bishop of the Chaldean Catholic Church, an Eastern Orthodox Uniate church in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.

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<sup>ciii</sup> His books include *The King of Rome*, New York 1907; *Napoleon I*, New York 1911; *True Religion*, South Bend 1913; *Behind the Curtain*, South Bend 1913; *Through Fog - To Light*, South Bend 1914; *Hungarian Service Book*, South Bend 1915; *Franz Josef I*, South Bend 1917; *Mr Man*, New York 1920; *As We Are*, New York 1929.

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Between 1932 and 1935 de Kubinyi was a bishop of the Apostolic Episcopal Church in New York. In or around the latter year, in response to events that were presaging the Second World War, he returned to Hungary.

On 7 October 1914 at Bromley, Kent, Mathew is alleged to have consecrated one James Arron Bell<sup>civ</sup> for the OCR. If he indeed existed, he apparently settled in Australia and nothing more than that is known of him.

By 1915, the ORCC had parishes in Chiswick, Croydon, Broadstairs, Belford, Oxford and Dublin, as well as elsewhere in London. The periodical “The Torch”, described as “a Monthly Review advocating the Reconstruction of the Church of the West and Reunion with the Old Orthodox Church of the East” had been launched in 1912, succeeded after three issues by “The Union Review”, though this too had ceased publication.

In early 1914, plans had been made to build a granite cathedral (based on the *Votiv Kirche* at Vienna) for the movement in London, though the appeal for £175,000 needed for the project was never met and the project was abandoned at the outbreak of the First World War in August that year.

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<sup>civ</sup> Ordained priest by Mathew on an unknown date. What we know of him comes from the account of Brion Christian Adrian Marae de Marigny de Fouesnel. Fouesnel asserts that he was consecrated on 3 April 1966 in secret by one Herbert Fergusson-Bell, who had been consecrated by James Arron Bell at Ayr, Scotland, on 18 November 1939, for the Old Catholic – Free Catholic Church, later known as the Old Catholic Apostolic Church. There is no independent evidence that supports the existence of either Bell or Fergusson-Bell.

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Mathew was also much influenced by his historical studies, and by the thought – also previously explored by Richard Williams Morgan (Mar Pelagius) of the OCR, who was the successor of Mar Julius (Ferrette) – of reviving the forms of Christianity that were indigenous to the ancient Britons. This search for a Celtic heritage and for an authentic British Orthodox Church was in tune with many writers and thinkers of his time, finding perhaps its most profound expression in the Celtic nationalism of such figures as Yeats and Arnold Bax, and particularly in the legends of Glastonbury and Tintagel. Mathew published a short work outlining his place as the successor of this heritage, “The Ancient Catholic Church of Great Britain”. He also reinterpreted the “Old” in “Old Catholic” to recall this past history in Britain just as it had in turn referred to a historic expression of faith in the Netherlands. For him the words “Old” and “Ancient” were synonymous in this context, and he described his church using both terms interchangeably.

Mathew continued to offer help to the Church of England, offering in a letter of 11 May 1915 to Davidson's chaplain (the Revd. J.V. Macmillan) to reordain and reconsecrate Arthur Winnington-Ingram, their Bishop of London, so that he might be the instrument for the restoration of Catholic unity to Britain. This offer was to receive a response in the form of “An Episcopal Odyssey” which we will discuss in due course.

The same day, Mathew expanded on this theme and returned to his appeal for a British Uniate Rite, “The Catholic party in the Established religion of Queen Elizabeth will be invited to come into union with us...For



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this work we received our mission from the spiritual descendant of the British Apostle of the Netherlands, St Willibrord. We are both willing and hopeful that the work may be carried on in union with the Holy See. If His Holiness, Pope Benedict XV, who is a Pontiff of high intelligence and profound learning, anxious to keep abreast of the times, will deign to listen to us, and to assist us with his approval, His Holiness will have no reason to regret the confidence he may repose in us...In no other way can the British Empire be restored to Catholic Unity.”

It is difficult to imagine these sentiments receiving a warm response in Canterbury. One difficulty was that Mathew was rarely short of initiatives but found it extremely difficult to envision, let alone secure, the necessary administrative underpinning whereby they might be realized. Appealing to the Anglicans for support was an alternative to self-reliance, but was never likely to be well-received. Having been placed in a position of leadership, Mathew was ill-equipped for the tasks of management: setting out and communicating a clear and consistent vision, inspiring others to share this and engage with him in the cause, and then delegating responsibility and ensuring that the necessary tasks were carried through. Mathew too often assumed that others would take care of the realisation of his ideas and that he could detach himself from the mundane.

What is also particularly evident from Mathew's correspondence of his later years is that he often found the recall and organization of detail increasingly difficult and had to add postscripts or follow-up letters that amplified the points he had made. If, as often was the

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case, he did not make contemporaneous notes of a conversation, he could not then recall it accurately at a later stage. There was little that was systematic about his archives, and this together with a busy and at times pressured stream of correspondence served to place him at a disadvantage where a sharper focus would have avoided confusion. Certainly Mathew's rather haphazard approach did not commend itself to Davidson's cool intellect, which tended to see it not as the naïve muddle that it was but as an active attempt to dissemble and mislead.

Throughout the following years, Mathew ordained and consecrated a number of men for service throughout the world. Some were Anglicans seeking valid orders, others were seeking a Christian expression independent of the mainstream denominations. Many were part of the Reunion mission of the OCR. A number of those whom he ordained priest according to the OCR rite were subsequently accepted into the Church of England without conditional reordination.

### THE PRINCE DE LANDAS BERGHES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MATHEW'S MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mathew's consecration of Prince Rudolph de Landas Berghes et de Rache<sup>cv</sup>(1873-1920) on 29 June 1913 was highly significant, since it is from de Landas Berghes that his lineage developed in North America, and indeed

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<sup>cv</sup> Much of the information concerning him is to be found in *Anson*, p 189-194 etc. The source for this is likely to have been Brandreth, who provided much source material to Anson concerning the earlier years of the Free Catholics.

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from 1952 onwards the North American Old Roman Catholic Church provided the source of episcopal orders of all branches of the Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain<sup>cvi</sup> save that led by Archbishop Wilfrid Barrington-Evans.

de Landas Berghes' full name and style was Rudolph Francis Edward St. Patrick Alphonsus Ghislain de Gramont Hamilton de Lorraine-Brabant, Prince de Landas Berghes et de Rache, Duc de St Winock. He was born in Naples, Italy on November 1, 1873, and claimed to be of the royal house of the Princes de Rache of the house of de Berghes and a Grandee of Spain, as well as a member of the royal line of Brittany. He was brought up as a member of the Church of England and educated at Eton and the Universities of Cambridge, Paris and Brussels, where he studied Law, Theology and military tactics. He served as a Staff Officer Captain in the British Army for ten years and took part in the Sudan Campaign under Lord Kitchener. He was subsequently promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After his service in the military, the Prince de Landas Berghes joined the Old Catholic Church, having been introduced by the Baroness Uxkull or Mme Novikoff (q.v.), and on 21 November 1912 was ordained to all minor

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<sup>cvi</sup> However, the statement by Gerard George Shelley, who was Archbishop of that church from 1954 onwards, that he was ordained priest by Mathew in 1914 is false according to Archbishop Richard Arthur Marchenna, who consecrated Shelley. Marchenna's letter is in the archive of St Ephrem's Institute, Solna, Sweden.

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orders, subdiaconate, diaconate and priesthood by Mathew in Bacon's oratory.<sup>cvi</sup>

On June 29, 1913, he was consecrated by Mathew to serve as the Old Catholic missionary bishop for Scotland. His intention appears to have been to set up an anti-papal church on the Continent, but this plan was thwarted by the outbreak of World War I. Being a subject of the Austro-Hungarian Empire resident in Great Britain, he became an enemy alien, and was liable to incarceration. As a special favour to him for his distinguished service in the British Army, the British Foreign Office apparently arranged for him to go to the United States, which was a neutral power until 1917.

On 7 November 1914 he arrived in the USA and was licensed to function in The Protestant Episcopal Church by David H. Greer, PEC Bishop of New York between 1908-19. The PEC asked de Landas Berghes to assist at the consecration of Hiram Richard Hulse as the Episcopal Missionary Bishop for Cuba at New York City on the January 12, 1915. In this way, there could be no doubt about the apostolic succession of Bishop Hulse or the validity of his orders from the Roman Catholic point of view in light of Pope Leo XIII's bull *Apostolicae Curae*. It should be noted, however, that de Landas Berghes jurisdiction after this point did not originate from Mathew, but rather from this relationship with the PEC. Some degree of limited recognition was, however, extended by Mathew to several of his episcopal acts.

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<sup>cvi</sup> Bernard Mary Williams was ordained priest on the same occasion, as was Frederic Adams, a former Anglican. Adams later returned to lay life, but according to Barrington-Evans exercised his orders surreptitiously in the Anglican Church.

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In the United States, the North American Old Roman Catholic Church had formed in 1916 from the churches led by de Landas Berghes, William Henry Francis Brothers (1887-1979) and Carmel Henry Carfora (1878-1958) and elected de Landas Berghes as its first Archbishop. De Landas Berghes took up residence at St Dunstan's Abbey, Waukegan, Illinois, where he on 3 October consecrated Brothers, who was the Abbot, and on 4 October, with the assistance of Brothers, consecrated Carfora, a former Roman Catholic priest, as his co-adjutor. With Carfora, de Landas Berghes then consecrated Stanislaus Mickiewicz, a former Polish National Catholic priest, in 1917.

On December 22, 1919, de Landas Berghes renounced the Old Catholic Church and joined the Roman Catholic Church, making his submission to the Archbishop of New York, Patrick, Cardinal Hayes, in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, New York. He then entered the Augustinian novitiate in Villanova, Pennsylvania on March 13, 1920. He died there on November 17 at the age of 47. He was buried in the Community Cemetery at Villanova with full episcopal honours by the Roman Catholic Church.

Carmel Henry Carfora was a Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Naples and a Doctor of Theology of the Theological Institute in Naples. He entered the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin in 1895. He ministered to Italian-American immigrants as a Roman Catholic priest at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, in Youngstown, Ohio. On 17 May 1907 he and some of his congregation founded St. Rocco's Independent National Catholic Church in response to a dispute with Carfora's superiors

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in the Roman Church. This ministry later extended to a number of mission congregations serving immigrant groups. On 7 June 1907 in Paris Carfora was consecrated by Mar Timotheos (Vilatte)<sup>cviii</sup>. Mar Timotheos' auxiliary Paolo Miraglia Gulotti of the Italian National Episcopal Church assisted Carfora in organizing the Italian National Catholic Diocese of America during 1908. Gulotti in consequence settled in New York and from May 1908 served as a suffragan bishop to Mar Timotheos and assistant to Carfora, who was now overall head of the Italian National Catholic Church. Carfora and Gulotti opened missions of that church in West Virginia, Brooklyn and New York. By April 1909, Carfora was pastoring St Rocchus National Church, Youngstown, Ohio.

In June 1912 Carfora's work was incorporated as the National Catholic Diocese in North America, which remained under the formal oversight of Gulotti. After Gulotti's death in 1916, Carfora united his diocese with that of de Landas Berghes during 1917, and left St Rocco's

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<sup>cviii</sup> See Persson, *op. cit.*, p 23. Carfora was working in West Virginia between 1906-08 and may also have assisted Vilatte in Europe during that time; in 1908 he formally separated his mission from the Roman Catholic Church. He was further consecrated by Gulotti on 14 June 1912. This is reported in Carfora's own words in The Catholic American, Vol I, No 1, p 6. The Ancient Christian Fellowship Review, October-December 1946, p 12 also confirms the time. Gulotti's death in 1916 caused Carfora to seek links with other Old Catholics. On his consequent reception into union with the Prince de Landas Berghes, his consecrations in the Vilatte succession were not accepted, and he repudiated them in favour of the consecration which he received from de Landas Berghes on 4 October 1916. At that time he incorporated the Italian National Catholic Church into the union that would in 1919 become the North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

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in 1918 (which became part of the Episcopal Church on 15 June 1918).

The NAORCC prospered, growing to a peak of 50,000 mostly immigrant members, and regarded itself as a sister communion to that of Mathew in Great Britain, rather than the subject of his direct jurisdiction. However, Carfora was the only one of the North American bishops to be formally recognised as such by Mathew, de Landas Berghes having advised Mathew not to recognise William Brothers.

Under Carfora, who succeeded de Landas Berghes in 1919, the policy of the NAORCC was a strict pre-Vatican I Roman Catholicism, with the exception of a married priesthood. By the 1950s, the church had declined somewhat in numbers (not least because its immigrant clientele had by now been more closely assimilated within mainstream denominations), and explored union with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, but although thirty parishes did indeed join that church, formal union was not pursued. In 1953, Carfora suffered a stroke that left the church in hiatus since he was unable to undertake the duties of leadership. At his death in 1958, Hubert Augustus Rogers was his elected successor, but other elements did not accept Rogers' leadership and went into schism as a result.

William Brothers, meanwhile, had been born near Nottingham as a Roman Catholic, and moved to the United States as a child. In 1908 he joined the American Congregation of St Benedict which was closely linked with the Polish Old Catholic Church in America. From 1907, the Union of Utrecht shifted its support from the

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POCCA to the Polish National Catholic Church, which left the POCCA stranded.

In 1908, POCCA's primate, Jan (John or Johannes) Francis Tichy (1869-1951)<sup>cix</sup>, founded a new group, the Old Catholic Church in America, which in 1909 moved to Fond-du-Lac, Wisconsin, where it was under the patronage of Bishop Grafton of the PEC. Grafton gave the group a large building which they named St Dunstan's Abbey, and Fr. Bernard Harding became the first Abbot. On 3 October 1911, with Grafton's blessing, the abbey was transferred to the jurisdiction of the OCCA and Tichy on that day ordained Brothers priest. In 1912, Grafton died and Tichy suffered a stroke. After his reordination by Mar Timotheos (Vilatte), Tichy made Brothers head of the OCCA in 1914.

Brothers withdrew from the union with de Landas Berghes and Carfora shortly after it had formed in 1916 and on 8 January 1917 announced that he was again Archbishop and Metropolitan of the OCCA. At that time he pastored a congregation in Chicago and successfully built up work among the immigrant communities, consecrating bishops who were Polish and Lithuanian-speaking (Josef Zielonka and Stanislaus Mickiewicz respectively). In 1924 he moved to New York City where he worked with former PEC bishop William

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<sup>cix</sup> He was a Roman Catholic priest in Czechoslovakia, but was excommunicated on 24 October 1902 by the Bishop of Ohio. In October 1905 he was consecrated by Anton Koszowski of the POCCA, who had been consecrated on 17 November 1897 by Herzog assisted by Gul and Bishop Weber of Bonn. Koszowski's death in 1907 brought about Utrecht's shift in support away from Tichy and towards the PNCC, hence Tichy's decision to seek Grafton's patronage.



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Montgomery Brown (1855-1937)<sup>cx</sup>, who as a Communist had been deposed for heresy and thereafter united his mission with the OCCA. In 1927 their church became responsible for the Mariavite community outside Poland. Also in the 1920s, Brothers incorporated the Western Orthodox Catholic Church, which collaborated with the Russian Orthodox (Living) Church under John Sava.

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<sup>cx</sup> Born a member of the Methodist Church. Ordained by Bishop Gregory Bedell in the Episcopal Church: deacon, 17 June 1883; priest, 22 May 1884. On 24 June 1898 in Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio, he was consecrated as co-adjutor bishop of Arkansas in the Episcopal Church by William E. McLaren, Bishop of Chicago (1831-1905), assisted by George Franklin Seymour, Bishop of Springfield, and Cortlandt Whitehead, Bishop of Pittsburgh. In 1898 he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Kenyon College. On 5 September 1900 he was elevated to Bishop of Arkansas. From 7 March 1906 he was a member of the Liberal Catholic World Council, and on 15 May 1908 ordained William Albert Nichols, later the first OCR Provincial in the USA, as deacon. He resigned on 11 April 1912, purportedly because of ill-health, but in fact because his Communist views had become a source of difficulty for the Episcopalian hierarchy, who tried and convicted him of heresy and excommunicated him in 1925. He published *Communism and Christianity: Analyzed and Contrasted from the Marxian and Darwinian Points of View*, (Galion, Ohio 1923); *My Heresy*, (New York 1926), *The Science of Moscow and the Superstition of Rome*, (Galion, Ohio 1930) and *Teachings of Marx for Girls and Boys*, (Galion, Ohio 1935). On 24 June 1925 at a "secret ceremony in the library of his Galion residence", he was rebaptized and reordained deacon and priest by William Henry Francis Brothers, and the same day consecrated by Brothers, assisted by Józef Zielonka and Albert Jehan. See the *Orthodox Catholic Review* Vol 1, No 3, p118. In that same year, he was "enthroned as a bishop of the Liberal Episcopal Church, with Headquarters in Denver, Colorado" (Correspondence of Abp. Quatannens to Bertil Persson, 9 September 1991). On 2 January 1927 he consecrated Wallace de Ortega Maxey, later Primate of the Apostolic Episcopal Church.

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By 1936, Brothers' jurisdiction had 24 parishes and nearly 5,500 members. During the 1950s, tensions emerged, and on 21 March 1962 Brothers led his church into union with the Russian Orthodox Church, accepting reordination as a Mitred Archpriest by Dosifej Ivanchenko. In 1967, however, he withdrew from the ROC (having resumed episcopal functions from at least 1965 onwards) and from 1967-69 was a member of the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Church in Exile. In 1969 he reorganised the OCCA and appointed Joseph Anthony McCormack (consecrated by Brothers in 1965 and by Petro Widybida Rudenko (Archbishop Palladij of the HUACE)) as Brothers' successor. Brothers retired in 1977. Brothers and MacCormack consecrated Joseph John Skureth on 14 April 1966.

## MATHEW AND THEOSOPHY

Mathew ordained several members of the then highly active Theosophical Society who would go on to form the Liberal Catholic Church, including James Ingall Wedgwood<sup>cx1</sup>, the LCC's founder and a former Anglican organist. This had come about when Wedgwood, who was both Anglo-Catholic and Theosophical in his beliefs, saw a letter by Mathew in "The Times" on the subject of birds. He sought a meeting with Mathew, and in 1913 was accepted into the ORCCGB together with his fellow TS

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<sup>cx1</sup> Wedgwood was Secretary of the TS 1911-13. He resigned from the ORCCGB on 12 November and was elected Presiding Bishop of the church that was to become the LCC on 10 December. He was consecrated by Willoughby assisted by King and Gauntlett on February 23 1916 in the Masonic Temple at Great Queen Street, London.

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members, who, with their dates of ordination to the priesthood, were: Robert King<sup>cxii</sup> (1 August 1914), Bernard Edward Rupert Gauntlett<sup>cxiii</sup> (1 July 1914), Reginald Elphinstone Astley Loftus Farrer<sup>cxiv</sup> (1 August 1913) and Frederick James (4 April 1915). They had an oratory in Red Lion Square, London, and at last it was their efforts that gave some hope that the cause of Old Catholicism in England could expand and prosper.

The Theosophical Society, commonly abbreviated as the TS, had been founded by Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in 1875 with the three objects “(1) to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour; (2) to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science; and (3) to investigate unexplained laws of nature and powers latent in man.”

Mathew himself was initially sympathetic towards Theosophy based on the literature provided by Wedgwood about the TS and the Order of the Star in

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<sup>cxii</sup> He was a popular lecturer on aspects of Theosophy and psychic manifestations.

<sup>cxiii</sup> Wedgwood tells us that his family owned a large paper-making business in which he worked.

<sup>cxiv</sup> Farrer was a man of independent means. He was ill at ease with the priesthood, and in fact sought to withdraw only a week after his ordination by Mathew. Frederick Willoughby (q.v.) persuaded him not to do so, and in time he became Secretary to the Liberal Catholic Church and gave good service in that capacity. However, when he resigned from that position in September 1918 he again began to exercise his doubts, and resigned his offices in the LCC in January 1920, only to resume them once more in October of that year. This again did not last.

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the East, a body established to prepare for the Coming of the World Teacher. He took the view that the TS was a learned society interested in comparative religion and the OSE an organisation dedicated to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The OSE was in fact concerned with the manifestation of an avatar of Vishnu, the Lord Maitreya, which was believed in turn to have previously incarnated in the Person of Jesus Christ, but it is difficult to see how this would have been of especial concern to one of Mathew's wide ecumenical awareness, particularly as his clergy saw no contradiction between these activities and the maintenance of a strongly Anglo-Catholic outlook.

Indeed, Mathew made his clergy sign an oath of canonicity, and there is no evidence that any of the TS members considered this oath and a full belief in the mainstream Catholic faith at odds with the study of comparative religion or an interest in its teaching. Of the TS president, Mrs Annie Besant, Mathew recounted to Canon Farrer "I so often have seen a sort of mental vision of Mrs Besant in the garb of an *abbess*! It is very curious, but I think something is working in her mind and that she is seeing more clearly the divinity of the Catholic system and revelation, which is alone able to satisfy the soul's aspiration and longings. She would be another St Teresa or a St Catherine of Siena – and I have for some time – quite a year – felt that this is her destiny. But we shall see."

There are still tales that Mathew secretly consecrated Mrs Besant, but no proof of this has ever been forthcoming. What is certain, though, is that Mathew's comments accurately predicted the course of the

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Theosophists that would be worked out through the Liberal Catholic Church and such works as Leadbeater's "The Science of the Sacraments" which we shall discuss later. Unfortunately, Mathew failed to predict that such a development would take place without him.

### FREDERICK SAMUEL WILLOUGHBY

Frederick Samuel Willoughby was born in 1862. He entered St Catherine's College, Cambridge (where he was later a tutor), in 1880 and graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1883 and Master of Arts in 1890. Trained for the ministry at Lichfield Theological College, he was ordained deacon in the Church of England in 1887 and priest the following year, and became a member of the English Church Union, the Guild of All Souls and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.

Willoughby had served curacies at Worfield, Salop. (1887-94), St Paul, Worcester (1894-96) and Parkgate, Yorks. (1896-99). He founded Hooton Pagnell Theological College<sup>cxv</sup>, now part of the University of Durham, and was principal between 1901 and 1904 as well as being Vicar of Hooton Pagnell between 1899 and 1906.

Appointed Vicar of St John's, Stockton-on-Tees in 1906, Willoughby conducted a successful and strongly Anglo-Catholic ministry in the parish. Unfortunately, this did not commend itself to those parishioners who opposed Ritualism, and they determined to make trouble for their vicar.

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<sup>cxv</sup> Initially called St Chad's Hostel. Willoughby was Principal between 1899 and 1906. The college was High Church in character.

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While Willoughby was away on holiday during the summer of 1914, certain of his parishioners began a campaign of outlandish gossip and accusation. They then approached Willoughby's Ordinary (Handley Moule, Bishop of Durham) and made allegations of a moral nature against him, which seem to have been that he was involved in homosexual activity. The exact nature of these allegations was never revealed to Willoughby, who was a married man, since Moule, who seems to have been acting out of panic, conducted his own private investigation. At the end of this, Moule asked Willoughby to resign his benefice or face the publicity of a full inquiry. Willoughby decided at Moule's recommendation to resign under the Clerical Disabilities Relief Act 1870, and left the ministry of the Church of England on 19 January 1915.

Willoughby approached Mathew and made a clean breast of matters. Mathew, as a fellow Anglo-Catholic, at once sympathized with his situation. As a result, Willoughby was baptized and reordained conditionally, and made a member of the Cathedral Chapter.

Wedgwood writes in *Theosophy in New Zealand* (December 1916), "In September, 1914 he [Mathew] had addressed a letter to his clergy saying that in view of his advancing years it seemed to him desirable that 'immediate steps should be taken to preserve the valid Episcopal succession in our position of the Church from risk of loss.'" An election was held among the clergy, with the result that Willoughby was first in the vote to elect a successor and Wedgwood second.

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Willoughby was accordingly consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop of St Pancras in the ORCCGB on 28 October 1916 by Mathew assisted by Fr. Bernard Mary Williams and Fr. John Briggs Seaton (who would later join the LCC) in the banqueting-hall<sup>cxvi</sup> of the Royal Bell Hotel, Bromley, where the ecclesiastical furnishers Messrs. Jones and Willis had fitted up a special Chapel for the occasion.

Following the consecration, Mathew and Willoughby collaborated on the pamphlet “The Conversion of Great Britain: What can the Ancient Catholic Church of England do?” and Willoughby himself published “The Ancient Catholic Church of England: Her Authority, Her Mission, Her Work, Her Appeal.” Willoughby also ordained another Theosophist to the priesthood, Theodore Bell<sup>cxvii</sup>, on 13 November 1914.

On 16 December 1914, Mathew had written to the Pope, unbeknownst to his clergy. Reading his letter closely it is clear that what he intended to achieve was to continue his episcopal ministry and his movement, but as a Uniate Church of Rome in line with the aims of his mission under the OCR.

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<sup>cxvi</sup> Some sources say the Ballroom. Others call the establishment the Bull Hotel or Inn rather than the Bell. The correct name is the Royal Bell Hotel, 175 High Street, Bromley, which was built on the site of the seventeenth-century Bell Inn in 1898. Its predecessor is mentioned in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. It is currently disused.

<sup>cxvii</sup> He was of a Quaker family in Harrogate. His parents were leading Theosophists, and managed a drapery business. Later in life he left the LCC and exercised his ministry in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. His brother, Robert William Bell, was also a priest of the LCC and served at Tekels Park, Camberley.

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We should note in this letter that there is no suggestion that Mathew intended simply to reconcile with Rome and to cease to act as a bishop. Rather, what he intended was that Rome should accept his mission and take the English Old Catholic movement under her wing. This appeal would be repeated the following year, but with a different emphasis regarding Mathew's own role. We can also see evidenced here the conformity with Roman doctrine that was already a major aspect of Mathew's theology and that would reach its apex in the ultramontane direction of his movement in the last years of his life.

Mathew wrote as follows, "My wish and that of all who co-operate with me is to make our humble submission to Your Holiness and to receive from Your Holiness absolution from the censure pronounced against us and permission from Your Holiness to continue our work exclusively among protestants, agnostics, Jews and pagans in the British Empire and in direct submission to the Holy See I humbly beg Your Holiness to be pleased to grant the approval of the Holy See for our catechism, and to order us to make use in the instruction of those who wish to enter the priesthood of such works on Philosophy, Theology, and Ecclesiastical History as may seem good to Your Holiness. Ye have hitherto made use of Merxier for Philosophy, also of various works in English written by the English Jesuits, for theology Tanquerri, the Summa of St. Thomas, Scheeben's Dogmatic and other approved works. For Morals, Gary SJ. also Slater and his *casus*. Our desire is to make submission to Your Holiness corporately and without reserve and to place all our publications under the approval of the Holy See. I renounce and condemn all



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teaching and all questions which are in any way displeasing to the Holy See..."

This direction was not inconsistent with what would happen in 1915, as Mathew made clear his opposition to liberalism and to any thought of ultimate separation from Rome. However, it would appear that there was no response from the Holy See to Mathew's letter.

### AN EPISCOPAL ODYSSEY

There appeared in "The Guardian" of 19 May 1915, a publication entitled "An Episcopal Odyssey". This work, which consisted in part of confidential correspondence of Mathew, was placed in that periodical by the Anglicans with the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London for the purpose of doing Mathew's reputation harm; it included correspondence to those men that was clearly marked as private and in which the expectation was that confidentiality would be maintained on both sides.

The leading agent behind this was the Revd. J.V. Macmillan, chaplain to Davidson. He wrote to Mathew, "I am directed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to send to you, in accordance with an intimation already given to you by the Bishop of London, a reply to certain recent letters which you have addressed to His Grace and to the Bishop of London. If the Archbishop understands the purport of these letters aright, their suggestion is that you and those who are at present associated with you should be regarded as constituting or representing the Holy Catholic Church in this country, the Church of England remaining as a religious body as associated with

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the National life but with no claim to a regular or orthodox position in any ecclesiastical sense.

You further suggest that the Bishop of London should subject himself to you for re-ordination, in which case you would be prepared, as the Archbishop understands, to grant him some official recognition. The Archbishop of Canterbury feels that it is hardly possible to treat these letters seriously or to reply to them in terms which you would regard as more discourteous than the silence which you deprecate. But as you press for a reply, the Archbishop thinks it best that I should, on his behalf, enclose to you a memorandum recalling in bare outline some of the incidents of the last eight years [There followed an account of Mathew's ecclesiastical history presented in as unflattering terms as possible]. In view of the facts which are therein referred to, the Archbishop feels it to be impossible for him to enter with you into a discussion of the subjects raised, or to regard your letters on these public matters as bearing a confidential character. He is quite willing, therefore, that you should make this letter and the memorandum public if you desire to do so, and he reserves to himself a similar discretion."

Mathew knew nothing of the appearance of this work in "The Guardian" until it was pointed out to him after the event. The fact that the Anglicans sought to discredit him publically, rather than simply ignoring his letters or sending him a discouraging reply, and were willing to commit a public breach of confidence in order to do so, was a mark of how much of a potential threat he constituted to them.

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Mathew responded with an Open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on 1 November, in which he answered all of the points made by the Anglicans and protested against the Archbishop's patent breach of faith. He entitled this letter also "An Episcopal Odyssey"<sup>cxviii</sup> and headed it with the words "Ergo inimicus vobis factus sum verum dicens vobis"<sup>cxix</sup> The conclusion of this pamphlet is particularly significant in that it summed up the situation of Mathew's church all too accurately, "Our body is small and extremely poor. So poor, indeed, that its indigence defies description. My Clergy receive no remuneration or emoluments whatsoever, and work without hope, and, it would seem, without prospect of any earthly reward for their labours. There is not a man at present with me who has not jeopardized his all, and some of my clergy have made sacrifices which they would not allow me to mention, in order to carry on the work which we honestly believe Almighty God has committed to us. As yet we see little result beyond failure and disappointment. The greatness of our work in the interests of Re-union is the measure of our trial, and, when we have proved ourselves more worthy, we may be blessed to the extent that our toil has not been wholly in vain. The Movement will go on in spite of all difficulties, and notwithstanding the persecution and scorn of our enemies, however severe it may be."

Mathew had also defined what was to be the role of his church in his last years, and that has endured unchanged

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<sup>cxviii</sup> Thus causing not a little confusion among those who have referenced the first publication mistakenly to Mathew rather than the second.

<sup>cxix</sup> "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians, 4:16)

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among his various successors in English Old Catholicism. His church was, "A very humble little Catholic Mission, possessing indisputable Orders and valid Sacraments, working side by side with the great Roman Catholic Church and portions, at least, of the Eastern Churches, endeavouring to found an Uniate Church, to be approved by the Holy See, perhaps with a vernacular liturgy, and with a Clergy bound neither to celibacy nor to marriage."

This rejoinder was described by Williams, perhaps optimistically, as "the greatest blow to [Davidson's] prestige he had ever received." Nevertheless this did not stop the Anglican hostilities.

It was this cast-iron sense that there was an ultimate Divine Purpose at work in the Old Catholic movement in England that impelled Mathew and those loyal to him forwards. Others have found it difficult to comprehend the extent of such faith, considering that it would have been more worldly and more rational to have given up and to have recognised that the odds were stacked against the Old Catholic movement in such a way as to make its very survival most unlikely. This was not the way that Mathew thought. His mind was not fixed on the things of earth, but on the things above.

As we contemplate his situation, while we cannot but regret the consequences of a number of his decisions and remark that a man more skilled in leadership would have handled things differently and with greater insight, there is nevertheless something entirely admirable in his total conviction in his mission, and his confidence in carrying it through to the utmost of his ability even

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when any prospect of success in the eyes of his contemporaries seemed lost. It was not a delusion; for as we will recount, those actions of the early years of the twentieth-century would give rise to a movement that is still active today and indeed far more widespread than Mathew could ever have imagined would be possible.

### THE THEOSOPHICAL SPLIT

By the end of 1910, Mathew and his wife had separated following the breakdown of their relationship over several years<sup>cxx</sup>. His wife was opposed to Mathew following any form of ecclesiastical career in whatever denomination, and this, together with her Anglicanism, caused great tension between them. Early on, Mathew transferred valuable assets into her name against a monthly income which she provided for him long after their separation, relying on a verbal agreement solely as the basis of this.

A vehement attack on Willoughby had appeared in the gutter press magazine "John Bull" of 20 June 1914, dredging up all the previous allegations in the full knowledge that Willoughby lacked the financial means to bring a libel suit. This material was repeated by that journal in a further article in May 1915, and when this was brought to Mathew's attention it caused him considerable disquiet.

Furthermore, Mathew's estranged wife had expressed views on the matter. On 15 December 1914, Mathew wrote to Canon Farrer, "My wife and her relations...are

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<sup>cxx</sup> In 1921 she remarried Sir Hugh Cholmondeley Thornton, CMG, CVO, later Senior Crown Agent.

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bitterly hostile to our movement *and* to Theosophy. They have heard of various members of the T.S. becoming associated with, and friendly to, us, and of my going on a few occasions to 1 [Upper Woburn] Place. Their anger is not concealed.”

He summoned a Synod on 19 May to consider these matters, but Willoughby declined to attend (he was given only a few hours’ notice) or submit a defence. Bernard Mary Williams suggested that Willoughby might be administratively laicised, but this was not the mood of the meeting, which was not minded towards either justice or charity, but merely fearful of the taint of scandal. Later, various of those who were present attempted to allege that Willoughby’s consecration was invalid because the Litany and Book of Gospels were omitted, but these omissions did not bear upon the validity and efficacy of the ceremony<sup>cxix</sup>. Mar Georgius held that “he was never condemned, or even cited before, any court of competent jurisdiction, whether civil or ecclesiastical. Furthermore, his wife was always his strenuous supporter in all the attacks made on him...justice and Christian charity must deem him to be Not Guilty.”<sup>cxxii</sup>

Bernard Mary Williams, who was the most ultramontane of Mathew’s priests, considered the

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<sup>cxix</sup> Fr. Thurston SJ wrote in *The Month* of this omission that it was of little importance. Mathew’s attention was called to it by some of the priests at the end of the service, but he held then that it had no effect on the validity of the consecration and that it need not be included.

<sup>cxxii</sup> Mar Georgius, *Varied Reflections*, Catholic Apostolic Church, Anvers, 1954, p 10.

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Theosophical Society to be heretical, and brought considerable influence to bear on Mathew to act decisively on the matter in order to separate himself from its influence. Williams wished to promote an English-speaking Uniate Rite despite the earlier discouragement of the idea from Rome, and was to dedicate his life to this ideal, despite the consequent isolation it would bring upon him and his few followers. Williams was an articulate and strong, though markedly archaic and even eccentric personality, where Mathew was a more reticent, mutable and mystic figure.

In addition, there is some suggestion that Mathew was prepared to blame the Theosophical priests for supposedly encouraging his initial acceptance of Willoughby at face value, while they were well aware of the nature of those things that had been alleged against him. A similar suggestion was made that Davidson had been amiss in not informing Mathew of the allegations. The truth was that Willoughby had been entirely frank with Mathew about matters and, while undoubtedly relating matters from his own perspective, had in no way misled him. Mathew was simply morbidly scared of any scandal of a homosexual kind, and would do anything, however apparently destructive, to remove himself from association with it.

Wedgwood said of Mathew, "The real trouble with Abp. Mathew was his instability of character. He was outwardly charming and the most courteous of men, and it was difficult for one who knew him to think of him as being consciously or intentionally dishonest. But he was constantly changing his outlook on things. His mind behaved like a weathercock, blown about by the

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exigencies of the moment and the emotional reaction awakened by them.”<sup>cxixiii</sup>

The Theosophists, meanwhile, seem to have taken the view that their identity as members of the TS was their primary bond and the context of their Catholic faith, and that so far as Mathew was prepared to accept this, they were happy to serve under him. Mathew seems not to have perceived the danger that he would split his church by acceding to the demands of one side over the other until it was too late.

Mathew allowed himself to be swayed by Williams, and accordingly forbade his clergy to be members of the Theosophical Society and the Order of the Star in the East in a pastoral letter promulgated on August 6 1915. This read as follows, after the customary salutations:

“We find it incumbent upon Us in the exercise of Our Office as your Chief Pastor, to point out to you that we cannot, as Christians or as Catholics, allow that our Holy Religion may be placed on a level with other religions or philosophical systems, which, however excellent their adherents may be and however good some of their maxims and precepts, are neither essentially Christian nor Catholic.

The Catholic Religion is the final and complete Revelation made by Almighty God to the human race. It admits of no doubt, dispute, or question, but must be accepted obediently, fully and with absolute faith and

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<sup>cxixiii</sup> Wedgwood, J.I. *Beginnings of the Liberal Catholic Church* (1937), retrieved from [http://www.global.org/Pub/JIW\\_History.asp](http://www.global.org/Pub/JIW_History.asp) in October 2009.



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confidence in the Word and the Promises of God Incarnate. We, therefore, feel that owing to various expressions of belief or of disbelief on the part of members of the Theosophical Society, and of the Order of the Star in the East, which have come under Our notice, We must definitely and absolutely forbid Our Clergy and Faithful to join either of these Institutions, and if any of them already belong to those Institutions, We require them at once, on receipt of this notice, to relinquish their membership. It is not permitted to Catholics to accept such doctrines as the transmigration of souls, or reincarnation; neither may any Catholic admit the very painful and blasphemous assertion that our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, far from being that which the Nicene Creed describes Him to be, is simply the reincarnation of some other probably mythical personage.

We deeply regret to have to condemn absolutely and irrevocably all association, on the part of Our Faithful people, with Societies which tolerate the publication of what, in Our eyes, is blasphemy and paganism, presented in a seductive and dangerous guise.

We exhort you, Our beloved Fathers and Our most dear Children, to render Us that filial obedience which is due from you in a matter which concerns your spiritual welfare, and We do not doubt that you will nobly and heroically sacrifice your private judgment and your personal predilections, should these be touched by Our remarks, in order that the Unity of the Faith and the Bond of Peace may remain inviolate among us.

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We recognise the many excellencies of prominent Members of the Societies to which We have alluded, and We freely acknowledge and bless their numerous philanthropic and other good deeds. We pray that Grace and light may be sent to them. These dear souls beloved of God, are looking for a “World Teacher”, and that Teacher is already here, and will be recognised by all who pray aright for guidance and light, in that Divine Institution to which Almighty God Himself said: “Go, teach all nations, preach the Gospel to every creature, baptising them, and Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world”.

The Faith is summarised in our Catechism, which everyone should study diligently, and having done so, should make the basis of daily meditation and self-examination.

GIVEN under Our hand and seal, this Feast of the Transfiguration of our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, 1915.

(L + S) † ARNOLD HARRIS MATHEW  
Archbishop and Metropolitan

St Willibrord's Oratory,  
28, Red Lion Square,  
London, W.C.

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The above letter is to be read aloud on the Sunday after its receipt, at the principal Mass, by the Priest in charge of each of Our Missions. And We require that each Priest will, on the next day be kind enough to send Us his assent to Our wishes and order as contained herein.”

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Mathew now purported to dissolve his Chapter on 18 September on the apparent ground that this action was justified because the Canons had never been properly installed. This was an absurd statement since, if true, it would have invalidated his own actions since 1910.

The effect of this was to place the five Theosophical priests (Wedgwood, King, Gauntlett, Farrer and James) who had hitherto been loyal to Mathew, in an impossible position. They felt very understandably that their frankness with Mathew about their position and that of the TS throughout had been shabbily repaid. Furthermore, they had an active oratory, and had gathered a small congregation, who now wished them to continue in their ministry.

They held two meetings of the Chapter, at which all clergy were present save Mathew and Bernard Mary Williams, who was not invited. The second of these meetings, on 10 December 1915, elected Wedgwood to the episcopate and petitioned Mathew to consecrate him.

Two of those who represented these meetings, Canons Farrer and Wedgwood, wrote to Mathew saying that he was obliged to resign his position, since he had broken faith with them. Farrer demanded "complete liberty of action" in the sphere of belief, and rejected outright the suggestion that Mathew should act in a similarly dogmatic manner to the very Papal infallibility that his movement had reacted against in the first place.

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However, Mathew did not accept this advice, and instead all of the Theosophical priests now resigned *en masse* from his jurisdiction, Wedgwood stating to Mathew in his resignation letter of 12 November that this was effectively a declaration of independence. However, Wedgwood continued to assert that he was breaking with Mathew, and not with Old Catholicism as a movement.

The Theosophical priests continued the growing ministry at Red Lion Square and after a while were joined by Canon Seaton, who was a thoroughly orthodox man and saw nothing whatsoever objectionable in their approach.

Only Williams, James Columba McFall, the Benedictines of St Scholastica and two laywomen (who renounced Theosophy) remained with Mathew thereafter. It was apparent to all concerned that this was a devastating, and potentially fatal, blow to Mathew's movement.

At this point, as if to compound the difficulties, Mathew's estranged wife sought a divorce from him and custody of their three children. As a Catholic, Mathew could not consent to this in conscience. As a result, Mrs Mathew cut off Mathew's only source of income in the form of the monthly allowance that had been realised from his assets, and left him in financial dire straits. Mathew had been living in Ethelbert Lodge at Bromley, which he had rented from Bacon, but now had to move for a time to the more modest "The Brambles" in the Kent village of Kingsdown, which he shared with Bernard Mary Williams. When this arrangement came

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to an end, since Williams could not afford to continue to maintain it, his position became altogether uncertain.

In a further move against Mathew's waning authority, it was Willoughby who now consecrated two of the Theosophical priests, Bernard Edward Rupert Gauntlett<sup>cxixiv</sup> and Robert King<sup>cxixv</sup> on 25 or 26 September 1915. This was so the three could then consecrate Wedgwood, who was at the time away in Australia, upon his return to England. In a letter in "The Occult Review" of July 1927<sup>cxixvi</sup>, Willoughby says, "In justification to the L.C.C. bishops known and unknown to me, I am bound, as the "Father" of their episcopate, to come forward in their defence. I unhesitatingly and without any scruple or reservation affirm the validity of their consecration. It cannot be questioned on any ground whatever."

Willoughby did not join the new LCC, and instead prepared to reconcile with Rome. His letter in the Occult Review addresses this matter, "As regards the Church of Rome, I was received into that body after a very long delay, consequent upon my episcopal status, by a very dear Passionist Priest who had a special dispensation from the Vatican for the purpose. Rome received me as a 'pseudo' bishop. If by any chance she has changed her mind in the matter, no inkling of it has ever been conveyed to me although I have been in constant correspondence with the authorities. I think you may

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<sup>cxixiv</sup> He was ordained priest by Mathew on 1 July 1914, and resigned from the ORCCGB on 25 September 1915. He joined the LCC.

<sup>cxixv</sup> He was ordained priest by Mathew on 1 July 1914, and resigned from the ORCCGB on 25 September 1915.

<sup>cxixvi</sup> p 51

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take it that Rome regards my episcopal consecration as perfectly valid but entirely irregular.”

However, it is said that at the end of his life Willoughby was looked after by LCC members. His consecration of James Bartholomew Banks in 1922 also calls into question to what extent he believed himself by then to be under Roman obedience, for certainly his reconciliation was conditional upon him not exercising his powers in respect of the conferral of Holy Orders, and Banks was somewhat more esoteric than ultramontane in his beliefs and ministry. More likely, having spent some time in reconciliation, Willoughby subsequently felt that he was justified in adopting a looser relationship with Rome and acting in essence as a bishop in semi-retirement.

Willoughby also consecrated on 5 November 1916 at the Theosophical Temple, Blomfield Road, Maida Vale, Frederick James, who had been ordained priest by Mathew in April 1915 and was one of the Theosophical priests who had seceded in August of that year. James was a teacher of music and elocution and an actor by profession. He opened an oratory for public worship in St John's Wood but abandoned this work when during the latter stages of World War I he went to the Far East with the YMCA serving with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. When he returned he reorganised his work as the Church Catholic, first holding services in a hall on Princess Street, Cavendish Square.

In 1927 he created The Sanctuary at 23, Basil Street, Knightsbridge. He resided in the flat above the church. The worship was Theosophical in nature, with images of

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Christ, Buddha and Apollo in the sanctuary, and included among its active followers the eleventh Duke of Leeds. James stated “The Creed of the Sanctuary is “I believe in God”, and it reduces all ethics to one of non-injury. There is no belief in any special divine revelation, but revelation unfolds in the process of natural and spiritual evolution as the mind of man expands...The teaching given in the Sanctuary is not dogmatic: it is to be accepted only in so far as it may strike a responsive chord within the soul. The aim should be to demonstrate in one’s own life that the Divine Love, when understood and lived, leads to spiritual regeneration.”<sup>cxxvii</sup> This work came to an end during World War II when James retired and his church disbanded.

### AN ATTEMPTED SUBMISSION TO ROME

Mathew, whose health was significantly impaired by the great stress of these affairs, now sought the assistance of a priest whom he had ordained, Fr. Carlo Miglioli of Persico, Italy, to further the Uniate plan. Miglioli then approached Andrea Cardinal Ferrari, the Archbishop of Milan on Mathew’s behalf. Cardinal Ferrari apparently was sympathetic to the case for a British Uniate Rite under Mathew, and suggested the wording of a direct petition to the Holy See.

Mathew accordingly wrote to Pope Benedict XV on 16 December offering him his complete submission and placing such parts of the Old Catholic movement in Britain as remained loyal to him under his jurisdiction.

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<sup>cxxvii</sup> Quoted in Anson, p 369.

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On 18 December he appointed (as what he believed to be his last independent episcopal act) Fr. Bernard Mary Williams as Grand Vicar and Administrator of the Vacant See.

Mathew began negotiations with the Vatican and issued "An Act of Submission to His Holiness Pope Benedict XV" on 31 December. This read, in part, as follows, "Having spent two months, beginning from 18<sup>th</sup> October 1915, in almost uninterrupted solitude and retreat, in order that I might devote much prayer and study to a careful reconsideration of the position I was induced, in 1907, to adopt, in relation to a Movement which appeared likely to help forward the return of our Nation to the Faith of our Forefathers, it behoves me to inform my friends of the result of this period of serious contemplation...When a man perceives clearly that he has blundered, or been misled, it is his obvious duty, at no matter what sacrifice, to acknowledge the fact. This I am now doing, by offering my contrition, with humble, unconditional and entire submission to His Holiness Pope Benedict XV. I have, therefore, sent my petition for absolution from censures and for restoration to the visible unity of the Church to His Eminence Cardinal Merry de Val, Prefect of the Holy Office."

In response, "The Tablet" of 8 January 1916 printed the following announcement, "The Rev. Arnold Harris Mathew, whose submission to the Holy See has already been announced, writes to us with regard to his position, as follows, "Although the Orders of the Dutch schismatical clergy were, down to 1910, undisputed in Rome, I make no claim to be regarded as a bishop, or to exercise episcopal functions, or to use any episcopal



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insignia. I desire to conform in everything to whatever may be the commands or wishes of the Holy See. Neither do I intend to claim even to exercise priestly functions, unless and until as I earnestly hope, this privilege may be permitted to me. *It is my firm resolve which nothing will ever alter*, to obey the commands of the Holy Father, whose word I am perfectly willing to await, and I shall do nothing whatsoever, either publicly or privately, in any ecclesiastical matters without the permission of Superiors.”

This was essentially the same proposal of December 1914, but its main difference was in the removal of Mathew’s episcopal function from the desired recognition of the work of his movement. Wounded by the events of the previous year, Mathew wanted nothing more than that he should lay aside his episcopate and resume his status of a Roman Catholic priest and that Rome should take care of the remaining British Old Catholics – consisting of two priests, two sisters, and two laywomen - as a movement. In seeking again to exercise the Roman Catholic priesthood, Mathew may also quite understandably have been motivated by the fact that he had no permanent residence and no source of income.

The eventual response from Rome, however, could not have been couched in harsher terms. It was made clear that, firstly, the Holy See would only accept Mathew’s return under punitive terms as a layman (notwithstanding his valid Roman Catholic priesthood), since he was married, and, secondly, that a condition of his return would be his acceptance of the doctrine of Papal infallibility and the primacy of the Pope. There was no question of making provision for the care of the

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other members of his movement should they not themselves choose to submit in like manner. Effectively, the movement was too small and devoid of influence for the Holy See to regard as meriting any significant effort on its part.

This forced Mathew into an impossible situation. On the one hand, he wished to submit to Rome and had placed his movement firmly in the hands of the Holy See, thus setting aside the jurisdiction he had received at his consecration by Utrecht in 1908, but on the other, he could not leave those few who were still loyal to him, given that they had been loyal to him in the most trying of circumstances, effectively without leadership if Rome refused to allow him to continue to act as a clergyman. Nor could he lay aside the exercise of his ministry and the objections of his conscience.

### NO CHOICE BUT TO CONTINUE; LAST YEARS OF MATHEW

It is important to define Mathew's jurisdictional position at this point precisely, because this has often been the subject of misunderstanding. The movement which he had led from his consecration in 1908 (and independently of Utrecht from 1910), latterly known as the Old Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain, had been extinguished by Mathew's resignation and submission to the Holy See, which placed it under the jurisdiction of the Pope. Mathew could not simply withdraw that action, nor attempt to wrest his church back from the Holy See (which showed little sign of caring about it) without acting uncanonically. The only jurisdiction he now possessed was that imparted to him

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by his OCR consecration in 1909. For all that Bernard Mary Williams would try to maintain that Mathew's post-1916 Old Roman Catholic church was continuous with his previous jurisdiction, this is not borne out by the facts already discussed.

While there had certainly been a previous position of intercommunion with the Orthodox that might have been looked to at this point, intercommunion is entered into between churches, not individuals, and a strict examination of the facts would conclude that the church with which the Orthodox had entered into intercommunion was indeed the very same Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain that had now been placed under the Pope.

When Mathew resumed his duties as Archbishop on 5 March 1916, it was therefore by officially adopting the name Uniate Western Catholic Church for what he hoped would be a renewed mission under the OCR banner. The UWCC name had originally been used by the revived OCR for its "inner church."

It should be noted that Mathew could not in any case have used the former name of Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain at that time, because this name was now being used by Frederick Willoughby for his new mission. This is likely the source of the subsequent claim that the "true" ORCCGB was vested in Willoughby and what would become the Liberal Catholic Church, and not in Mathew's small remnant, together with the quite justified perception that it was Mathew, not the TS priests, who had broken faith and left his church.

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This position has remained that of the Liberal Catholic Church for many years subsequently. Unfortunately, it is problematic, not to say fatally flawed, as an argument, because the Theosophical priests had formally resigned from Mathew's jurisdiction and had made it clear (certainly in Wedgwood's case) that in doing so they were seeking jurisdictional independence. The suggestion that the ORCCGB was simply continued by them without break – similar to that which was made by Bernard Mary Williams in respect of *his* church - is an interesting exercise in wishful thinking, for while their practical administration of their movement certainly did continue in this way, it could not logically, nor legally, be the same entity from which they had of their own volition departed. In fact, no jurisdictional successor to the 1908 consecration now existed save for the Holy See itself.

That being said, the assertion by E. James Burton (1908-96), sometime LCC Auxiliary Bishop for Great Britain and Ireland, that Mathew's post-1916 mission was without jurisdiction is also *prima facie* false<sup>cxviii</sup>. As stated above, that jurisdiction was supplied by Mathew's Primacy of the OCR, and was not dependent upon Utrecht or on his Chapter.

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<sup>cxviii</sup> *Burton, vol. 1, p 7* "In so far as any church is "old" Roman Catholic, the existing Liberal Catholic Church may claim the title. The subsequent new body formed by Mathew, when he again left Rome after his submission, has no claim to the title at all; it is not Roman Catholic. Much less "old" Roman Catholic. Its Orders, derived from Mathew are valid, but its bishops are necessarily without jurisdiction." Either Burton was unaware of the OCR under Mathew, or he chose to ignore it in this statement. The latter seems more likely in view of other comments we will quote later on.

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On 16 May 1916, Mathew wrote to Allen Hay, the Anglican Vicar of South Mymms, asserting that “My one desire has all along been to try to do *something* for reunion. Rome slams her doors in my face and will listen to nothing but the most grovelling submission and subservience...” This again was a reflection of the overall difficulty in the OCR mission, as well as of Mathew’s own demoralized state of mind. He continued, “There should be a little public decency somewhere, and an act of union should be publicly made and signed by those who would, if allowed to do so, come with me. There might be several priests and one or two bishops.”

In 1916, Mathew wrote to Davidson once more, suggesting that the UWCC might form an Anglican Uniate Church. Surprisingly, in view of earlier events, and perhaps aware that Mathew’s Open Letter had produced support from those who rightly saw Davidson’s behaviour as dishonourable, Davidson responded by inviting Mathew to visit him. This he did on 15 April 1916 accompanied by Williams, whom he had consecrated the previous day in the Domestic Chapel at Kingsdown, as Bishop for the Western District, though Williams was not permitted to participate or observe the discussions.

Davidson offered Mathew a deal. If Mathew halted the issue of his reply to “An Episcopal Odyssey”, Davidson would see his way to co-operation between Mathew and his clergy and the Anglican Communion. Davidson also offered a personal apology to Mathew for his actions, saying that he “had been misled on certain matters” by Winnington-Ingram and others. Following his acceptance of this bargain, Mathew’s episcopate was to

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be recognized in a very limited way within the Church of England at the end of his life, though he was certainly never admitted to any active ministry.

However, Mathew's political naïvety can be judged from the fact that while he agreed to withdraw his Open Letter, he did not demand in return that Davidson give a written undertaking to withdraw *his* "An Episcopal Odyssey", but satisfied himself merely with a verbal pledge. This was an error, for after a break of some weeks, the Anglican attacks on Mathew resumed in earnest.

Bernard Mary Williams, who had made a written record of everything said at the meeting from Mathew's account delivered immediately afterwards, took the astute position that Davidson's statements had been insincere, and also opined that as a Protestant, Davidson had no right to dictate terms to a Catholic prelate such as Mathew.

On 2 July 1916, Mathew consecrated James Columba McFall (d. 1950) for service in Ireland. There had been an informal agreement between Mathew and Bernard Mary Williams after December 1915 that Mathew would not consecrate bishops without Williams' consent. Williams claimed variously that McFall was never consecrated - but this was clearly untrue since Williams' own handwriting appears on McFall's consecration certificate! - or that the consecration was irregular since the Rite did not extend to Ireland - but this, too, fell down since Mathew had asserted that he was Metropolitan of Great Britain and Ireland since at least 1911.

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The fact was that McFall and Williams did not see eye to eye, and during the ensuing few months, McFall became a source of annoyance to Mathew because he remained in England, thus interfering in Mathew's jurisdiction, and Mathew consequently excommunicated him. This was because McFall had pledged to the Irish Roman Catholic Cardinal Logue that he would not confer Holy Orders in Irish territory. He eventually returned to Belfast, where he carried on business as a church furnisher at 10, Regent Street until those premises were destroyed in World War II.<sup>cxxix</sup> McFall on 21 December 1933 consecrated Thomas Reginald Coatbridge Williams, an Anglican priest.<sup>cxxx</sup>

Mar Georgius recounts<sup>cxxxi</sup> that at this time, being homeless and cut off from any source of income by the actions of his estranged wife, Mathew wandered the Kentish coast until he found a sheltered cave; here he intended to retire with his chalice, paten and vestments, and celebrate the Mass daily for as long as he had strength and access to the elements. In practical terms, he intended to wait until enforced starvation robbed him of life. Even had he not repaired to a cave, Mathew

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<sup>cxxix</sup> There are uncorroborated tales that at the end of his life he emigrated to the United States and served in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

<sup>cxxx</sup> He was ordained priest by McFall on 4 October 1918 and appointed by him as Canon in 1921. In 1926 or 1927 he was received into the Diocese of Chelmsford and reordained. He was Rector of Great Sutton in the Diocese of Chelmsford (1929-47) at the time of his consecration, which was under the patronage of W. Noel Lambert (q.v.) On 22 March 1947 he was appointed Rector of Walton-le-Wolds in the Diocese of Leicester (*Brandreth*, p 35, n. 5)

<sup>cxxxi</sup> *Ibid*, p 25

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was without income or home, and in an acute state of depression in which this form of slow deprivation of life may have been less a conscious choice than an acknowledgement of the *status quo*.

Once Bernard Mary Williams, Mathew's former host, heard of this position, even though he was far from a man of means himself, he arranged at once for Mathew to have accommodation at Lees Cottage, Walmer, and the necessary support to carry on.

With Mathew now merely an aged and impoverished figurehead supported by Williams' charity, Williams was instrumental in the readoption of the former name Old Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain and Ireland during 1917 (the Theosophists were by now using the name The Liberal Catholic Church), which body he now effectively led, having been appointed Mathew's co-adjutor with right of succession on March 25. This, as stated before, was a new church with roots in the former jurisdiction, and Williams sought to emphasise that continuity as much as was possible.

On 22 August 1917<sup>cxvii</sup> Mathew consecrated John Arnold Carter<sup>cxviii</sup> and William Noel Lambert (q.v.; he was at this time incumbent of St Gabriel's, South Bromley), for

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<sup>cxvii</sup> However, *Yelton*, p.210, suggests a date of 15-16 December 1919, deriving from a list in the possession of the late Dr F.R. Brittain of Jesus College, Cambridge, who knew Mathew and indeed is buried near him at South Mymsms.

<sup>cxviii</sup> He was originally a Roman Catholic. The entry of his consecration does not appear in Mathew's Register, and this may have caused the doubt that led to his subconditional ordination. He was ordained priest by Mathew on 23 March 1913.



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the OCR<sup>cxxxiv</sup>. In 1921 Carter was received into the Church of England and ordained subconditionally by Winnington-Ingram. He became curate to Lambert at St Gabriel's, South Bromley<sup>cxxxv</sup>, joining Francis Bacon there (q.v.)

Just as Williams grew more anti-Anglican, Mathew took the position that he was largely reconciled with Canterbury. He sought permission to officiate in Anglican churches, and made another appeal to Davidson and to Winnington-Ingram, as well as to Handley Moule, the Anglican Bishop of Durham, seeking that he might be granted a benefice.

Moule refused the request outright. Meanwhile, Davidson continued to bear his existing grudge against Mathew as a fomenter of schism, and on 12 September 1917 wrote to Winnington-Ingram concerning the matter, "The story has now become a pathetic one. It is

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<sup>cxxxiv</sup> After leaving Mathew, Winnington-Ingram arranged for him to be a parish worker at St James, Islington. In early 1912, he left the Church of England, but returned later that year. After further study he was appointed curate of St Saviour, Poplar, and then in 1916 vicar of St Gabriel, South Bromley (Chrip Street, Poplar). He was appointed vicar of St Mary Norwood, Hayes, in 1935. In the late 1930s he was Warden of the Benedictines of Ss. Mary and Scholastica in succession to Bernard Mary Williams. His son was named Bernard Mathew, presumably after Mathew, and eventually succeeded his father as parish priest of Norwood. Lambert initially refused to be reordained by Winnington-Ingram, but was eventually conditionally reordained priest by him on 21 December 1920. (*Yelton*, pp.201-03).

<sup>cxxxv</sup> In 1922 he moved to St Alban, Teddington; in 1925 became parish priest of Hampton Poyle, near Oxford; in 1927 moved to Lillington, near Leamington Spa, and after the Second World War to a parish in the Diocese of Hereford. (*Yelton*, p.205)

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pitiable to think of Bishop Mathew's desertion by the lady whom he wrote about as Countess of Landaff, and whose picture he sent to us with pride. What is meant by her being able to claim the control of her children if she deserts her husband, I do not in the least understand. The pamphlet about his earldom, and the pictures of his countess, look strangely now. It is also pathetic that he should now find himself in financial straits, if that is indeed so. I fear that the fomenting of schisms, and the founding of Churches, have involved much expenditure on some one's part, both in East and West, and it is possible that this has hit him hard. I feel intensely sorry for him, foolish and harmful though his doings have been...Bishop Mathew is, to the best of my belief (though of course I speak without knowledge of what is said by his wife or anyone else against him), a virtuous old fellow, with a delightfully attractive manner, a fine appearance, a certain amount of ecclesiastical learning, and a strange lack of balance. His harmfulness has lain in the real lightness (strenuously as he denies it) with which he has played fast and loose with great questions of Church Order, and thus set going, in different ways and in different lands, schisms which it may take many years to heal. He has given to ecclesiastical adventurers less honest than himself, an example fraught with abundant peril. None the less, I have a personal regard for him, and although he has only himself to thank for his present position, I should like to be able to help him, in some way which did not do harm to the Church wherein I am set to be a responsible custodian of what is right. I should certainly fail as such a custodian if I were to say now, what neither you nor any other Bishop whom I have met would wish me to say, that after all that has passed, we propose to recognize him as one who

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might rightly hold the trust of ministry in the Church of England.”

Davidson shows here his key difference with Mathew in that his outlook could not but regard Mathew's activities as definite attempts at schism, while Mathew sought to meet particular defined needs of the Church through co-operation with Davidson and placing himself at his service, just as he had indicated throughout his episcopal ministry, and with no thought therein of acting against the interests either of the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of England. Any vestige of his anti-Romanism that had manifested itself under the influence of Tyrrell had now long since departed.

Davidson's position was also doubtless influenced by the fact that Mathew's activities had throughout been subjected to the generally unfavourable scrutiny of the press, and thus to side with him at this stage would have risked valuable alliances in that line as well as appearing inconsistent. At the end of the day he was adamant that he would receive Mathew as a layman only, and not to exercise any active ministry. Nor, it might be added to his discredit, did his compassion extend to offering Mathew an almshouse or any similar act of charity.

Other Anglican clergy considered and suggested to Davidson that Mathew might have been offered a supervisory position as a librarian, secretary or similar, or as chaplain to a hospital. On this, Davidson was adamant that all such suggestions should be refused outright and that Mathew was unsuitable to hold any charge whatsoever under him.

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In 1918, the Revd. Allan Hay, Vicar of South Mymms, Hertfordshire, had generously provided Mathew, who was at that time living supported by Williams' rather precarious charity in Walmer, with a cottage in his village. Mathew worshipped at Hay's church, sitting in choir in his episcopal robes and insignia. At the very end of his life, it is said that Mathew went on to consecrate Hay in secrecy according to the Order of Corporate Reunion rite, and various Anglican clergymen sought Mathew out in South Mymms so that they might receive valid orders. In all, some four hundred Anglican priests had eventually been validly reordained, although Mathew claimed that most of this had been done by Bacon rather than by himself.

Davidson wrote to Mathew in March 1919, "You have been in a very marked way, quite conscientiously and genuinely, a promoter of "Schism" in the true sense of that word. Your ecclesiastical position is different to what it has been, and you claim at my hands a recognition which would be met on your part by the kind of declaration of allegiance to Anglicanism which you desire to make. The question, however, is what line ought the Anglican Bishops to take towards one who during a considerable series of years set on foot and promoted what cannot, I think, be fairly regarded otherwise than a schismatic Church of England."

Responding to these sentiments, Mathew wrote to Davidson in September 1919, "I have endured thirty years' persecution, at the hands of certain people, and at the close of life this assault comes as a blow from one whom I wished to look upon with respect if not as a friend." It was the end; Mathew's aspirations for his movement

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were not to be fulfilled in any respect through his person.

A brief respite came on 10 May 1919 when Mathew along with his son and one of his daughters was a guest at a private reception to mark the ninety-second birthday of the Empress Eugénie, and was accorded his full ecclesiastical and nobiliary honours. This seems to have been the last public event that he attended, with the exception of the regular worship at South Mymms.

On 20 December 1919, Mathew died quite unexpectedly. The only person present at his death was a Mr F.E. Wright, who was to have been ordained priest the following day<sup>cxxxvi</sup>. His tomb in South Mymms churchyard bears the inscription:

Of your charity pray for the good estate of  
ARNOLD HARRIS MATHEW, D.D.,  
Bishop of the Old Catholic Church.

De Jure Earl of Landaff of Thomastown, Co. Tipperary,  
who entered into rest 20th December, 1919.

“Behold a great priest who in his days  
pleased God and was found just.”

Within twenty-four hours of his death, persons unknown stole his seal, register and other documents from his cottage, and although this was complained of to the Bishop of London, no action was taken against the perpetrators of the crime. Mathew had foreseen this eventuality, and entrusted Bernard Mary Williams with

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<sup>cxxxvi</sup> He was ordained by Bacon in due course, after Williams had refused.

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a duplicate copy of his register<sup>cxxxvii</sup>. At the funeral, Bishop Bacon appeared unexpectedly, but Bishop Williams, who was at home in Gloucestershire, did not receive the news in time to attend.

### UNDERSTANDING MATHEW'S CHARACTER

How can we best sum up Mathew's complex character? Mathew, like his mother, was spiritually an Anglo-Catholic throughout his life. His theology, strong leanings towards Catholicism and his ritualism placed him squarely in the mould of the Oxford Movement. Like many High Church Anglicans, he faced a dilemma in the early years of the twentieth-century as to whether Canterbury could continue to accommodate them or whether low church elements would force them out to seek sanctuary with the Roman Catholics (an anxiety made very real by the actions of the Ritual Commission). What Mathew ultimately sought, and created in his own way, was a bridge between Rome and Canterbury that avoided many of the problems that attached to both. In his libel proceedings against "The Times", Mathew stated that he had regarded himself as a Catholic throughout, whichever church he had served in. That position, which Peter Anson found so utterly incomprehensible, is precisely that of legions of Anglo-Catholics and the founding principle of the Oxford Movement.

His character is best summed up by Williams,

"He was truly one of those of whom the world was not worthy - a man without guile. His kindness, sympathy

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<sup>cxxxvii</sup> The original, too, was eventually recovered, with certain entries in it erased. Neither register was complete.

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and generosity were only too easily aroused and knew no bounds. Himself a good man, he seems to have been incapable of suspecting or understanding bad faith and treachery in others and so became a very easy victim to the unscrupulous...No man has ever been more thoroughly misunderstood or more viciously, wantonly and most unjustly persecuted. He was a man of simple tastes, possessed of a high appreciation of the beauties of nature, with a deep knowledge of Natural History. A real scholar, whose sound learning was by no means confined to the usual fields of clerical knowledge; a nobleman of great courage, perfect courtesy, the highest integrity and an address which can only be described as charming. A prelate of wonderful humility and very great personal sanctity, he died in the sixty-seventh year of his age, the forty-third of his priesthood and the twelfth of his episcopate.”<sup>cxviii</sup>

Another perspective is offered by the Revd. Alban Cockerham,

“He was a genial, kindly man, easily persuaded, scholarly, unbusinesslike, and not a good leader or a skilled organizer. He was a man of the highest integrity and moral character; not even his enemies ever impeached his character.”<sup>cxix</sup>

Brandreth offers the following assessment,

“Bishop Mathew was personally devout, sincere and virtuous, with a genuine simplicity of character, but the

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<sup>cxviii</sup> Two Works, *ibid.*

<sup>cxix</sup> Cockerham, Alban, *The Apostolical Succession in the Liberal Catholic Church*, St Alban Press, California, p 36

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story of his career from the time that he ceased to be in communion with Utrecht bears ample testimony to the fact that he was wholly unsuited for the position which he assumed as head of an independent religious organisation.”<sup>cxl</sup>

Writing to Brandreth on 13 February 1945, Williams had also come round to this position,

“I agree that Mathew was the worst possible choice for a Bishop that could have been made. The reason why he was elected was the belief that his Earldom, though dormant, would prove to be valuable capital for the Rite.”<sup>cxli</sup>

### THE ANGLICANS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIM

Until the very end of his life, Mathew could not believe that Davidson or other senior Anglicans could act out of malice towards him. He applied his own nobleman's standards to them as he did to all others he encountered.

Undoubtedly, Mathew's consecration highlighted a crisis within the Church of England. After the condemnation of Anglican orders as “completely null and utterly void” by the Pope in “*Apostolicae Curae*”, many on the Catholic wing of the Church of England began to feel that Canterbury did not merit their loyalty. Factors such as the prosecutions and convictions of Arthur Tooth and Sydney Faithorn Green in the 1870s,

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<sup>cxl</sup> *Brandreth*, p 19

<sup>cxli</sup> *Ibid*, p 19. Yet this must have been speculation on Williams' part. He was not in any way connected with Mathew at the time of his election to the episcopate.



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and the Public Worship Regulation Act 1874, had also served to emphasise a Protestant ascendancy and the marginalisation of Anglo-Catholics.

While there was still widespread anti-Roman prejudice in Britain, the Church of England could rely on being able to control the majority of Anglo-Catholics in its ranks, as they would not leave to join the Roman Catholic Church. Mathew, however, threatened to split this position wide open by introducing an indigenous English ritualist church with valid orders and sacraments. The Anglicans feared that Anglo-Catholics would leave *en masse* to join Mathew, thereby plunging the Church of England into crisis and exposing the weakness that “Apostolicae Curae” had set out so clearly. This would have left the Church of England as a mere Protestant rump shorn of its former power. It was in order to preserve this power that Davidson determined that the only course open to the Church of England was to discredit Mathew and his successors through the spreading of falsehoods.

Mar Georgius sums up the issue thus, “...the Anglicans regarded Mgr. Mathew as a dangerous menace, and so, from the very start, its officials inaugurated the policy: WE HAVE GOT TO DISCREDIT MATHEW AT ALL COSTS. In this they were successful beyond their fondest dreams. But, God is not mocked. Somewhere from among the welter of Old Catholic, Orthodox and kindred Rites, there will one day arise one which will accomplish, with God’s aid, all and more than Mgr. Mathew failed to do.<sup>cxlii</sup>”

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<sup>cxlii</sup> *Ibid*, p 28.

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### VALIDITY OF MATHEW'S ORDERS; THE FALSEHOODS OF UTRECHT AND CANTERBURY

Turning to issues of the validity of Mathew's Holy Orders, unquestionably Mathew was accepted as a valid Roman Catholic priest, since he served in that denomination for a number of years. His Old Catholic episcopate was bestowed by four bishops, all of whom were in a valid line of Apostolic Succession from the Roman Catholic Church and as of 1908 were acknowledged by Rome as being so.

His episcopate in the Order of Corporate Reunion likewise derived directly from Rome as well as from the Orthodox churches. Anson states<sup>cxliii</sup>,

"[The Anglican bishops] could not deny the validity of either Mathew's priesthood or his episcopate, for both were derived from unquestioned Roman Catholic sources. In 1908, the Church of Rome herself accepted the validity of orders conferred by the Church of Utrecht, which had been in a state of schism for nearly two hundred years."

In order to establish the issue beyond any doubt, an Old Roman Catholic prelate in the English succession from Mathew via Carfora (q.v.) determined to obtain a formal ruling from the Vatican, where he had contact with the Apostolic Nuncio in Italy. The Apostolic Nuncio requested that the Consiglio per gli Affari Pubblici della Chiesa should prepare a chart of apostolic transmission,

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<sup>cxliii</sup> *Anson*, p 172

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and after reference to an expert, Mgr. Annibale Ilari, professor of Benedictine History at the University of Cassino, this was duly forwarded, confirming that the episcopate received through the Mathew-Carfora lineage was regarded as valid and could be traced back to Scipione Rebiba (from whom most Roman Catholic bishops today trace their lineage).<sup>cxliv</sup>

In addition, both the Patriarchate of Antioch and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria formally recognised the validity of Mathew and his church in the Acts of Union signed in 1911 and 1912 respectively, after he had broken from Utrecht. This places Mathew in the position of being a historical bridge between the East and West, a role which many of his successors have continued to take up.

From time to time someone has attempted to assert that Mathew's orders were invalid because of defective intent on his part. This false assertion arises through ignorance of normative canon law as practiced by the Roman Catholic Church. According to any established interpretation of canon law, which holds that schismatic clergy retain all sacramental powers, Mathew's adherence to a particular denomination after his ordination or consecration had no bearing on his sacramental validity as a priest and bishop. Nor was his capacity to ordain or consecrate others affected by this, the sole condition for validity being that the bishop

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<sup>cxliv</sup> This confirmation was in the case of Frederick Gilbert Linale: CpgADC no. 1245/83. The Vatican has since then discontinued its practice of being prepared to investigate and comment on the Holy Orders of other churches.

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concerned intends to do as the Church does in conferring Holy Orders.

Wedgwood explained this point by means of several examples, “The main reason why the Roman Catholic Church regards Anglican Orders as null and void is that the Reformers, according to this judgement, had no intention to ordain sacrificing priests in the Catholic sense. There lived in England in the days of my youth an ultra-Protestant Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, a certain Dr. Ryle, who carefully told his candidates before their ordination that he was not going to ordain them as sacrificing priests but purely as ministers of the Gospel. The enquiry now made showed quite clearly that the intention to do what the Church intends to be done suffices and that idiosyncrasies of personal belief do not seriously intervene in the situation. It is the good of the many which is taken into consideration, not the misplaced belief of an individual. In other words, it is not Bishop Ryle who ordains but the Lord Christ.”<sup>cxlv</sup>

During Mathew’s time, the Utrecht Union had already begun a movement towards Protestantism that was at odds with Mathew’s view of ecclesiological development, as explained above. This work continued after the parting of the ways with Mathew in 1910. In 1925 the Utrecht Union accepted the validity of Anglican orders. In 1931 it entered into formal intercommunion with the Church of England via the Bonn Agreement, and remains so united.

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<sup>cxlv</sup> Wedgwood, James I., *Beginnings of the Liberal Catholic Church* (1937), retrieved from [http://www.global.org/Pub/JIW\\_History.asp](http://www.global.org/Pub/JIW_History.asp) in October 2009.

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The Utrecht Union has always been centred in continental Europe and particularly in the Low Countries, Germany and Switzerland. It has no presence in Britain as such because it regards the Church of England as its presence in that country.

Because of Anglican hostility to Mathew and his movement, as explained above, after 1910 the Union decided that it would not recognise its “separated brethren” who were the lineal heirs of Mathew’s ORCC in Britain or the United States, where a large number of Mathew-derived communities exist. Even today, it does not generally comment officially on such clergy other than to say, correctly, that they are not in communion with the Union.

Concerning Mathew, their lost sheep, they have likewise been keen to avoid discussion. In conferences and communications in the years after Mathew’s departure in 1910, Herzog, who at one point had held Mathew in high regard, turned sharply against him, unfairly and falsely casting doubts on his validity and that of his successors. Much of the hearsay that had earlier been put about by the Anglicans was now encouraged without regard for its accuracy. In particular, Herzog’s statement that Mathew’s motivation in seeking the episcopate was personal gain could not have been further from the truth, as the circumstances recounted above shew.

It was most convenient to the Union to discredit and forget about Mathew ever having been a bishop of the Utrecht Union, whatever the truth of the matter, and

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their declaration of 28-29 April 1920<sup>cxlvi</sup> sought to do just that, effectively blaming Mathew for O'Halloran's deception and ignoring that it was Mathew himself who had brought that deception to their attention with an offer of his immediate retirement which they had themselves publically refused. The impression was given that the Union had broken relations with Mathew in 1910; this was false since it was Mathew who had declared his independence.<sup>cxlvii</sup> As Wedgwood said, "The whole document reads as though it owed its existence to some outside pressure."<sup>cxlviii</sup>

The Union, however, specifically acknowledged in the second part of its declaration that there were those with valid orders deriving from Mathew. Their prolegomena, according to Wedgwood, raised some doubts on the

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<sup>cxlvi</sup> *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, April-June 1920, pp 94-96.  
"1. We declare that the episcopal consecration given in the year 1908 to the Roman Catholic priest, Arnold Harris Mathew, was surreptitiously secured by the production of false testimony, and would never have been given (as was shown to the same priest) if the consecrators had known that the terms asserted in the said documents and desired by our Episcopate for a consecration were nonexistent.

2. And we declare that we stand in no ecclesiastical relationship whatever with the bishops and clergy who derive their ecclesiastical faculties directly or indirectly from this act of consecration consummated in 1908"

<sup>cxlvii</sup> This was acknowledged by Utrecht in the *Oud Katholiek Jaarboekje voor 1913* which states that Mathew had informed the Archbishop of Utrecht of his withdrawal from the Union. In the *Church Times* of 14 November 1913 a meeting of the Society of St Willibrord on the 7th of that month was reported, at which the Bishop of Haarlem (van Thiel) had been present and said "Bishop Mathew had officially broken all connection between himself and the Old Catholics."

<sup>cxlviii</sup> Wedgwood, *The Lambeth Conference*, pp 234-235

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issue but then declined to address or justify them, a silence which, says Wedgwood, “is sufficiently eloquent.”

Mar Georgius sums the Utrecht declaration up as “a deliberate, wicked and malicious lie.<sup>cxlix</sup>” It is difficult not to agree wholeheartedly with his assessment.

The Church of England under Davidson was, of course, only too ready to follow suit in their acceptance of this deliberate falsehood, since it removed from them the problem of recognition of Mathew’s successors, which would ultimately have placed serious strain upon the matter of church order and set up the possibility that the Anglicans would have to recognise the English Old Catholic movement despite that movement’s decentralisation and increasing fragmentation into competing bodies and the independent ministries of individual bishops, some of whom ordained men who were ill-prepared for their ministry by virtue of education or character.

The Sixth Lambeth Conference, which ended on 7 August 1920, accepted the following resolution:

“(27.) We regret on a review of all the facts we are unable to regard the so-called Old Catholic Church in Great Britain (under the late Bishop Mathew and his successors), and its extension overseas, as a properly constituted Church, or to recognize the orders of its ministers, and we recommend that, in the event of any of its ministers desiring to join our communion, who are in other respects duly qualified, they should be ordained

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<sup>cxlix</sup> *Ibid*, p 29.

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*sub conditione* in accordance with the provisions suggested in the Report of our Committee. (28.) The Conference recommends that the same course be followed, as occasion may require, in the case of persons claiming to have consecration or ordination from any ‘*episcopi vagantes*’, whose claims we are unable to recognize.”

However, this resolution was and is not binding on bishops of the Anglican Communion, and we should remember that the position was already inconsistent, and to a certain extent has remained so thereafter<sup>cl</sup>. We should also note the careful wording of the document to avoid any pronouncement on the validity of the orders concerned.

The position on validity was expressed thus, “The circumstances of Bishop Mathew’s consecration are so uncertain, and his subsequent isolation is so complete, that, without casting any sort of reflection on the validity of Old Catholic Orders, or discussing the theological question of abstract “validity”, we feel that, as a matter of practice...the only proper course would be for [those in orders deriving from Mathew]...to be ordained *sub conditione*.”

This was ably addressed by Wedgwood, who answered,

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<sup>cl</sup> *Burton, vol 2*, p 22 quotes from the minutes of LCC Synod, “Bishop Wedgwood reported that he had recently been in communication with Fr. Scolply of Warwick, a priest ordained by Archbishop Mathew, who had forwarded him a copy of a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury in which the Archbishop regarded Archbishop Mathew as the victim rather than the culprit.”



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“It is difficult to know how to deal with this pronouncement, because, in the first place, the argument is a *non sequitur*, and begs the question, and secondly, the Committee so confuse the issues that one is faced with a perplexing uncertainty as to what they do mean.

As they recommend conditional re-ordination, one ought to assume that the present issue is one of validity – only the Committee brush that aside. In such case, we should be on well-trodden ground, and the course to be followed would be amply determined by precedent. It would consist in a judicial enquiry, first into the facts of the case, and then into the question whether from the theological standpoint those facts in any way invalidate the Orders. Your Committee, however, enquire into neither. Instead, they resort to some entirely new system of “pragmatic theology” which apparently disdains or evades principle, and takes as its criterion not ultimate truth, but expediency. The conditional re-ordination is proposed “as a matter of practice”. I cannot escape the conclusion that the most probable reason for the Conference’s inability to “recognise” our Orders is simply that those Orders come from a source of which they disapprove. That no more affects their validity than the fact of an event being unpleasant renders it unhistorical.”<sup>cli</sup>

Wedgwood also pointed out that any reference to Mathew’s “isolation” was also false, because only eight months after he had broken with the Old Catholics he had entered into union with the Orthodox Church.

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<sup>cli</sup> Wedgwood, The Lambeth Conference, p 237

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There were numerous other cases that Wedgwood cited of baptisms, confirmations and Holy Orders conferred by Mathew (both before and after 1910) or indeed by Wedgwood himself, being accepted by the Anglican and Utrecht Old Catholic communions.

The complexity of the situation is further evident from the fact that before the Sixth Lambeth Conference, orders from Mathew were regarded as valid in the Protestant Episcopal Church, a view given explicit expression on several occasions, as will be seen.

In 1913 John Hazen White (1849-1925), Bishop of Northern Indiana from 1895, accepted Bishop Victor de Kubinyi (q.v.) Meanwhile, David H Greer (1844-1919), Bishop of New York from 1908, took care of Bishop de Landas Berghes et de Rache and invited him to participate together with thirteen other bishops in the consecration of the Missionary Bishop of Cuba, Rev. Hiram Richard Hulse (1868-1938) on 12 January 1915. In 1914 Reginald H. Weller (1857-1935), Bishop of Fond-du-Lac from 1912, extended an invitation to Bishop Hinton, who in 1916 was also invited to New York by Bishop Greer. The PEC participated in the Sixth Lambeth Conference and ended its recognition of orders issuing from the Mathew succession thereafter.

Subsequent correspondence from Bishop Rinkel of the Utrecht Union to Archbishop of Canterbury Cosmo Gordon Lang (memorandum of 11 March 1940<sup>clii</sup>)

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<sup>clii</sup> Cited by Persson, *op. cit.*, p 28, note 16. This reprehensible behaviour would be seen by many of those in the Mathew and Vlatte succession as an open declaration of the very real

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confirmed the decision of these churches to collude in explicitly denying the *validity* of Mathew and his successors. Rinkel stated that it is of the utmost importance for both churches that they have the same outlook, “a denial of the validity of all ordinations and consecrations of *episcopi* and *presbyteri vagabundi*, who trace their orders from A.H. Mathew, Vilatte and all these sorts of adventurers.”

This murky and dubious policy has impaired relations between the Anglican Communion and the successors of Mathew ever since, and has also influenced many who have written and spoken on the subject without necessarily being aware that they were acting as mouthpieces for Anglican propaganda. Wedgwood ended his Open Letter to Canterbury with the quotation, “Sirs, we are brethren, why do we wrong one another?” It is a question that remains pertinent today.

Matthew Duckett records that, after the isolated Hulse consecration discussed above, the Bonn Agreement of 1931 marked a point of relations between the Utrecht Union and the Anglican Communion “after which participation in each other's consecrations became, and remains, a regular occurrence. At the first available opportunity after the Bonn Agreement - on the 24th June 1932 - Henricus van Vlijmen, Bishop of Haarlem, assisted Archbishop Lang at the consecration of George Francis Graham-Brown as Bishop in Jerusalem and Bertram Fitzgerald Simpson as Bishop of Kensington. Both these Bishops assisted at the consecration of many others, for example Simpson was one of the consecrators

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persecution many were to face from the Anglicans during the twentieth-century.

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on the 25th May 1933 of Clifford Woodward as Bishop of Bristol, who on the 29th September 1952 was one of the consecrators of Arthur Michael Ramsey (see main list). Archbishop Ramsey also had the Old Catholic succession through the Bishops of Durham, Sheffield, Grimsby and Edinburgh.”<sup>cliii</sup>

It may be seen, therefore, that the Anglicans saw the prospect of obtaining orders from Utrecht as a very real and clear bulwark against the charges of invalidity levelled at them by Rome, and that while they were keen to repudiate Mathew on a personal level, they were just as eager as a body to benefit from the succession in which he had shared as had been the many clergy of their flock who had previously sought him out to conditionally revalidate their orders.

As to the numbers who had been re-ordained, it is impossible to know exactly how many there were. While records were kept of Mathew’s ordinations of his own clergy – in a Register – the surviving accounts omit ordinations that can be independently corroborated, as well as some which were ephemeral or dubious. But since most of the re-ordination of Anglicans took place within the OCR, it is important to note that the OCR deliberately kept no written records and regarded its actions as consciously clandestine. Moreover, Mathew was not the only one ordaining for the OCR; Bacon also did so, and possibly Howarth and others also. Without records, Mathew’s memory was not sufficiently reliable

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<sup>cliii</sup> Duckett, Matthew, *The Episcopal Succession of the Church of England*, published online at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ffiucgbmxd/success2.htm> accessed January 2010.

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to give any kind of accurate figure, and the numbers he gave to various people over the years were wildly divergent. In addition, it seems possible that a culture existed within the OCR that permitted the denial of orders received within it when questioned by the Anglican authorities; this may explain Allen Hay's categorical denial to Davidson that he had been re-ordained by Mathew.

The original of Mathew's Register had been stolen from his cottage following his death; Williams accused Hay of stealing it. On 1 January 1920, Lambert wrote to Davidson stating that he had possession of this item and implying that it contained entries for the OCR running into the hundreds<sup>cliv</sup>.

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<sup>cliv</sup> *Yelton*, p.213

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**W**illiams convened a Synod on 17 January 1920, at which, on grounds of his own poor health, he requested that another bishop be appointed Archbishop in his place and that he should serve as that bishop's Auxiliary. The Synod elected Bishop Francis Herbert Bacon of Durham to that office, but Bacon resigned from the jurisdiction in October that year in order to re-enter the Anglican ministry, leaving Williams as Archbishop and sole bishop of the movement. Bacon thereafter carried on Mathew's practice of conferring valid Holy Orders upon Anglican priests, while Williams in his Pastoral Letter of Advent, 1920, withdrew from this activity altogether wishing to end the bitter conflict with the Anglicans which he, above all, had witnessed at first hand.<sup>clv</sup>

MINISTRY OF FRANCIS HERBERT BACON

As we have already recounted, Bacon was ordained priest and consecrated by Mathew as Titular Bishop of Durham on 7 January 1911. On 2 May 1913 he wrote to Davidson that he wished to join the Anglican Communion and resign all connections with his

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<sup>clv</sup> According to *Yelton*, p.211, Williams stated that Lambert had been elected President of the OCR with Hay as his Vice-President. Lambert said that he had also been approached to succeed Mathew in the Rite, but had refused. However, Bertil Persson indicates that Howarth succeeded Mathew as head of the OCR.

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previous associations, and published a notice in *The Guardian* to this effect.<sup>clvi</sup> However, this purported retirement was not carried through.

Bacon was a Canadian by birth, and between 1914-19 he was active on behalf of the OCR in Canada and the USA, undertaking lecture tours and reordaining several Anglican clergymen<sup>clvii</sup>. In 1917 he returned to England and resumed dialogue with the Anglicans.

From 17 January to 16 February 1920 he was auxiliary to Bernard Mary Williams, and between 16 February and 4 October that year served as Archbishop-Primate of the Old Roman Catholic Church (Pro-Uniate Rite), as the ORCCGB was then called. On 1 October 1920 he was received into the Church of England and subconditionally reordained by Bishop Arthur Winnington-Ingram (q.v.), who, in a curious arrangement, appointed him curate of St Gabriel, South Bromley, under W. Noel Lambert (q.v.) and alongside John Carter (q.v.), thus creating a parish of the Church of England that was served for a year by three bishops consecrated by Mathew<sup>clviii</sup>. Bacon was appointed in 1927, aged seventy, as vicar of All Saints, Buxton Street, Mile End.

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<sup>clvi</sup> *Yelton*, p.202

<sup>clvii</sup> He asserted that he had received the degree of Doctor of Laws in Canada in 1909.

<sup>clviii</sup> Moreover, between 1924-26 Henry Bernard Ventham, who had been consecrated bishop in the succession of Mar Timotheus (Vilatte) and conditionally reordained priest by Mathew, was appointed curate of the parish. He had been reordained deacon and priest in the Church of England in 1922. In 1926 he became vicar of South Creak, Norfolk.

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However, this appointment proved to be short-lived. Bacon resigned from the Church of England on 8 December 1927, and in a court case the following February it emerged that he had also been involved for ten years in the ownership of a wholesale chemist's business (under the pseudonym Harold Baron) in which he had employed a female assistant who had sold drugs to women in order to procure abortions. This at that time was illegal, and Bacon as the proprietor of the business was legally responsible for the actions of his assistant even though he himself had not been directly involved in the affair and asserted that he had believed the business only supplied laxatives. He served a fifteen-month term of imprisonment in consequence and does not appear to have resumed his ecclesiastical career after his release from gaol.

Bacon consecrated (without Mathew's consent, and thus marking the eventual end of relations between the two<sup>clix</sup>) Thomas Bensley (1876-1944) on 2 December 1914. Bensley was ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church by the Bishop of Birmingham in 1904, and left that church in 1909. In the same year he was received into the Protestant Episcopal Church by the Bishop of Ohio. Bensley was a priest in the PEC throughout; he sought to supplement his existing orders with those which he knew to be definitively valid. He was rector of St Andrew's PEC Lambertville, New Jersey. On 4 May 1915 he consecrated another priest ordained by Bacon, Arthur Willoughby Henzell (1880-1946). Henzell was ordained in the PEC Diocese of Pennsylvania in 1922. He in turn consecrated Walter P. Crossman on 1 March 1946.

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<sup>clix</sup> At some point, Bacon retired into lay life, but seems to have resumed his ecclesiastical duties on arriving in America.



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Crossman was another PEC priest who had apparently also been consecrated by Bensley in 1915. He was still in the PEC when he joined the Liberal Catholic Church in 1937 and was ordained priest subconditionally by Edmund Walter Sheehan on September 7 that year. In 1946, he left the PEC and formed the Independent Episcopal Church in the United States and Canada, which appears not to have survived him.

### MINISTRY OF BERNARD MARY WILLIAMS

In 1925, Bernard Mary Williams issued a new Constitution for the ORCCGB, in which the following Articles were included:

#### “Article V

We repudiate the protest which the Church of Utrecht, through confusing the active with the passive conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, made against the Bull “Ineffabilis Deus”, and we accept the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary as *de fide*.

#### Article VI

We repudiate the protest which the Church of Utrecht made against the Decree of the Vatican Council which defined Papal Infallibility, and we accept the Dogma of Papal Infallibility as *de fide*.

#### Article VII

We repudiate the Declaration of Utrecht of 1889, and renew our acceptance of the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, which were formerly received by the Church of Utrecht at the 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Utrecht, held in

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1565, but repudiated in part, and to an extent not clearly defined, by the Church of Utrecht, in the Declaration of Utrecht of 1889.”

This was a comprehensive repudiation of the position of Mathew and of the Old Roman Catholic Church of Great Britain hitherto.

As a result, a group of his adherents led by a solicitor, William Charles David Evans, seceded from his jurisdiction and placed themselves initially under Fr. Francis Finch-Styles, a priest of the Vilatte succession, and then under Bishop James Columba McFall, calling themselves the Old Catholic Orthodox Church. It was for this church that Mar Georgius would be ordained priest in 1938. Mar Georgius would go on to lead the Catholicate of the West, a reunion movement of several smaller churches, from 1943-44 onwards.<sup>clx</sup>

Williams now led a very small remnant of the Old Catholic movement in England, consisting of a small congregation at Bristol and a group of two or three nuns who had formerly belonged to the West Malling community and who had reorganised under Mathew as the Benedictines of SS Mary and Scholastica. There were two or three priests under his charge, but all worshipped in home oratories, with no public worship undertaken.

Williams’ action of 1925 left no doctrinal difference between the positions of the ORCCGB and the Roman

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<sup>clx</sup> This church was strongly ecumenical in character. It was abandoned by Mar Georgius in 1953 and he subsequently established his mission on a more narrowly Orthodox basis, readopting the designation Catholicate of the West for his new mission in 1959.

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Catholic Church, save that the ORCCGB celebrated in English rather than in Latin, and did not require priestly celibacy (though it did require such for bishops). In view of the very small size of the ORCCGB, it is not clear as to why at that stage Williams did not simply accept the Papal position that he should submit to Rome and have done with it. Instead, he continued efforts to construct a Uniate Rite which he claimed was “part of the Roman Catholic Church” despite the lack of encouragement for such a position from the Vatican.

Williams was not merely a traditionalist in most issues (and a fervent Jacobite who held that all Acts of Parliament passed after 1688 were invalid), but one of strict obedience and little compromise. His Constitution of 1925 accepted Papal Infallibility even though the rejection of that doctrine had been the very cause of the Old Catholic movement post-1870, and its re-adoption involved the repudiation of the 1889 Declaration of Utrecht. Of those bishops who derived their orders legitimately from Mathew, he recognised only those who conformed to his particular definition of orthodoxy, and the table of apostolic succession issued by him is highly selective<sup>clxi</sup>. For Williams, it was more

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<sup>clxi</sup> In an approach that would be followed by others in later years, he wrote, “Of the other Priests who received Episcopal Consecration at the hands of Archbishop Mathew for work in Great Britain, all have retired into other communions, in most cases without exercising the Episcopate, and one has been suspended. For the subsequent acts of the latter, the Old Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain is in no way responsible. We profoundly deplore them, and neither acknowledge nor admit to our communion any who claim to have received ordination or consecration at his hands, or hold any sort of communion with the sect founded by him.” (Williams, *Two Works*, op. cit., pp 31-32) It goes without saying that

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important that the few people in his charge were true to the *esse* of the faith than that his church risk the souls of its people through innovations that he regarded as suspect. Accordingly his mode of life was simple and devout, embracing not only his assiduous devotions at his oratory but also vegetarianism.

In 1927 he opened a small chapel in the grounds of his residence at Madams Wood near Painswick<sup>clxi</sup>, and adopted the new title for his church of “The Old Roman Catholic (Pro-Uniate) Rite of Great Britain” and for himself of Archbishop of Caer-Glow, Caer-Glow being the Celtic name for Gloucester, where he resided.

Williams was an able writer, producing several shorter works. “A Summary of the History, Faith, Discipline and Aims of the Old Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain” appeared anonymously in 1924. In 1930, Williams issued a reworking of his 1919 pamphlet “A British Uniate Rite”, which offered a full justification for the role of his movement.

In October 1934, Williams set out his position in a letter to the Revd. W.H. de Voil, “I am under no illusions whatever as to the Roman Catholic Church, either with regard to its Divine or human sides. Generally speaking, Roman Catholics are the most un-Christlike of

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this viewpoint would have been vehemently rejected by, say, the bishops of the NAORCC. However, these words have been reprinted almost *verbatim* in the pamphlets produced by the late Old Catholic bishop John Christopher Simmons (q.v.) during the 1990s as they have also been by others of his ilk.

<sup>clxii</sup> This was a bungalow with a wooden oratory attached. Until 1921 he had lived at “The Edge”, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

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Christians, and it is this unhappy fact together with fear of Vatican politics, and not the Catholic Faith, which makes union between the Holy See and the people of this country impossible, except only by means of a Uniate Church. There are, alas, ten thousand sound reasons why the Anglican Communion can never serve as the base of a Uniate Church. On the other hand, "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church" and "Other foundation can no man lay than is laid", so whether we like the human side of things or not, there is nothing else for it, if we would save our souls...If, before my death, we become convinced that it is the Divine Will to withdraw the means of building up a Uniate Church for England which the Good God has held out through this Movement to the people of this country, we shall, of course, submit to the Holy See the moment we become so convinced."

1939 saw Williams' last major publication, "The History and Purpose of the Old Roman Catholic (Pro-Uniate) Rite in Great Britain", in which he commented thus,

"We are simply a Rite within the Catholic Church...The Pro-Uniate Rite is the lineal descendant of the ancient Church of Britain. Among her Saintly Founders she numbers St Egbert of Northumbria, who sent St Willibrord and his eleven companions to evangelise the Catti, Batavi and Frisones. The Rite had survived in the Netherlands for thirteen hundred years, whence it had been re-introduced in England by Bishop Mathew in 1908...

The Pro-Uniate Rite has its roots deeply imbedded in our native land. It is not a modern importation, as are

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the non-Catholic religions, the progenitors of which arrived in this country in Tudor times...It has never broken Catholic Unity, and therefore has not within it the seeds of disunion which must lead to the production and multiplication of sects. In this most important particular, the Old Roman Catholic (Pro-Uniate) Rite stands alone, and it is therefore the only means in this country (except the Latin Rite) which is capable of bringing about a real and lasting union among Christians. The truth of this fact is most clearly demonstrated by the tremendous opposition the Pro-Uniate Rite has had to endure at the forces of disunion – the measure of persecution to which it has been subjected.”

The position was in fact close to that set out by St Augustine in “De Vera Religione”, as follows,

“Divine Providence often permits even good men to be driven out of the Catholic community by dissensions caused by carnally-minded persons. Let them bear this disgrace or this injustice with the greatest patience, in order, as far as in them lies, not to disturb the peace of the Church; let them introduce no novelties either of schism or false doctrine, and thus they will teach men by example with what hearty sincerity and purity of love we must serve God. And it is the mission of such men, either to return when the storm is allayed, or (if that is forbidden them, either because the storm still lasts, or in order that no new and still more violent one may arise) to benefit those very persons to whose tumult and disorder they give place, and without forming any private school, and far removed from all schism and disunion, to defend to the death, and to prove by their

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testimony, the faith which they are sure is that which the Catholic Church confesses. Such the Father Who seeth in secret crowns in secret. (Matt, vi, 18.)”

Not unsurprisingly, Williams’ Rite attracted little support, for it offered nothing that the Roman Catholic Church itself did not offer better. Yet he obtained the respect of such generally hostile writers as Brandreth, who writes of him, “He was theologically orthodox and, although his movement was extremely small, its reputation remained high.”<sup>clxiii</sup>

The first priest to have been ordained by Williams was Matthew William Butroyd (1888-1970). Butroyd was baptised at St Andrew’s, Willesden Green, then as now an Anglo-Catholic stronghold. In secular life he was a clerk. On 29 December 1915, at which time he was living initially at his father’s house at Kennington Oval and subsequently in Clapham, he enlisted in the Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment as a private soldier (11652) and was posted to the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He saw active service with the British Expeditionary Force in France between 3 May 1916 and 5 June 1916, and according to Williams was suffering from shell-shock as a result of this. On 6 June 1916 he was posted back to the Depot of the West Kents but on 27 September received a medical discharge as “no longer physically fit for War Service”. He was given a £10 gratuity and the Silver War Badge.

On 3-4 March 1923 he was confirmed and received the minor orders and subdiaconate from Williams. On 5 March 1923 he was ordained deacon at the chapel of the

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<sup>clxiii</sup> Brandreth, p 29

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Benedictines of St. Scholastica at Bourne House, Plaxtol, Kent, with the two sisters as witnesses to the ceremony. This would also be the venue for his priesting on 23 March 1924. On 18 October 1924 he was appointed as Private Domestic Honorary Chaplain to Williams.

By 1939 Butroyd was resident in Hounslow, and on 10 October 1939, Williams issued him with a certification of his status as a clergyman so that he would thereby be exempt from military service in the Second World War.

It seems unlikely that most of the clergy of the Rite ever met Butroyd<sup>clxiv</sup>. Butroyd had a prominent life as an Anglican layman, serving as Lay Secretary to the Guild of All Souls. His life as an Old Roman Catholic priest was entirely secret and he did not reveal his ordained status in public or attend the gatherings of the Rite, instead communicating directly through Williams. His private diary has survived and shows that he was in much inner torment due to his homosexuality.

By the aftermath of the Second World War several more men had been recruited to the priesthood, some of whom established oratories and undertook public ministry of various kinds. These were Frs. Wilfrid Andrew Barrington-Evans (1903-71), Arthur J. Bennett<sup>clxv</sup>,

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<sup>clxiv</sup> He was known as "Canon Matthew", occasionally misspelled Mathew (eg. by Brandreth and Mar Georgius). His names are also found reversed in some sources, the name Stanley added in others, and his surname misspelled as Buckroyd. Some writers have openly doubted his existence! (*Pinnington*, pp 102, 115 etc.) The 1960 *Directory* of Barrington-Evans gives his full address.

<sup>clxv</sup> He died in 1958, having served under Barrington-Evans until his death.



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Arthur J. Mortimer, James Ritchie-Long<sup>clxvi</sup>, Geoffrey Peter Thomas Paget King (1917-91) and George Aubrey St John-Seally (1898-1959). All excepting the last-named were ordained priest at the Marylebone oratory during 1947.

Of these men, Geoffrey Paget King was formerly a Captain in the Church Army<sup>clxvii</sup>, being of an Anglo-Catholic persuasion. The Anglican Bishop of Chester suggested he seek ordination in the Church of England, but by then his faith had moved in a more ultramontane direction, and on 29 August 1943 he was received into the ORC(PU)R by Fr. St John-Seally. He was confirmed in December 1946 and received the first of the minor orders in March 1947.

Wilfrid Barrington-Evans was the son of a Baptist deacon and an Anglican mother. He became a licensed Anglican Lay Reader in the dioceses of London, Oxford and Southwark, and worked in a bank. In 1947 he informed the Bishop of London of his decision with some associates to formally secede from Canterbury to the ORC(PU)R, was ordained priest and, after a brief time at the Marylebone mission of Fr. St John-Seally (q.v.), opened a chapel at West Drayton, Middx., also founding and editing the *Diocesan Chronicle*. A second oratory

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<sup>clxvi</sup> Mar Georgius tells us that he was afterwards reconciled with Rome.

<sup>clxvii</sup> He was born at Haslington, Cheshire, and was confirmed by the Anglican Bishop of Chester in 1931. Aged sixteen, he became an Anglo-Catholic. He was educated at Nantwich and Acton Grammar School and then at Cheshire County Training College (1935-36), joining the Church Army in March 1938. Between 1938-40 he attended the Church Army Training College.

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was opened in 1948 at West Kensington, moving in May 1949 to a house in Park Crescent, Regent's Park.

Fr. St John-Seally, meanwhile, had been ordained priest by Williams in 1940. His oratory was at Devonshire Lodge, 15 Marylebone Road, London, from 1940-44. On 29 September 1944 letters were issued by Williams to Canon Butroyd commissioning him to induct St John-Seally as parish priest of the Parish of the Most Blessed Sacrament (or Corpus Christi) and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, London. St John-Seally asserted that the ORCCGB “offers freedom from Ultramontane and State domination, and international politics...[it is] entirely without “views”, “schools of thought”, “higher criticism” or “modernism”, for it professes the Old Faith in its integrity and entirety”.

These were significant arguments in favour of English Old Catholicism, in that both the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches were to see very significant changes in the post-war years on account of the forces that St John-Seally described. Indeed, St John-Seally was echoing Williams himself, who had written, “It may be well to add here that I belong to no School of Thought, and that I have no views. I believe in the Divine Inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, and accept them, wholly and absolutely. With regard to the recorded utterances of our Blessed Lord, I believe that He meant exactly and precisely what He said, and not what divines of one or other of the Schools of Thought appear to think He ought to have meant. Whenever science apparently contradicts Revelation, I accept Revelation, believing that on the point in question, science is as yet imperfectly informed, and has something more to

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discover. I am, and always have been, implacably opposed to Modernism, Higher Criticism, heresy, and spurious philosophy.”<sup>clxviii</sup>

At a Synod at West Drayton in October 1947, at which the recent hostile publication of Henry Brandreth<sup>clxix</sup> was discussed, Williams approved the text of an open letter to Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, that was sent to him and to every bishop in the world-wide Anglican Communion. This letter called for an end to the open persecution of the Old Catholic movement by Anglicans. It also stated that the practice of offering conditional validation of the orders of Anglican clergy under the OCR banner had ceased some time ago (at least as far as the Rite was concerned) and would not resume.

Williams was to go on to write of the Church of England that it was,

“...the creation of the foreign Protestant Reformers under Elizabeth, her Minister Cecil, and his Church-despoiling friends...Nothing, not even all the chasubles in the world, can change the fact that the Anglican Communion is an essentially purely Protestant foundation. Secondly, from her foundation until now, she has suffered from a complete lack of Order of any sort or kind, as is proved by the writings of her founders, who did not believe in the necessity of Ordination...Thirdly, because of the rampant heresy

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<sup>clxviii</sup> Williams, *Two Works*, p 39

<sup>clxix</sup> *Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church*, discussed further in another monograph by the present author as well as in Mar Georgius' *Episcopi in Ecclesia Dei and Father Brandreth*.

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within the Anglican Communion (even the Catholic-minded party is permeated with Modernism) which she is powerless to restrain or repress, even if her Authorities were inclined, or dared to attempt to do so...Can the cause of God be served by such means? Could a Uniate Church be built upon such a foundation? Surely not?"

Indeed, Williams' position was one of full-blown opposition to the OCR. His view in 1920 had been that, "It is, and always has been, a great grief to me that the late Archbishop Mathew was ever prevailed upon to revive the Order of Corporate Reunion. For while I am bound to admit that both Archbishop Mathew, and those of the Clergy and Laity of another Communion who persuaded him to revive it, together with those who subsequently received valid Orders at his hands, acted with the highest and best intentions, and in good faith, yet it seems to me that the Order tends to set up a state of ecclesiastical anarchy which can in no way serve the cause of Reunion, but rather the reverse. By it, both the giver and the receiver of the Orders are placed in a false and most awkward position. I believe it to be fairly well known that I have never been in sympathy with the Order, and that I have never ordained one of its members. I propose to refuse Holy Orders on the lines of the Order of of Corporate Reunion, while recognising that I have a duty towards those ordained by my predecessors; and I shall be happy to do whatever I honestly can for them, if any members of the Order care to communicate with me at any time."<sup>clxx</sup>

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<sup>clxx</sup> Williams, *Two Works*, pp 40-41

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Williams vacillated for years concerning the provision for a successor in his Rite. He wrote, "I have been greatly pained and shocked by the number of Priests whom Archbishop Mathew was urged to raise to the Episcopate in order to make our Apostolic Succession secure. I have no intention of consecrating an Auxiliary Bishop until that step becomes imperative. In other words, until the Movement provides more work than one Bishop can perform. In the event of my leaving no successor through some unforeseen mischance, the Archbishop of the Old Roman Catholic Church in America, Mgr. Carfora, whose Orders are derived from the late Archbishop Mathew through the Archbishop and Prince de Landas Berghes et de Rache, whom he succeeded, has bound himself to consecrate one who shall be elected by the Clergy in England from their own number."<sup>clxxi</sup>

Carfora had nominated Bishop James Christian Crummey<sup>clxxii</sup> of his movement to arrange for a successor to Williams. Crummey, probably in accordance with Williams' earlier wishes, accepted the nomination of Fr. Matthew Butroyd.

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<sup>clxxi</sup> Williams, *Two Works*, p 40

<sup>clxxii</sup> He was consecrated by Carfora on 19 March 1931 and fulfilled an important role in the OCR in America, establishing the Universal Episcopal Communion and Universal Christian Communion as a reunion movement of Old Catholics. The UEC was an episcopal council, while the UCC was a church into which the various bodies could be allied; both were seen as the two parts of a single organisation. Brandreth (p 44 n. 1) tells us that "This movement demanded a higher standard of discipline than that which obtains among the other so-called Old Catholic organizations in America and, in general, its bishops were men of greater worth." Crummey died in 1949 and thereafter his work became dormant.

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On 17 March 1941, marking his Episcopal Jubilee, Williams appointed Butroyd as a Canon and Member of the Metropolitan Chapter of Caer-Glow of the ORC(PU)R. The Instrument refers to Williams as the only survivor of the revised Chapter erected by Mathew. It is clear that Williams had not mellowed towards his former Theosophical brethren, for he refers to Mathew's dissolution of the Chapter being "to purge it of certain heterodox, perverse and unruly men who by dint of base deception, fraud and intrigue had obtained membership thereof with the evil purpose and intent of taking to themselves the things of God, and of destroying the orthodoxy and integrity of this Rite". It seems clear that Williams' own orthodoxy could only be maintained by comparison to others who fell short of his high ideals. He now reconstituted the Chapter, translating it from London and Middlesex to Caer Glow. Butroyd was appointed as Vicar Capitular in the event of Williams' death without first having appointed a co-adjutor and designated as archbishop-elect in those circumstances, his consecration to be arranged by Crummey and Carfora.

However, this was not the end of the matter. Williams at various points stuck to his nomination of Butroyd as successor, but on other occasions turned to Barrington-Evans. Matters were complicated by the fact that Williams, in an open letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury of 1947, broke communion with Carfora and excommunicated both him and those bishops deriving their orders from him. This excommunication would not be rescinded during the remainder of Williams' pontificate.

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Unlike Mathew in 1915, there was no issue of Williams reconciling with the Holy See. In one of his last letters to the Revd. de Voil on 24 September 1951, he explained,

“All the Popes since Pius IX have been Socialists, except Benedict XV, the only gentleman among them. I could never submit to a Socialist Pope, but if we had a sound Pope, and I could have been received on the terms of the Pacification of Clement IX, then I would have taken the course before now, but that remains the only course I could take. I cannot believe that Almighty God requires me to take an oath I well know to be false in order to save my soul. That is what the present position amounts to, and well the Authorities know it.”

Both Paget King and St John Seally had been excommunicated by Williams on 31 January 1948 for breach of canonical obedience and the promotion of schism. Seally retired from active ministry at this point. Paget King then placed himself under Carfora<sup>clxxiii</sup> and by 1951 was leading a body he called the Old Roman Catholic Church in Great Britain. In early 1952, Paget King began talks aimed at reconciling with Williams.

Meanwhile, Wilfrid Barrington-Evans led a group of Williams' remaining clergy who found the uncertain position of Williams regarding a successor intolerable, and consequently seceded to form the Independent Old Roman Catholic Church, later known as the Old Roman Catholic Church (English Rite), through a Deed of Declaration on 22 September 1950. Included were all Williams' priests save Canon Butroyd and Fr. Bennett,

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<sup>clxxiii</sup> Around this time Carfora and all but a few of his bishops were excommunicated by Williams.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

who had sympathy with the dissenters but remained loyal on account of their oaths of canonical obedience to Williams.

There have been rumours that Barrington-Evans was secretly consecrated by a French bishop in the late 1940s, but no proof of this has ever been forthcoming. Bishop Radavan Jost of the Old Catholic Church in Yugoslavia agreed to consecrate him but was refused a visa. Bishop Aloysius Stumpf (Mar Timotheos II) was expected to have consecrated him on 14 January 1950, but did not do so. Bishops Syer, Langhelt and Hurgon of the Catholicate of the West were also approached but declined to consecrate. There was difficulty finding a bishop to consecrate Barrington-Evans, because he was a married man, as well as the problematic issues of relations with Williams and his and any potential consecrator's canonical obligations.

Eventually, Barrington-Evans was consecrated as Mar John, Bishop (later Archbishop) of Verulam, on 5 August 1951 at Iver, Bucks., by Dirk Ludwig Thomas Tollenaar (1908-82), a married man who had in turn been consecrated by Mar Leofric (Charles Leslie Saul) formerly of the Catholicate of the West, on 8 January 1950<sup>clxxiv</sup>. Saul was markedly Protestant in his ministry, leading a church called the Evangelical Church of England<sup>clxxv</sup>, and Tollenaar was a former priest in the Liberal Catholic Church who had later been associated with the Eglise Catholique Gallicane (q.v.) He was

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<sup>clxxiv</sup> See Pinnington, Judith *The Old Roman Catholics*, London, The Seraphic Press, 2009, p 104, in a quotation of letters between Bishop J.E. Bazille-Corbin (Mar Marcus Valerius) and Mar Georgius.

<sup>clxxv</sup> Also called the English Episcopal Church.



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subsequently described as the Old Roman Catholic Archbishop of Arnhem.

In the event, there was to be no direct successor to Williams. Williams finally declared that at his death, his Rite should be closed down, all his documents destroyed and his priests should submit to Rome. By the time of his death on 9 June 1952, he was reconciled with Paget King, had appointed him to be Administrator of the See on the event of his death, and received the Last Rites from him; negotiations were also under way to heal the breach with Carfora. The other two priests still with him were Canon Matthew and Fr. Bennett. These three did not submit to Rome.<sup>clxxvi</sup>

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<sup>clxxvi</sup> Barrington-Evans writes in *1960 Directory of the Old Roman Catholic Church*, Iver, 1960, p 5, that of the three, “one [Bennett] has since died, one [Canon Butroyd] has accepted the jurisdiction of [Barrington-Evans] and the last [Paget King] has joined himself to a Bishop [Marchenna] of the heretical and excommunicated North American Old Roman Catholic Church.”

## THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

**W**e have already recounted the birth of the English movement that was originally termed the Old Catholic (Old Roman Catholic) Church in Great Britain, but from 1917 acquired its present title of the Liberal Catholic Church under its Presiding Bishop, James Ingall Wedgwood (1883-1951). Wedgwood was a man of significant accomplishment, education and spiritual gifts. He was the great-grandson of the famous potter Josiah Wedgwood, and studied music and analytical chemistry at University College (later the University of) Nottingham. As a High Church Anglican he served as junior choirmaster at York Minster.

In 1904, Wedgwood attended a lecture in York by Mrs Annie Besant, president of the Theosophical Society (TS), and at first was antipathetic, doubtless realising the dim light in which the Anglican hierarchy saw the TS. He determined to attend a second lecture to rid himself of the influence of Mrs Besant, but the experience had the opposite effect. Three days later, he became a member of the TS, and in consequence gave up his involvement with the Church of England. He served as General Secretary of the TS in England and Wales between 1911 and 1913. He was also from 1911 Very Illustrious Supreme Secretary 33<sup>o</sup> of the British Federation of International Co-Freemasonry<sup>clxxvii</sup>. In this

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<sup>clxxvii</sup> The Co-Masonic (Droit Humaine) heritages were from John Yarker, and later not only involved Wedgwood but the occultist Aleister Crowley and Mar Georgius in various competing claims to their succession.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

latter role, Wedgwood visited Australia in 1915, where Co-Masonry had been established since 1911. Here he met for the first time and inducted into the Co-Masonic Order the noted occultist and esoteric teacher Charles Webster Leadbeater (1854<sup>clxxviii</sup>-1934).

### LIFE OF C.W. LEADBEATER

Leadbeater<sup>clxxix</sup> was ordained deacon on 22 December 1878 and priest on 21 December 1879 (in St Andrew's, Farnham) by Edward H. Browne, Bishop of Winchester, and from 1878 was curate of Bramshott, Hampshire, where he lived with his widowed mother (she was to die in 1882) and had, prior to his ordination, spent eighteen months as a lay reader. The Rector of the parish was Leadbeater's uncle, William Wolfe Capes, who was also Reader in Ancient History at the University of Oxford.

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<sup>clxxviii</sup> Not 1847 as given in many LCC-originated sources (see Warnon, note below). There is further commentary on this issue by Gregory Tillet at <http://www.theos-talk.com/archives/200005/tt00296.html> Note that while 1854 is given as his date of birth in the censuses between 1861 and 1881 (and indeed is recorded on his birth certificate), in the 1891 census it was changed to 1847. 1847 was also the year of birth of Annie Besant. The reason for this change is not clear; Leadbeater used the 1847 date in his passport and presumably came to believe for esoteric or exoteric reasons that it was correct.

<sup>clxxix</sup> According to Bishop Maurice Warnon, Leadbeater worked as a teacher at the school attached to St Mary's Church, Tottenham, at some point in the 1870s. See <http://kingsgarden.org/English/Organizations/LCC.GB/LCIS/Scriptures/Liberal/Leadbeater/Leadbeater.HTM> (retrieved October 2009). He had not attended university (despite some claims that he was at The Queen's College, Oxford), and passed an examination before being admitted to ordination.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Leadbeater was certainly active in the parish and in Anglican affairs more widely, organising clubs and societies for young people and also making astronomy his hobby. He became a member of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament in 1882, a surprising move, since his parish was in the Low Church tradition<sup>clxxx</sup>.

He took an interest in Spiritualism and visited séances in London given by the noted medium William Eglinton, who was a member of the TS. He also undertook psychic investigations in the Scottish Highlands. At this time, having read A.P. Sinnett's "The Occult World", Leadbeater became interested in Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91) and the TS, which he joined on 21 November 1883. This was to set the course of his future life.

On 3 March 1884, Leadbeater endeavoured to make contact with the Ascended Masters<sup>clxxxii</sup> by sending them

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<sup>clxxx</sup> *Charles Webster Leadbeater, 1854-1934: A Biographical Study by Gregory Tillett* Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Sydney, Sydney, 1986, pp 109-110, accessed online at <http://leadbeater.org> during October 2009. The CBS was a secret society of Anglo-Catholics, outwardly condemned by the Church of England.

<sup>clxxxii</sup> Theosophy has taught that the Ascended Masters were once incarnated in human form and learned the necessary lessons to gain mastery over the physical planes, fulfilling their Dharma and balancing their karma. Having undergone spiritual transformation, the Master is united with his/her God-self and becomes a beacon of unconditional love. Now, from the astral plane, they act as a source of wisdom and encouragement to mankind, and can assist men and women to achieve their own ascension. Mme Blavatsky said, "... they are living men, born as we are born, and doomed to die like every mortal. We call them "masters" because they are our teachers; and because from them we have derived all the Theosophical truths...

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

a letter through the mediumship of Eglinton. As was expected, the letter was conveyed, and shortly afterwards, Leadbeater received an acknowledgement through the post confirming that fact. No reply was forthcoming, however, until he came to say goodbye to Mme Blavatsky on October 30<sup>th</sup> as she was leaving for India and the headquarters of the TS at Adyar. Blavatsky, who could not otherwise have known of Leadbeater's attempt, told him that his letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> March had been seen by the Master Koot Hoomi<sup>clxxxii</sup>. When Leadbeater returned home the following day, the letter from the Master was awaiting him. It concluded as follows,

“You ask me, “what rules I must observe during this time of probation, and how soon I might venture to hope that it could begin”. I answer: you have the making of your own future, in your own hands as shown above, and every day you may be weaving its woof. If I were to demand that you should do one thing or the other, instead of simply advising, I would be responsible for every effect that might flow from the step and you acquire but a secondary merit. Think, and you will see that this is true. So cast the lot yourself into the lap of Justice, never fearing but that its response will be absolutely true. Chelaship is an educational as well as probationary stage and the chela alone can determine whether it shall end in adeptship or failure. Chelas from a mistaken idea of our system too often watch for orders, wasting precious time which should be taken up with

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They are men of great learning, whom we call Initiates, and still greater holiness of life.” (*The Key to Theosophy*)

<sup>clxxxii</sup> Blavatsky claimed that she was the guest of Koot Hoomi while staying in Tibet. K.H. was widely identified with the coming World Teacher.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

personal effort. Our cause needs missionaries, devotees, agents, even martyrs perhaps. But it cannot demand of any man to make himself either. So now choose and grasp your own destiny, and may our Lord's the Tathâgata's memory aid you to decide for the best.

K.H.”

A further missive materialized at the hand of Blavatsky and was more explicit,

“Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it was my desire you should go to Adyar immediately, I may say more. The sooner you go the better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th if possible. Join Upasika at Alexandria. Let no one know that you are going, and may the blessing of our Lord and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life. Greeting to you, my new chela.

K.H.<sup>clxxxiii</sup>”

This was the signal Leadbeater needed. On 3 November 1884, Leadbeater embarked for Madras in the company of Blavatsky, having previously given away his possessions to the boys of Bramshott and taken care to provide for their future welfare<sup>clxxxiv</sup>. He presented himself at the TS in Adyar and asked to be considered for what work was available. In consequence he was

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<sup>clxxxiii</sup> Quoted in Tillett, *op. cit.*, p 139.

<sup>clxxxiv</sup> It does not appear that he ever resigned from the Church of England; he would simply have been regarded by that church as an inactive priest thereafter.

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appointed as Recording Secretary and Editor of “The Theosophist.” His work was not particularly fulfilling and he was increasingly homesick. It was while working in this capacity that Leadbeater was directed by K.H. and possibly aided by Djwhal Khul<sup>clxxxv</sup> to develop powers of clairvoyance, and through repeated effort and practice in the year 1885 he made considerable progress in these studies.

In 1886, with Blavatsky, Leadbeater travelled to Ceylon and there met Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) who had been the co-founder and first President of the TS from 1875. Olcott and Blavatsky had been acknowledged as Buddhists from 1880, and Olcott’s work was dedicated to the presentation of Buddhist ideas for a Western audience as well as the establishment of a number of Buddhist schools in Ceylon<sup>clxxxvi</sup>. Leadbeater became Olcott’s assistant from 1886-89 and a Buddhist, but on the important condition that he would not be required to repudiate the beliefs of the Church of England. However, he did resign from the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, citing as cause that he had become a Buddhist<sup>clxxxvii</sup>. From 1889, Leadbeater edited “The

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<sup>clxxxv</sup> Djwhal Khul is said to be an Ascended Master with particular responsibility for the spiritual development of the planet. His normal life is among human beings. Leadbeater recounted that while sitting with Mme Blavatsky, he saw D.K. teleport into the room (*The Masters and the Path* Adyar, Madras, India: 1925 Theosophical Publishing House pp 8-9).

<sup>clxxxvi</sup> Ananda College, Dharmaraja College, Maliyadeva College, and Mahinda College were all built by the TS, and significantly by Leadbeater’s repeated and peripatetic work during this time.

<sup>clxxxvii</sup> Tillett, *op. cit.*, p 149.

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Buddhist, The English Organ of the Southern Church of Buddhism,” a weekly publication<sup>clxxxviii</sup>.

In 1888, Leadbeater met a thirteen year-old adolescent called Currupumallage Jinarajadasa (1875-1953). With Jinarajadasa, he returned to England in 1889 at the request of A.P. Sinnett, in order to become private tutor to his son; he also worked as a journalist. Once in England, he told Jinarajadasa that he was the reincarnation of his younger brother Gerald, who had died in a childhood accident<sup>clxxxix</sup>. A significant amount of Leadbeater’s modest income went to support the education of Jinarajadasa and George S. Arundale (1878-1945), another TS member whom he tutored. Both would subsequently obtain degrees from the University of Cambridge<sup>cx</sup>.

In London, he was in contact with Annie Besant, who would succeed Olcott as President of the TS on his death, and Leadbeater built up a significant reputation in the TS as a lecturer, writer and clairvoyant. In 1900 and 1904 he undertook lecture tours of the United States and Canada, and in 1905 of Australia. Leadbeater became a controversial figure and attracted considerable criticism from sections of the TS; at one point there were two journals set up to denounce him<sup>cxci</sup>. His occult and psychic investigations extended through history, to

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<sup>clxxxviii</sup> Tillett, *op. cit.*, p 172.

<sup>clxxxix</sup> Tillett, *op. cit.*, p 42. The author says there was no evidence Leadbeater ever had a brother.

<sup>cx</sup> See Ransom, Josephine, *The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Book of the T.S.*, 1950, accessed October 2009 at [http://www.teozofija.info/Biografija\\_Jinarajadasa.htm](http://www.teozofija.info/Biografija_Jinarajadasa.htm) Jinarajadasa succeeded Arundale as President of the TS in 1945.

<sup>cxci</sup> Tillett, *op. cit.*, p 12.



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scientific matters and then to a study of the planets of the solar system<sup>cxcii</sup>. These investigations were productive and their results widely publicised through books and articles.

It should be remembered in discussing what Leadbeater said and did that he saw little difference between facts as commonly understood, and clairvoyant insights. These latter could easily have persuaded him of the truth of events and phenomena that had not occurred on the earthly plane, or that had occurred unseen to those whose faculties were not sufficiently well-developed to perceive them (the truly “occult”, or hidden currents of affairs). Much of what Leadbeater said about himself, particularly his early life, was “untrue” in that it was factually inaccurate from a historical perspective.

However, Leadbeater and other Theosophists were both concerned with truth as an essentially hermetic and mystic proposition, whereby it was of no account as to whether the actual facts were accurate, but rather as to whether, as presented, they gave access to a deep and enduring lesson or issue in the context of spiritual teaching, or (as was often the case with Leadbeater) were a reframing of his emotions and past within the boundaries of a fictional account in which the necessary spiritual and moral features were more easily conveyed than in the language of bald statement. This “life as a parable” or “life as legend” approach is, as we will see,

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<sup>cxcii</sup> Leadbeater had clairvoyant access to the Akashic Records, through which he could establish the past lives of a subject, and also used this investigation as a means to gain insight into history, including the past civilisations of Atlantis, Egypt and Chaldea.

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fundamental to much of the esoteric tradition, and also had an influence on several more mainstream figures.

In 1905, Leadbeater was accused of having given sex education to boys in which he taught them how to masturbate, at a time when that activity was widely regarded as immoral. A further “cipher letter” purportedly from Leadbeater to a boy was circulated which added fuel to the fire<sup>cxci</sup>. Leadbeater resigned from the TS to avoid the Society experiencing any further bad publicity, although had he not done, Olcott had given orders he was to be expelled. Leadbeater was not interested in defending his position (although others certainly tried to do so on his behalf<sup>cxci</sup>), but in a letter

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<sup>cxci</sup> Annie Besant addressed this in her letter to members of the TS in November 1908, in which she said, “Much has been made of a “cipher letter.” The use of cipher arose from an old story in the Theosophist, repeated by Mr. Leadbeater to a few lads; they, as boys will, took up the cipher with enthusiasm, and it was subsequently sometimes used in correspondence with the boys who had been present when the story was told. In a typewritten note on a fragment of paper, undated and unsigned, relating to an astral experience, a few words in cipher occur on the incriminated advice. Then follows a sentence, unconnected with the context, on which a foul construction has been placed. That the boy did not so read it is proved by a letter of his to Mr. Leadbeater – not sent, but shown to me by his mother – in which he expresses his puzzlement as to what it meant, as he well might. There is something very suspicious about the use of this letter. It was carefully kept away from Mr. Leadbeater, though widely circulated against the wish of the father and the mother, and when a copy was lately sent to him by a friend, he did not recognize it in its present form, and stated emphatically that he had never used the phrase with regard to any sexual act.”

<sup>cxci</sup> Among them was Jinarajadasa, who stated that in his years of close contact with Leadbeater he had never had cause to suspect him of any sexual impropriety. In consequence of this defence,

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to Besant the following month he explained that “a natural function exists, which in itself is no more wrong...than eating or drinking<sup>cxcv</sup>”. Besant did not agree with this, taking an attitude that was more typical of her time.

Leadbeater’s approach was not that of the libertine, for he taught self-control and moderation in sexual habits, and justified his approach by reference to St Paul, but certainly he was frank in his talk of sex, as well as promoting a generally open attitude to the body that was forward-looking in the early years of the century<sup>cxcvi</sup>. As a result of the scandal, he spent much of the following time in Jersey and in Sicily<sup>cxcvii</sup>.

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Jinarajadasa was compelled to resign from the TS for a time, but was reinstated by Olcott (with apology) in 1907.

<sup>cxcv</sup> Leadbeater to Besant, 30 June 1906 (translation by the author)

<sup>cxcvi</sup> Leadbeater was accustomed to bathe naked with his students, for example, and also held that sexual activity was an occult path to divine communion, perhaps with some reference to Tantric tradition. He believed that by teaching masturbation and encouraging it, he was making it less likely that sexual experimentation would lead to unwanted pregnancies, since contraception was not widely available at this time. A factor in this approach was also that initiates in the TS, including Leadbeater himself, were expected to remain chaste and not engage in sexual relationships with others. In this context, Leadbeater’s teachings on auto-eroticism were a means, as he saw it, to enable initiates to remain within these bounds.

<sup>cxcvii</sup> It is not true that, as his enemies asserted, he was unable to remain in England for fear of arrest. He was never the subject of police investigation in England, and returned to the country in later years. It is more likely that he wished to keep a low profile for the sake of the TS, and also not to give further encouragement to the inevitable attacks in the English gutter press.

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Besant was aware that siding with Leadbeater would ruin her chances of succeeding Olcott as President of the TS, and accordingly she broke with Leadbeater and eventually publically accused him. Olcott, meanwhile, realised that he had been in the wrong and shortly before his death sent a letter of apology to Leadbeater<sup>cxcviii</sup>. When Besant eventually succeeded Olcott (which was not without significant opposition from American members of the TS), she faced a major campaign to readmit Leadbeater. She was faced with no option but to back down and apologise on behalf of the TS, but her actions in doing so caused a significant loss of membership from those factions who had been glad to see Leadbeater persecuted. Faced with a depletion of resources, Besant invited Leadbeater back to Adyar, and he arrived there on 10 February 1909 to resume work. The closeness he had enjoyed with Besant previously had cooled considerably given the intervening events.

## KRISHNAMURTI DISCOVERED

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<sup>cxcviii</sup> Letter of 13 January, which reads in part “Concerning the other matter about the disturbance your teachings have caused, both Mahatma M. and Mahatma K.H. assured me that you did well to resign, that it was right to call a council to advise upon the matter, and that I did right in accepting your resignation, but they said we were wrong in allowing the matter to be made so public, for your sake and for the sake of the Society. They said you should have stated in your resignation that you resigned because you offended the standard of ideas of the majority of the Society by giving out certain teachings which were considered objectionable. Because I have always cherished for you a sincere affection, I wish to beg your pardon, and to tell you before I die that I am sorry any fault of judgment on my part should have caused you such deep sorrow and mortification, for I should have certainly tried to keep the matter quiet, had I not thought that it would have reflected on the Society if I did so.” Quoted in Tillett, *op. cit.*, p 376.

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During 1909, Leadbeater joined a number of those at the TS in an evening swim. On the beach, he saw a boy of unremarkable appearance, but whose aura attracted his attention in a particular way, because it was completely unselfish. The boy, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986), was making little progress at school, but Leadbeater's clairvoyant investigation of him convinced him that he was the reincarnation of a "great instructor"<sup>cxix</sup>. In time, Leadbeater came to believe that Krishnamurti was an avatar of the Lord Maitreya, whom he in turn identified with Christ. He held that the Christ would not enter the body of Krishnamurti until it had been fully prepared and purified, and this explained the strong emphasis now placed on ensuring the right education and upbringing for Krishnamurti within the senior echelons of the TS.

In 1911, George Arundale formed the Order of the Star in the East as a vehicle for those members of the TS who wished to support Krishnamurti's development and training, and this proceeded under the charge of Mrs Besant<sup>cc</sup>. Leadbeater and Krishnamurti were never particularly close on an interpersonal level, and although Krishnamurti was intermittently grateful to Leadbeater

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<sup>cxix</sup> Leadbeater had been searching for the vehicle for the Maitreya for some time. He believed initially that he had found him in the person of Hubert van Hook, but once he had found Krishnamurti realised he had been mistaken. He wrote to Besant that K had "a better set of lives even than Hubert, though I think not as sensational." Quoted in Washington, Peter, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon*, London, Martin, Secker & Warburg, 1993, p. 128.

<sup>cc</sup> The Order of Servants of the Star was established for those under the age of 21.

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in later years, he was not in essence compatible with the older man's personality or approach.

After Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya had been brutally caned at school, Leadbeater insisted they be removed and educated privately. Besant and Arundale took Krishnamurti and Nitya to England to complete their education in April 1911, returning in October 1912. Krishnamurti began to commune with the Ascended Masters from almost the first lesson with Leadbeater.

During April 1912 they together with Leadbeater stayed at Taormina, Sicily, a place which according to Leadbeater had "the right kind of atmosphere." Leadbeater insisted that as part of their training, the boys must conquer fear, and so deliberately compelled them to face any experience which induced that emotion in them. On one occasion, exasperated by Krishnamurti's habit of standing with his mouth open, Leadbeater slapped him on the chin, an act which cured the habit, but for which Krishnamurti never forgave him<sup>cci</sup>. By the end of July, all had left for England. In their travels, they mixed extensively with the European middle and upper-classes.

Although Krishnamurti's father Jiddu Narianiah had given his written consent to his sons being taken abroad with Besant, he, having been expelled from Adyar, and learning that Leadbeater was still much involved with his sons, now revived the scandals of 1906, and made a wholly false accusation that Leadbeater had abused Krishnamurti. This came before the courts in India, and

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<sup>cci</sup> Tillett, *op. cit.*, p 472.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

in due course Leadbeater was fully cleared of all accusations, though the judge considered him to hold “immoral ideas”<sup>ccii</sup>. Besant, who now had custody of the boys and was regarded by them as a surrogate mother, became concerned that Narianiah would try to kidnap Krishnamurti and his brother, and she hid them in a large house lent for the purpose by the Countess de la Warr. This period saw the brothers become extremely close.

When Krishnamurti appeared before his followers, spiritual phenomena were experienced by many who were present, including the manifestation of powerful energies from him. Many Theosophists by now believed that Krishnamurti was the World Teacher, and at this stage, his powers seemed ample confirmation of the fact.

The most extensive result of Leadbeater’s clairvoyant investigations into the past was the “Lives of Alcyone”, in which a series of scenarios was presented from 22662BC until AD624. In each, the past life of Krishnamurti at that time was presented, along with the past lives of Leadbeater and many of his associates in the TS. These associates, according to Leadbeater, were the Band of Servers, a body of associates which accompanied Krishnamurti in each incarnation<sup>cciii</sup>. The idea of contact with past lives was a reality for many Theosophists, and

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<sup>ccii</sup> The final verdict was passed on 29 May 1914. On 2 June, in amelioration of their earlier reporting, *The Times* published “Everyone who knows Mr. Leadbeater, knows that his conduct is impeccable, whatever are his academic opinions. His opinion is based on his desire to protect certain women from the depravations that mark them for life, when men live their lives in full impunity.”

<sup>cciii</sup> See Washington, *op. cit.*, p 129.

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had a wider influence on other esoteric and Gnostic clergy, as is evident in such figures as John van Ryswyck (q.v.) and the Lord Patriarch Banks (q.v.)

A letter to Leadbeater from Krishnamurti of 31 October 1913 marked something of a breach between the two. Krishnamurti was now being supported by a trust fund provided by a Miss Dodge, who was providing £500 per month, to which was added the £150 that Mrs Besant was providing. On 17 February 1915 K again wrote to Leadbeater,

“When I was with you I did not appreciate what you did but now it is all different. You are the same old C.W.L. to me and I love you very much. I was foolish and an idiot not to see it and love you when I was with you. I am devoted to you too. Of course now I know what you did was good for me and I did not see it. I want to forget all that and turn over completely a new page. You were the first person who picked me up and I am grateful and you brought me to great things and I owe all that to you my dear C.W.L. It is very difficult for me to write what I feel but you will understand what I mean. When I was with you I hurt you in many ways and now I see it all and I am very sorry. Let us forget the past, except the happy bits, and I hope I shall make you happy yet. I wonder if you understand what I mean about all this. I want to be worthy of you and make your name shine like a light to everybody. I want everybody to know what you really are.<sup>cciv</sup>”

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<sup>cciv</sup> Tillett, *op. cit.* pp 568-569.



## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Many years later, Krishnamurti was to reverse his position, describing Leadbeater as “evil<sup>ccv</sup>”. In any case, as he reached maturity, Leadbeater was less concerned with his affairs<sup>ccvi</sup>. However, Leadbeater did not cease to regard Krishnamurti as the coming World Teacher, and continued to advocate his cause.

In February 1914, Leadbeater left Adyar for a lecture tour in Burma, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. At this time, Besant allied herself with the cause of Indian independence, which placed her once more in opposition to Leadbeater, who believed strongly in Empire. Likewise, Indian Nationalists opposed Besant, believing her involvement to be merely patronising.

Leadbeater remained in Australia thereafter, and through clairvoyance began to investigate the energies of the Christian sacraments. This work would culminate

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<sup>ccv</sup> Tillett, *op. cit.*, p 73. This information apparently comes from a remark made by K to Mary Lutyens. K would not elaborate further and refused to discuss anything regarding his past with Leadbeater.

<sup>ccvi</sup> Krishnamurti underwent a series of unexplained physical and psychic phenomena from August 1922 that he described as “the process” and which continued to recur until his death. Leadbeater and others were mystified by this. In November 1925, Krishnamurti’s brother died of tuberculosis and he was plunged into grief and existential crisis. On August 3 1929 at a public meeting he dissolved the Order of the Star in the East and disclaimed organised belief systems. He never denied being the World Teacher, though he held the matter to be irrelevant, and spent the remainder of his life lecturing, writing and offering individual guidance on spiritual matters. It is estimated that his complete works will eventually run to over 80 volumes.

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in “The Science of the Sacraments”, one of his most significant works of occult investigation<sup>ccvii</sup>.

Now we have traced Leadbeater’s life up to the time when Wedgwood came to meet him in Australia. The two men had had earlier contact, and had not got on. This time things were different, and they found much in common. Wedgwood initiated Leadbeater into Co-Masonry and Martinism, and perhaps also the Rosicrucian Order and the degrees of the Rite of Memphis and Misraïm. Leadbeater investigated these rituals clairvoyantly, and made a number of suggestions towards their improvement.

### FORMATION OF THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH; CONSECRATION OF WEDGWOOD AND LEADBEATER

That year saw the Theosophical breach of Wedgwood and his fellow priests with Mathew. Wedgwood wrote of this time,

“Our situation was not an easy one. We had not entered the movement with any idea of starting another Church. Nothing was further from my mind. It had been a disappointment to me that I could not enter the Anglican ministry, and when the opportunity presented itself of assuming “the sweet but heavy burden of the priesthood” under these conditions of greater freedom I gladly and happily embraced it. Had there been any thought of founding an independent church one would have taken information as to Abp. Mathew’s relationship

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<sup>ccvii</sup> Leadbeater, C.W., *The Science of the Sacraments*, ed. Kersey, European-American University Press, Dominica, 2007.

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with the other Old Catholic Churches and would certainly have decided to seek opportunity elsewhere. But things were not to be so. We found ourselves in relation with a devout and earnest congregation who had learned to value greatly the spiritual privileges which the movement afforded them. Experience had shown us that inevitably we should come to grief with orthodox leadership. There was no option but to go ahead, no matter how formidable and distasteful some of the outer consequences of that course were likely to prove. The decision to carry on was therefore taken.<sup>ccviii</sup>

By the time Wedgwood returned to Australia in July 1916 he was a bishop. He had initially held back from receiving consecration from Willoughby because he was not satisfied that he had acted openly in his approaches to Mathew. Accordingly, he approached other bishops consecrated by Mathew, and also Mar Jacobus (Herford), who had been consecrated by the Nestorians, but this was all to no avail<sup>ccix</sup>. Examining the issues concerning Willoughby directly, he found that the evidence pointed unequivocally in Willoughby's favour, and was therefore consecrated by him assisted by King and Gauntlett at a chapel specially erected at the Co-Masonic Temple, 13 Blomfield Road, Maida Vale, London W9, on 13 February 1916.

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<sup>ccviii</sup> Wedgwood, J.I., *Beginnings of the Liberal Catholic Church* (1937), retrieved from [http://www.global.org/Pub/JIW\\_History.asp](http://www.global.org/Pub/JIW_History.asp) in October 2009.

<sup>ccix</sup> Interestingly, an approach at this point was made to the Utrecht Union, and "it was replied by the pastor at the Hague that consecration would only be given after long and careful enquiry and when the movement could show itself well established, etc. [He did not, however, refuse.]" See *Burton*, vol 2, p 5

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An interesting issue occupied the Chapter meeting of 24 March 1916. Father Alfred Thomas Bennett Haines<sup>ccx</sup> was a priest of Mathew's church who was employed as a teacher under a local education authority. Conflict had arisen because the authority did not permit those who were in Holy Orders to be teachers. The decision of the Chapter was that it did not wish to take responsibility for this matter, and it was agreed that Haines would resign from the movement and that Wedgwood would testify that he had departed in good standing.

Returning to Australia, Wedgwood consecrated Leadbeater on 23 July<sup>ccxi</sup>, and Leadbeater explained this to Besant in a letter of 25 July,

“With His permission Wedgwood has consecrated me as a Bishop, on the understanding that I am at perfect liberty to wear my ordinary dress, and am in no way bound to perform any ecclesiastical ceremonies or take any outward part in the work unless I see it useful to do so, but am to act as intermediary between the Lord and this branch of His Church, referring to Him any points

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<sup>ccx</sup> Born in 1891, he was ordained by Willoughby in 1915. In October 1927 he was re-ordained by Winnington-Ingram. He moved to Canada where he was Vicar-General of the LCC, and was one of the founders of the Order of Antioch in 1933. On 8 December 1943 he was consecrated by Carmel Henry Carfora and as well as service in the NAORCC worked as a Congregationalist minister in Pennsylvania. In 1951 he was received into the PECUSA by the Bishop of Ohio. In 1954 he moved to Australia and served as an Episcopal priest there.

<sup>ccxi</sup> This was a private ceremony and at least initially only a limited circle were told of it, probably because it would prove controversial within the TS.

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of action or of doctrine upon which it desires instruction.

An interesting little glimpse of occult ways came to me the night after my consecration. My own Master referred very kindly to it, and spoke of the additional power to help that it had given to me; and the He remarked: "You thought you had given up all prospect of a bishopric when you left your Church work thirty-two years ago to follow Upâsikâ [H.P. Blavatsky]; but I may tell you that it would have been in this very year that you would have reached it if you had remained in your original work, so you have lost nothing except the emoluments and the social position, and have gained enormously in other ways. No one ever loses by serving Us!" That struck me as curious, for I had never thought of it in that way."

Wedgwood now published two key works, later to become known as the Statement of Principles and Short Summary of Principles (of the Liberal Catholic Church). These were outlines of the future direction that the church would take; Catholic in liturgy and ceremonial, while being liberal in the sphere of belief.

At the Synod meeting of 23 June 1917 it was reported that missions had been established at Nottingham, where there was now an oratory, Sheffield and Newcastle. There was also an oratory at Broadstairs under Seaton. Prospects were developing in Scotland, with lectures given under the auspices of the Revd. Narve A. Ellingson

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at Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee. On the other hand, J.A. Carter had resigned from the movement<sup>ccxii</sup>.

As well as Leadbeater, the Dutch nobleman the Jonkheer Julian Adriaan Mazel had been consecrated for the church<sup>ccxiii</sup>, and on 1 December 1917, Fr. William J. Collinson was ordained priest at Woburn Place. By the time of Collinson's ordination, there were ten priests in Australia, three in New Zealand and six in America.<sup>ccxiv</sup>

The Synod meeting of that 1 December also indicated its regret of the manner in which Mathew had dealt with the Utrecht Union. None of the clergy now in the movement had been involved in this, nor did they support Mathew's actions. They wished to make an "amende honorable" to Utrecht for Mathew's actions. However, the meeting was advised that the Utrecht clergy had recently made unfavourable comments concerning the English development of the Old Catholic movement, and this was to prove a barrier to such a desire for reconciliation.<sup>ccxv</sup>

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<sup>ccxii</sup> His subsequent career with Mathew and in the Church of England has been discussed in a previous chapter.

<sup>ccxiii</sup> On 24 June 1917 by Wedgwood assisted by Leadbeater.

<sup>ccxiv</sup> Between June 1917 and January 1920, 123 persons were baptized and 100 confirmed within the church in Great Britain alone.

<sup>ccxv</sup> At some point before 2 December, Wedgwood had written to the Archdiocese of Utrecht, "Les circonstances dans lesquelles l'Ancienne Eglise Catholique d'Angleterre se trouve aujourd'hui sont telles qu'il leur est impossible de changer l'orientation generale de sa politique ainsi qu'elles sont enoncees dans la declaration formelle de ses principes. Votre Grandeur sera peut-etre interesse d'apprendre que je viens de retourner en Angleterre apres un voyage en Australie et en Nouvelle Zelande. Nous avons la un clerge de dix membres avec un nombre de congregations faisant un nombre de 500 fideles. Notre clerge, inclus ceux en ce moment a la

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A further development on this occasion was the adoption of the new title for the church of “Liberal Christian Church (Old Catholic)”. However, the registered name of the church would be retained in respect of its oratory at Broadstairs. Unfortunately, at the meeting of 6 September 1918, Bishop King reported that there was already a body called the Liberal Christian Church. Furthermore, the name Old Catholic could not be registered without conflict both with Utrecht and with Williams’ body. The name Liberal Catholic Church (Old Catholic) was therefore adopted instead.

The church took further steps to disassociate itself from the work of the Order of Corporate Reunion, and at this stage, resolved that it would allow access to its altars to priests of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches “and other churches the validity of whose orders was indisputable<sup>ccxvi</sup>”. This policy was to be reversed in later years, with the abandonment of intercommunion, doubtless because there were those in valid orders (particularly those in descent from Mathew)

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guerre, est au nombre de 31 dont chacun a son activite publique avec une de nos congregations. Veuillez agréer l’expression de tous mes sentiments tres respectueux et devouees.

+ J.I. Wedgwood.

Eveque de l’Ancienne Eglise Catholique en Angleterre.

This letter essentially indicated that Wedgwood’s church was not prepared to compromise on the principles it had set out, and thus any common ground between it and Utrecht was outweighed by such differences.

<sup>ccxvi</sup> Burton vol 2, p 10

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with whom the LCC did not wish to associate itself, and indeed concerning whom it had little good to say.<sup>ccxvii</sup>

Leadbeater and Wedgwood began the work of revising the liturgy in order to arrive at a version that reflected the correct energies being transmitted as those were understood by Leadbeater. This immense labour resulted in an extensive and exceptionally elaborate liturgy of considerable aesthetic beauty. And in this work, both men were guided by what they believed to be the direct inspiration of the Ascended Masters. The following message of the Lord Maitreya to a Bishop is an example,

“Not for a moment would I have you sanctimonious or hypocritical, proud or self-conscious; yet I would that your mission should be ever present in your mind. Be natural, yet let your nature be one with Mine, as Mine is with the Father. That is the possibility which I have given to my Bishops through the link which I have made with them; yet can this link be kept bright only through

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<sup>ccxvii</sup> Burton's statement is typical, “The fact that Mathew, after leaving this Old Catholic communion, despite Wedgwood's plea, had submitted to Rome, made the position quite clear. That he subsequently set up another “church” of his own, and consecrated “wandering bishops”, without supporters or congregations, is only an irrelevant “chapter” in the ecclesiastical underworld.)” Such a viewpoint was clearly untruthful in the case of Williams, who certainly in latter years (Burton was writing at some point after 1968) had both supporters and congregations, who were highly active in London during the 1960s. The fact was that, as so often in this sphere, the LCC wished to establish itself as the only legitimate church of its kind, and admit to its conversation only those bodies which it considered sufficiently “mainstream” as to be to its advantage.



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constant use. Close and perfect is the communication which I have opened; it is for them to keep it open, and for this sleepless vigilance is needed. This gift I have given to them not for their enjoyment or advancement, but that through them My flock may be fed. They have been many to whom through the ages I have offered this; yet few have understood it and used it aright. I have chosen you to hold it in these last days of this dispensation, and to occupy until I come; and I know that the burden which I have thus laid upon your shoulders is a heavy one. You know more of what it means than many have done, and to bear it as it should be borne will need all your strength; yet I say to you that you can achieve if you will. See to it that you fail not in your trust. As I said to those whom I chose twenty centuries ago, so I say to you now: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'<sup>ccxviii</sup>"

Leadbeater initiated a number of his students into the priesthood, and lectured widely on his investigation of the energies behind the Mass and other aspects of Christian ritual. His main work became that of the Liberal Catholic Church, as that body gained momentum and attracted widespread interest from TS members and others.

The LCC, however, was never intended to be a "theosophical church" or merely to cater for TS members<sup>ccxix</sup>. Writing in 1921, Leadbeater made this very clear,

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<sup>ccxviii</sup> Leadbeater, letter to Besant, 14 May 1920.

<sup>ccxix</sup> *Keizer*, p 26, is strongly critical of the LCC's mirroring of the hierarchy and initiation of the TS with regard to Holy Orders. He says "Because the emphasis in Theosophy was initiation into higher

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“In case any question is asked, allow me to repeat, as head of the Liberal Catholic Church here, that it has never at any time sought to influence the Theosophical Society in any way whatever, and that it desires nothing from the latter but ordinary courtesy and abstention from misrepresentation and vilification.<sup>ccxx</sup>”

This comment was necessary, because there were within the TS parties who were strongly opposed to the LCC and indeed to any form of Catholicism.

As erstwhile LCC Presiding Bishop Ian Hooker has put it,

“Notwithstanding his heavy reliance on the members and resources of The Theosophical Society, Wedgwood was not building a church just for theosophists. From the beginning he saw the LCC as a haven for open-minded, liberally inclined Christians, no longer comfortable in mainstream churches. In time, he

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grades, Holy Orders became a kind of prize. Those who were ordained considered themselves to be of a more Gnostic rank than lay persons. Instead of becoming a servant, the Priest or Bishop became an esoteric guru. Naturally everyone wanted to become a guru, so minor orders were revived to slow the upward-mobile traffic of Ordination-seekers.” This last point is untrue, however. The minor orders were inherited by the LCC from Mathew’s ORCCGB and from normative practice in Rome at that time; they were never “revived” by the LCC.

<sup>ccxx</sup> Leadbeater, letter to Besant, 2 September 1921.

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believed, these people would form the majority of Liberal Catholics.<sup>ccxxi</sup>"

This intent was made clear in that, while preserving Catholicity and Apostolicity in its worship, the LCC permitted complete freedom of interpretation as far as matters of faith were concerned.

After the liturgy, Leadbeater worked on the LCC's hymnbook, under the inspiration of the Count de Saint-Germain<sup>ccxxii</sup>. Sixteen of the hymns were by Leadbeater himself; he had contributed both words and music to the volume. Indeed, the musical nature of services in the LCC is remarkable, with significant portions of the liturgies being sung. Possibly this reflects the influence of Wedgwood as an accomplished musician, but overall it suggests, rightly, that the liturgy set to music is more capable of inspiring the faithful towards Divine contemplation than spoken words alone.

The expansion of the church necessitated the formation of Provinces, and these were established in time in America, Australia and Holland in particular, in addition to Great Britain.

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<sup>ccxxi</sup> Hooker, Ian, *The Vision of the Founders* in The Liberal Catholic, vol 68, no 1 (Easter 2000), retrieved from <http://www.lcc.cc/tlc/2000-01/vision.htm> in October 2009.

<sup>ccxxii</sup> See letter from Leadbeater to Besant, 2 September 1921, "I have not, however, realized, until I heard my Master say so, that the Master the Count [de Saint-Germain] had ever inspired casual hymn-writers."

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The St Alban Press was established in early 1920 and the Revd. Theodore Bell<sup>ccxxiii</sup> was its first Manager. The Press continues to exist today, but in two separate branches, one operated by the LCC and the other by the Universal Catholic Church in California.

At the meeting on 9 October 1920, Wedgwood announced his intention to seek a meeting with the Anglican Bishop of Willesden in light of the resolutions of the 1920 Lambeth Conference which have been previously discussed. Of this situation, James Burton, who was himself previously an Anglican priest, said, "Headlam<sup>ccxxiv</sup> brusquely ignored our protest; a good scholar, he was a schoolmasterly man of almost intolerable conceit. The Lambeth Conference as a whole were not allowed to discuss the matter fully. Curiously, the Archbishop seemed to take sides with Mathew, despite their sometimes farcical clashes. (The psychology of the whole affair is interesting.) Ordinations by Mathew to the Priesthood had been accepted by the Anglicans, and they were in a most unhappy situation if they refused to admit subsequent ordinations, just so carefully performed with full intent to do as the Church does. The only way to sort out the situation was to "side" with Mathew and regard his movement as having been

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<sup>ccxxiii</sup> He was a guarantor of 2 Upper Woburn Place, but in October 1920 withdrew from that position and that of LCC Executive Officer in order to develop premises in Kensington Church Street. The opportunity to purchase these premises was offered to the LCC but rejected, with the result that Bell went ahead on his own initiative.

<sup>ccxxiv</sup> (Arthur Cayley), CH, (1862-1947), Anglican Bishop of Gloucester 1923-45 and previously Principal of King's College, London (1903-12) and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford (1918-23).

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“ended” by his submission to Rome!<sup>ccxxv</sup> What this submission had to do with the Church he had left, or how it affected its Orders, is puzzling, but at least this attitude added some appearance of gentlemanly propriety to the whole affair. Which was probably more important to the Anglicans of that era, rather than the facts of the case.”<sup>ccxxvi</sup>

By late 1920, Wedgwood had established relations with Archbishop Eulogius of the Russian Orthodox Church in Europe, who recognised the orders of the LCC, but not those of the Anglicans. Further application to the Church of England was met by support from some of its bishops but ultimately the resistance of Headlam prevailed in every case. This state of affairs prompted Wedgwood to write an Open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury from which we have already quoted.

In 1923, Leadbeater introduced Healing Services to the LCC. It is evident that these were occasions of considerable spiritual power, for he writes to Besant,

“Our Healing Service calls for a “Healing Angel”; in response to that there came a colossal and most dignified Angelic figure whom I have never seen before. Beyond a kindly smile of greeting, he took very little notice of us, but appeared to be pouring streams of force not only upon the patients, but upon other members of the congregation.

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<sup>ccxxv</sup> This was not the case, because the Anglicans did not, as far as can be seen, extend recognition to those ordained and consecrated by Mathew after 1916 either.

<sup>ccxxvi</sup> Burton, vol 2, p 20

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The power which other brought to bear was tremendous - so much so that two people fainted, and many others were affected in various ways. I shall endeavour humbly to make his acquaintance, if he will permit me to do so, because I think he could give us much valuable information, and possibly show us how to use his tremendous outpouring of force more effectively and economically.<sup>ccxxvii</sup>"

This aspect of the LCC was to have a far-reaching influence, and of course coincided with similar work being undertaken within Spiritualist and related churches. While it has continued to remain an aspect of the LCC, it may also be seen in other ministries such as that of Dennis Green (q.v.)

### THE STRUGGLES OF THE 1920s

Members of the TS as well as those of other churches, particularly the Roman Catholics, came to resent the success of the LCC during the 1920s, and as ever Leadbeater was a powerfully divisive figure. This brought about a series of difficulties from 1922 onwards, which coincided with the visit of Krishnamurti and his brother to Australia (this was the first meeting between Krishnamurti and Leadbeater for eight years). As well as reviving the 1906 attacks against Leadbeater, this time Besant and Wedgwood were also attacked, the latter being simultaneously accused of committing homosexual acts and having an affair with the wife of T.H. Martyn<sup>ccxxviii</sup>, the General Secretary of the TS. The

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<sup>ccxxvii</sup> Leadbeater, letter to Besant, 25 May 1933.

<sup>ccxxviii</sup> A vote of confidence in Leadbeater and Besant was held during the Australian Convention of the TS: this was passed by 85 votes to

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first of these charges was correct, while the second was not.

These allegations had arisen not merely out of external and TS pressures, but also from members of the LCC itself. As Bishop Lewis Keizer explains, it was integral to the inner tradition espoused by the LCC that such conflicts were bound to arise,

“In spite of the many faults of Theosophical Christianity, it must be seen in the larger view as a truly remarkable breakthrough for theology and ecclesiology. The reason that factionalism developed among the Liberal Catholics is not because they are worse than other Christians, but because they had adopted a church format for what was essentially a highly personal, mystic and individualistic path. Liberal Catholicism was really more akin to monastic orders or a secret brotherhood than a catholic church tradition. The spiritual problems which arose were those that a monk faces daily - pride, greed for spiritual advancement, pettiness over territories and identities.<sup>ccxxix</sup>”

What was said about Leadbeater, Besant and Wedgwood could not be proven, even after the police had investigated the matter, and Krishnamurti tried to reconcile Martyn to Leadbeater and Wedgwood. In the former case, he was successful, but not in the latter. As a

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15. Martyn was the promoter of a “Back to Blavatsky” movement that was opposed to the leadership of Besant and Leadbeater, and that was antipathetic to the LCC. At the meeting at which the vote was taken, Martyn’s main accusation against Leadbeater was that he was associated with Wedgwood.

<sup>ccxxix</sup> Keizer, p 27

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result, Wedgwood stepped down as Presiding Bishop of the LCC in 1922<sup>ccxxx</sup>, and was replaced by Leadbeater from 12 March 1923.

As Presiding Bishop, Leadbeater established his headquarters at a large house called The Manor in Sydney. Here he lived, surrounded by students and international visitors from all over the world. The LCC was once more back on track in earnest, and continued its expansion until Krishnamurti's dissolution of the Order of the Star in the East in 1929 led to many TS members becoming disillusioned and falling away. To a certain extent, this was a similar crisis in the affairs of the LCC to the non-appearance of the Second Coming to the Catholic Apostolic Church ("Irvingites"), which had entered its "Time of Silence" after 1901. Leadbeater felt that Krishnamurti's personality had obstructed the Coming and prevented his body from being occupied by the Lord Maitreya<sup>ccxxxi</sup>.

Leadbeater, at least, was undeterred by the events of 1929, and continued his work unabated, concerned increasingly with the idea that the key role of the TS/LCC was as a small-scale unseen helper of mankind, particularly through the LCC Eucharist, which even when privately celebrated established hidden vibrations of positive assistance.

The response of the LCC was, just as with the CAC, one of enclosure against the outside world and of an

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<sup>ccxxx</sup> He suffered grave ill-health as a result of untreated syphilis, and further problems as a result of the habitual use of cocaine. These issues severely restricted the scope of his activities in later years.

<sup>ccxxxi</sup> Tillet, *op. cit.*, p 796.



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increased conservatism. At the age of seventy-six, Leadbeater left Sydney in 1930 to return to Adyar, where he assisted Besant for the last years of his life. In 1934 he was on a return visit to Sydney when he took ill and passed away during a heatwave.

Wedgwood, meanwhile, had first taken a doctorate at the Sorbonne in Paris for studies in music, specifically organology, which were later published and became a standard reference work. While in Paris he made contact with the Russian Orthodox and Old Catholic churches. Once this period was ended, he continued working quietly within the LCC from 1924 onwards, firstly at Huizen in Holland. He was appointed LCC Bishop-Commissary for Europe in 1926. In 1928 he moved to Tekels Park, Camberley, Surrey, where he was active in building up the still-extant LCC parish there. He passed away in 1951, having some years previously suffered a serious decline in his mental health.

Elected as Presiding Bishop to succeed Leadbeater was Frank Waters Pigott<sup>ccxxxii</sup> (1874-1956), who had served as Regionary Bishop for Great Britain and Ireland since 1924. Pigott was responsible for a concerted attempt to preserve Leadbeater's work as an enduring tradition of the LCC, and to a large extent his approach also reflected Leadbeater's considerable Traditionalism and social conservatism on a number of matters. In time, it became obligatory for clergy in major orders to be

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<sup>ccxxxii</sup> He was ordained priest in the Church of England, conditionally reordained by Wedgwood on 18 January 1918 in London and consecrated on 9 March 1924 in Sydney by Leadbeater assisted by the Jonkheer Julian Adriaan Mazel and Irving Steiger Cooper.

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members of the TS, and also for them to follow a vegetarian diet and abstain from alcohol (the LCC uses unfermented grape juice at the Eucharist) and tobacco<sup>ccxxxiii</sup>. Although clergy were not stipended, their expenses on church business and those of the wider church were met from central funds. There were stringent requirements that any consecrated articles in the possession of clergy became the property of the LCC and had to be returned in the event of death or resignation.

In the United States, Regionary Bishop Irving Steiger Cooper<sup>ccxxxiv</sup> (1882-1935), who had been Leadbeater's secretary at one point, worked for many years on the "blue book" of ceremonial, published in 1934 as "The Ceremonies of The Liberal Catholic Church". This work codifies a form of worship that rivals that of the Catholic Apostolic Church for complexity and elaborateness, with the exception that the ritual of the LCC is in fact highly practicable, albeit requiring extensive training of its participants.

### THE LCC AFTER KRISHNAMURTI; THE SPLIT OF 1941

This aspect too marked the move of the LCC into an era where the emphasis was on the codification and

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<sup>ccxxxiii</sup> Leadbeater maintained that the devas were repelled by alcohol and tobacco.

<sup>ccxxxiv</sup> He was ordained priest by Leadbeater in 1918. On 13 July 1919 he was consecrated as regionary bishop for the United States by Wedgwood and Leadbeater, and established his base in California at the Krotona Institute on the extensive lands owned by the TS (called by them "Lomaland", and sold in 1942). Cooper was a leading supporter of Krishnamurti as the World Teacher and travelled with him and Besant promoting his messianic significance.

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enduring nature of religious practice, rather than the previous years of active searching for the ideal form of worship and structure for the church. Put simply, the LCC believed that this ideal form had now been found, and that it remained only to ensure that it was maintained as such a sacred duty required. Although freedom of belief was indeed still a feature of the LCC, an outsider would be struck more by the extent that what was nominally liberal was in fact decidedly unliberal in a number of aspects.

This also reflected a very real decline in numbers; the estimate of 45,000 members at the height of the movement has occasionally been cited since, but it is far wide of the mark, and by the 1940s the movement's adherents could be counted in the low thousands at best. The position since then has been one of steady decline.

In 1941, conflict developed within the LCC when Charles Hampton<sup>ccxxxv</sup> (1886-1958), who had succeeded Cooper as Regionary Bishop of the United States, wished to make Theosophy an optional belief for the clergy. Hampton himself was a Theosophist, but having in mind the expressed opinions of the Founders cited earlier, he believed that a liberal view of this matter was the right one. Presiding Bishop Frank Waters Pigott disagreed, maintaining that all clergy must continue to be members of the TS, and as well as deposing Hampton,

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<sup>ccxxxv</sup> He was ordained priest by Wedgwood at Krotona on 17 August 1917. In *Beginnings of The Liberal Catholic Church*, Wedgwood writes, "The first priest to be ordained in U.S.A. was my dear and honoured friend, Charles Hampton." He was consecrated on 13 July 1931 by Cooper assisted by Ray Marshall Wardall and George Sydney Arundale.

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began a lengthy legal battle over church property. Pigott appointed John T. Eklund as Regionary Bishop to replace Hampton.

The result of this was that two opposing factions developed, one supporting Hampton and the other supporting Pigott/Eklund. Judgement in the court proceedings was finally delivered in the Superior Court of the State of California on 13 April 1961<sup>ccxxxvi</sup>. This addressed the heart of the matter,

“The General Constitution (Exhibit 1) issued in 1945 provides for a presiding bishop (not mentioned in the Province of the United States Constitution). There are some discrepancies between the General and Provincial Constitution but nothing inconsistent with the independent power of the latter. Certainly there is no authority in the Presiding Bishop to remove the Bishop of the constituted and independent province.

Therefore the act of Presiding Bishop F.W. Pigott of London, England, on August 24, 1943, in attempting to “suspend” Provincial Bishop Charles Hampton and in later “removing” him was a nullity, as was his later attempt to appoint Bishop John T. Eklund as Bishop of the United States. He was never legally such and any attempted acts by him were a nullity. The legitimate Liberal Catholic Church in the United States rested in Bishop Hampton and has come down in legitimate succession to Edward M. Matthews, who is the duly consecrated and acting Regionary Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church in the United States. Since the church

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<sup>ccxxxvi</sup> Memorandum Decision no. 678, 744.

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

in England has separated itself from the Provincial Synod, it appears proper that he designate himself as presiding bishop.

The legal provincial synod is entitled to a decree enjoining all those claiming under the spurious “Provincial Bishop” John T. Eklund from representing themselves as “The Liberal Catholic Church” but such relief is not available in this action.”

Hampton had worked independently for a brief time after his deposition in 1943, and was in personal union with Mar Georgius of the Catholicate of the West, but in August 1945 joined the Old Roman Catholic Church in America and remained with this church until his death, not rejoining the Liberal Catholic Church. In this capacity he undertook a number of consecrations which had the effect of spreading the Liberal Catholic succession widely into the Free Catholic movement. He died in 1958.

The Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch – Malabar Rite has said of Hampton,

“Unfortunately Bishop Charles Hampton never learned of his legal victory. Most of his earthly possessions, such as his famous radio talks delivered during the 1940's, his vestments, and his crozier along with some of the archival information, records, and pictures of the Liberal Catholic Church, now rest in the archives of the Church of Antioch. It was Hampton's will that Herman A. Spruit carry on the spirit and love that he had dedicated with his entire life to. The legacy of Charles Hampton lives on, whereas Archbishop Richard Gundrey, the successor

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

of Matriarch Meri Louise, uses his crozier at each ordination, consecration and special Mass celebrated today. At Church Central, in Santa Fe, NM, rest the croziers of Patriarch Aneed and Bishop Charles Hampton, along with many other historical artifacts of the early days of the Independent Catholic movement in the United States.”<sup>ccxxxvii</sup>

The faction of the LCC led by Edward M. Matthews was now victorious, and from then on has been known as the “Liberal Catholic Church” within the United States, and as the “Liberal Catholic Church International” (LCCI) outside it. Initially confined to the Americas, it later absorbed Liberal Catholic groups in Holland and elsewhere in Europe, so that it acquired a similar international profile to the original LCC.

The faction led by Pigott adopted the name the “Liberal Catholic Church – Province of the USA” within America, forming a new corporation in Maryland in 1962, and has continued to call itself the “Liberal Catholic Church” outside it. This faction cited various arguments concerning trademarks in an attempt to present the decision of 1961 as a victory in its favour, despite the clear evidence that it had been judged to have “separated itself from the Provincial Synod” with consequent implications for the worldwide governance of the LCC. Not unsurprisingly, relations between the two factions have generally lacked warmth in the ensuing years.

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<sup>ccxxxvii</sup> *Apostolic Primacy in the Church of Antioch*, from [http://www.concentric.net/~\[tilde\]cosmas/apostolic\\_primacy\\_in\\_coa.htm](http://www.concentric.net/~[tilde]cosmas/apostolic_primacy_in_coa.htm), accessed January 2010.

THE OLD CATHOLIC ORTHODOX  
CHURCH AND JAMES  
BARTHOLOMEW BANKS

James Bartholomew Banks (1894-1975) was born at West Walton, Norfolk, into a Cambridgeshire landowning family who were listed in "Burke's Landed Gentry". He was educated at Woodbridge School, Suffolk, and then at Wells and Lichfield Theological Colleges, where he prepared for the ministry of the Church of England. The war intervened, however, and in February 1916 he enlisted as a private soldier in 3/28th County of London Battalion, The Artists' Rifles.

It would be no exaggeration to say that Banks' life was changed forever by his experiences in the First World War. He was appalled by its carnage, and although he personally did not see action when the Rifles were committed to battle in France in 1917 and 1918, he regarded many that were killed and injured there as close friends and was deeply affected by their loss. With the coming of peacetime he determined that their sacrifice should be commemorated.

Banks' faith had by then outgrown the boundaries of the Church of England, and in 1921 he was ordained priest, possibly by Bishop Frederick Samuel Willoughby (1862-1928) or by another prelate of the Mathew succession. Willoughby, a former Anglican priest who had been consecrated in 1914 and subsequently deposed by Archbishop Arnold Harris Mathew of the Old Roman

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Catholic Church in Great Britain, had provided the source of Holy Orders for the nascent Liberal Catholic Church before his submission to the Holy See at some point prior to July 1918, and his acts regarding Banks appear to have been the only subsequent occasions when he acted in such a way as to question this obedience, though apparently without incurring censure. On 9 July 1922 Willoughby consecrated Banks to the Episcopate.

Banks adopted the title of The Independent Catholic Church – the same as that which had been used by Archbishop William P. Whitebrook of the Vilatte succession for his own pre-war body – and proceeded to open the Service Church Pro-Cathedral of the Great Sacrifice, a commemorative edifice to those who had been lost in the Great War, on Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, London. This was in close proximity to the Roman Catholic church of Corpus Christi on the same street. An extremely rare photograph of the interior survives, and shows that it was fully equipped for public worship. The Union Flag was one of the two standards displayed.

As the Service Church started to attract a small number of adherents, so the need for a church organization grew. The first edition of its Liturgy was published in 1922 (there would follow other editions in 1931 and 1948), and included a calendar with dates of remembrance for a number of military festivals. Two hymnbooks – the Windsor Hymnal and the Service Hymnal – followed that included military and commemorative items by Banks himself (published under the pseudonym Seamus



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Michael O’Broughan)<sup>ccxxxviii</sup>. Both of these ran to several editions, the fourth (combined) of the hymnal appearing in 1955.

On 16 June 1923 Banks’s father Bartholomew was the recipient of a grant of arms from the College of Arms. This was matriculated as Sable, a pall or, between three fleurs-de-lys argent. Mantling sable and or. Crest — Upon a coronet composed of three crosses set upon a rim or, a stork proper, holding in the beak a fleur-de-lys gold. Livery — Dark blue.

One of the men who became interested in the work of the Service Church was John Matthew Cooper, founder of the Old Catholic Evangelical Church of God at Gloucester Circus, Greenwich, where he was a dealer in second-hand furniture; he also administered a Community of St Willibrord on the Isle of Wight for training men for the priesthood. On 22 June 1924, he received episcopal consecration from Banks. However, Banks and Cooper fell out after the consecration and

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<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> Anson quotes the central verse of one of the hymns Banks composed, “Remembrance Hymn”. This is to be sung to the tune of “Tipperary” to which it refers:

“Their long way to Tipperary  
Was much shorter than we thought  
But they never feared that journey,  
Nor the anguish that it brought.  
May we ask Thee, then, Beloved,  
To unite with them and know  
That we’re with them marching onward  
And progressing as we go.”

Banks revised the text of hymns by others to bring them in line with “the true teaching of the Divine Master Christ”. A number of hymns by Bishops Wedgwood and Leadbeater were reprinted.

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this led Banks to deny all knowledge of Cooper when subsequently questioned on the matter.

On 31 December 1924, Banks announced his election as Patriarch of Windsor. In 1925 he re-organized his church as The Old Catholic Orthodox Church<sup>ccxxxix</sup> (Apostolic Service Church). This church took the same doctrinal position as had Mathew and Willoughby, accepting the Old Catholic faith and in addition the 1672 Synod of Jerusalem, which Mathew had adhered to after declaring his independence in 1910. The published objects of the OCOC were as follows:

- a. “the promotion of the Catholic Faith, by all legitimate means, as being the only form of Religion and Philosophy directly of Divine institution, and therefore most satisfactorily suited to deal with present-day problems, and in the development of this, the restatement of that faith in terms of its relation to modern thought;
- b. the reunion, or absorbing of the various divisions now existing in Christendom.”

There was also a certain degree of openness to the esoteric modes of thought that were then common (though never officially sanctioned as such) within the Liberal Catholic Church; Banks himself believed in Christian Reincarnation, Universalism, and emphasised the female aspects of God equally with the male, although women were not admitted to Holy Orders. The OCOC also practised an open communion, stating that those of all creeds or none could be “aided in their

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<sup>ccxxxix</sup> Not the same as the body of that name led by Bishop James Columba McFall (q.v.)

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

spiritual progress after translation by the thoughts and prayers of those remaining on earth.” Something of the LCC’s teaching of karma was also encompassed in the belief that “evolution or spiritual unfoldment of Man takes place under an inviolable law of cause and effect.”

There were plans for an elaborate hierarchy that would have produced a miniature Vatican in terms of the offices and numbers described. The Synod was to be composed of four bishops as Sovereign Primate Chaplains, a Chancellor, Episcopal Barrister, Prelates, Protonotary-Apostolic and Nuncios-Apostolic. There would also be a Sovereign Primate Bodyguard composed of serving and former servicemen. These visions were never to be realized in practice, although the later organization of the Catholicate of the West in 1943 would take considerable inspiration from this example and go somewhat further along the road of turning it into a reality.

There was a particular appeal to serving and ex-military men who wished to offer themselves for ordination, and an emphasis upon Spiritual Healing, which it held “had been more or less ignored by other organizations of the Holy Catholic Church”, for which special services were provided. Three chivalric orders were established under Banks as Grand Master: the Sovereign, Noble, Religious and Chivalrous Orders of the Saint Esprit, Keys and Vigil and Sainte Couronne. Banks also announced that he would confer academic degrees in Arts, Divinity, Literature, Philosophy, Law, Sacred Law, Sacred Science, Music and Divine Healing, and added several doctorates to his postnominals.

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On 7 November 1925, Banks consecrated Paul Francis Cope, a medical doctor of Kansas City, USA. Archbishop Cope did not consecrate anyone to the Episcopate but the church he established continued under bishops of the Carfora succession. Cope on 5 March 1939 ordained to the priesthood Francis Xavier Resch who, dissatisfied with his ordinary's conservative approach, defected to become a bishop of Carmel Carfora's North American Old Roman Catholic Church. Following a reconciliation<sup>ccxi</sup>, Cope appointed Resch his auxiliary on 15 June 1941, and Carfora deposed him. Resch continued to lead the independent Archdiocese of Kankakee which in turn developed into the still-extant Traditional Roman Catholic Church.

The Service Church in Covent Garden appears to have closed its doors by 1936. In that year, Banks assumed the office of Universal Patriarch Archbishop of the OCOC, which now incorporated the Independent Catholic Church, Ancient Catholic Church and Apostolic Service

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<sup>ccxi</sup> This is explained at [www.oldcatholic.org/history](http://www.oldcatholic.org/history) (retrieved December 2009) in the following extract: "[Resch] describes this in a letter dated August 19, 1942 to Father Charles Bauer of Chicago: "the growth of the church was very slow because of the Archbishop's great care and solicitude against taking in men who were not worthy of the trust. He hesitated taking men into the church until I came along...but because his hesitancy to expand and reach out, I withdrew and went over to the North American Old Roman Catholic Church. I was consecrated a bishop in that church by Carfora. I soon learned that I had made a great mistake in joining that church. I went back to Archbishop Cope, to bask again in the sunshine of a saintly man, a man of whom anyone could be proud. After coming back, he told me that he had intended to consecrate me to the bishopric and prevailed upon me to accept the office of auxiliary bishop, which I did. The Archbishop is very conscientious, and he has kept the church free from all evil influences."

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Church. The first and last bodies were of Banks' own foundation, while the Ancient Catholic Church was a designation that had briefly been used by Archbishop Mathew after 1910 but subsequently forsaken.

At around this point, Banks acquired The Priory, 12, Matham Road, East Molesey, Surrey. This substantial sixteen-room property had its own outside chapel, which now took over from The Service Church as the place of worship of the OCOC and was designated the Priory Church of St. Michael and All Angels. Banks flew his armorial standard from a fifty-foot flagpole outside his home.

It was in 1936 that the Holy Star of Office of the OCOC was made at Banks' commission by Wilson and Gill, goldsmiths of Regent Street, London. The Holy Star is made of eighteen carat gold and palladium inset with amethysts and decorated with fine enamel depicting the arms of the OCOC. The reverse of the Holy Star proclaims its role as the badge of office of the Sovereign Primate and Lord Patriarch Archbishop of the OCOC and lists the rites unified by that church: Old Roman Catholic, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, and Anglican. The rite for the crowning of the Universal Primate (as recorded in the revised Pontifical of the OCOC) requires that the Holy Star of Office is presented to the Universal Primate-elect on a cushion and then ceremonially fastened to his robes with the words "Receive the Sacred and Princely Star of Office, which signifies that thou art a Sovereign Ruler of the Church of Christ."

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

On 28 May 1940, at the Priory Church in East Molesey, Banks, acting under Letters Dimissory from Archbishop Daniel Cassel Hinton of the American Catholic Church, consecrated Sidney Ernest Page Needham<sup>ccxli</sup> (1879-1962), Rector of Farthinghoe in the Church of England, who had been additionally attached to the American Catholic Church (established by Mar Timotheos (Vilatte) in 1915) since 1928. It was around this time that both Banks and Needham were admitted to membership in the Order of the Crown of Thorns by Prince-Abbot Edmond I, the latter as Prelat-Commandeur and Banks possibly to the same rank (the record of his appointment has been lost, although he is mentioned several times in correspondence in the San Luigi archives). Needham subsequently accepted office as a bishop of the Catholicate of the West under Mar Georgius of Glastonbury, whom he consecrated on two occasions<sup>ccxlii</sup>.

Around 1940, Archbishop Daniel Cassel Hinton, who was head of the American Catholic Church in succession to Frederick Lloyd and Mar Timotheos before him, appointed Needham as head of the University of Sulgrave. Sulgrave is a town around six miles from Farthinghoe which was the ancestral home of George Washington's family. The University had been chartered by the State of Delaware and succeeded the Intercollegiate University that had been led by Archbishop Churchill Sibley of the Vilatte succession on

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<sup>ccxli</sup> Not "Paget" as often given.

<sup>ccxlii</sup> At the same occasion as the first of these events, 4 January 1945, in the Priory Church of St Michael and All Angels, East Molesey, Needham subconditionally consecrated Mar Basilius Abdullah III (William Bernard Crow) and apparently raised an unnamed Anglican priest to the episcopate.

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the closure of that body. Although then as now it was perfectly legal for such a foreign institution to operate in England, a series of attacks on it in the press and in Parliament led to the decision to close the University<sup>ccxliii</sup> and establish as a new body the Western Orthodox University, which then became part of Mar Georgius' ministry.

The consecration of Needham seems to have led to conflict between Banks and Dr Geoffrey Francis Fisher, Bishop of London in the Church of England, as witnessed by an exchange of correspondence in 1944. A prelate of Banks' independence of spirit and means was not about to accept censure from an Anglican, however senior, and in August 1946 he administered conditional baptism, confirmation and the minor and major orders up to the priesthood to John Edward Bazille-Corbin (1887-1964) who would receive consecration from Mar Georgius as Mar Marcus Valerius in the Catholicate of the West in 1948. Bazille-Corbin was at this point rector of Runwell St Mary, near Wickford in Essex, in the Church of England, and would continue to hold that benefice until his retirement in 1961.

Around this time, Banks raised to the priesthood Francis Everden Glenn, who would be consecrated by Mar Georgius in 1959. Glenn became Superior of the Order of

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<sup>ccxliii</sup> Pace *Anson* p 375, there was absolutely nothing that American universities could have done to prevent its operation, since Delaware at that time permitted the free establishment and operation of institutions of higher education within the state (indeed, it did so until around 1999), and the University was therefore breaking no law either in Delaware or in England. Anson is as ever more concerned with discrediting the initiative than examining the facts.

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the Servants of Christ and bishop of the Catholic Episcopal Church (also known as the Old Catholic Church in England after 1969). He maintained contact with Banks after his consecration and some of his former priests were left with colourful memories of their visits to East Molesey. Mgr. James Phillips, sometime Vicar-General of the Order of Antioch, was a deacon under Glenn and remembers speaking with Banks on the telephone in those years. Fr. Tony Clavier, Glenn's erstwhile Vicar General, recalls a visit with Glenn to the Patriarch, by then in considerably advancing years, "It was an extraordinary day. The old boy was very large and infirm, wore a red piped white cassock, an enormous and valuable pectoral cross and a huge ring.<sup>ccxliv</sup>" Documents in the hands of Mathew and Willoughby were on display (their subsequent destination is unknown). We should recall that Banks was a believer in Reincarnation, for "the most astounding moment was when another cleric said that Banks reminded him of Cardinal Wolsey, to which Banks replied loudly, "You bloody fool, I am Cardinal Wolsey." Fr. Anthony Sayer-Richardson, a priest under Glenn, caused an incident when, coming across a ceremonial crown in Banks's chapel, he tried it on for size.

What is clear, however, is that by the 1960s Banks had experienced a significant deterioration in his health and had become considerably infirm. Glenn cared for him for a time, and Banks prevailed repeatedly upon Glenn to accept appointment as his successor. However, Glenn refused this since he could not by then accept the liturgy

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<sup>ccxliv</sup> Private correspondence with the author, January 2009.



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of the OCOC. This led to a difficult relationship between the two men in later years. However, it was Glenn who would conduct Banks's funeral, at which the Banks standard was flown from the hearse.

Banks's wealth led to an effective self-sufficiency for the OCOC and the Priory Church. He had accounts with the major theological publishers to the effect that every new publication they issued would be automatically purchased and delivered to him. He was profiled in the *Daily Sketch* of 9 February 1955, which discussed his financial position as an heir to his father's estates and described him dressed in riding garb and wearing a Stetson-style hat. Effectively he had become an unusual sort of oecumenical patriarch; while he had no effective jurisdiction over other churches, he both represented the union of Christendom within his own person and viewed his role as extending paternally over the autocephalous communions. However, just as has been the case with the Oecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Banks' determinations were not invariably accepted by those communions either in terms of the decisions themselves or his right to make them.

As Bishop Glenn had refused the succession Banks was faced with a dilemma, in that the only other bishop to whom he was close, S.E.P. Needham, was by then dead; he was without other regular clergy, and his family had never been sympathetic to his religious beliefs, remaining within the fold of Anglicanism. At this point the Alexian Brothers at Twyford Abbey were invited to undertake his care and in a will made in the last year of his life, Banks charged them with the continuation of his

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

church. He directed that his estate should provide for the establishment of a nursing home in his residence at East Molesey, but that the house and Priory Church should also continue to be used as the headquarters of the OCOC and as a Memorial both to those who had given their lives in the two World Wars and to Banks himself. He also made provision for the maintenance, promotion or advancement of the tenets and objects of the OCOC. As of 2013, the only part of these instructions that was being carried out was the operation of the nursing home.<sup>ccxlv</sup>

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<sup>ccxlv</sup> Today, a revival of the OCOC, designated The Old Catholic Orthodox Church (2013) functions as an inner, commemorative communion of the Abbey-Principality of San Luigi under Lord Patriarch Charles S.J. White. As previously, the titular Lord Patriarch exercises a symbolic oecumenical role with regard to the unity of the smaller communions and of the Church more widely, and is committed to the pursuit of these aims through a life of prayer and contemplation. There is no provision for other clergy or lay membership, save for the appointment of a Co-adjutor to the Lord Patriarch, presently the Prince-Abbot of San Luigi. The special Feasts of the OCOC are observed, which are Zeebrugge Day (April 23), Anzac Day (April 25), Ireland's Remembrance Day (August 22), Trafalgar Day (October 21), and Armistice Day (November 11). In addition, the revived OCOC commemorates the Lord Patriarch Banks on the anniversary of his passing to spirit, September 5.

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SUPPLEMENT:

DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS



Bookplate used by Mathew prior to the death of his father

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



The consecration of Mathew at Utrecht in 1908



Mathew (seated, right) signs the Act of Union with the Patriarch of Antioch, Gerrassimos Messara (seated, left) in 1911



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Arnold Harris Mathew

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Bernard Mary Williams

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James Columba McFall



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Signed photograph of Francis Herbert Bacon

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



Consecration of James Ingall Wedgwood.  
Front row L to R: Robert King, Wedgwood, Frederick  
Samuel Willoughby, Rupert Gauntlett



Charles Webster Leadbeater and Wedgwood

# MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



Leadbeater

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



Leadbeater, Annie Besant and Krishnamurti seated together at the Theosophical Society, 1911



Annie Besant as a Master Mason in the Co-Masonic Order

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



Pro-Cathedral of St Mary, Caledonian Road, London



Wedgwood at Tekels Park, Camberley

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



The LCC conference at High Legh, 1949. Back row: Rev. Ted Shepherd, unknown, Rev. Harry Farrow, Rev. Dr Eric Taylor. Front row: Rev. Alban Cockerham, Rev. Hockmeyer, Rev. Marsh, Rt. Revd. Frank Waters Pigott, Rev. Nevin Drinkwater, Rev. Sir Hugh Sykes, Bt.



Wedgwood's chalice on the altar at Putney

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



Consecration of E. James Burton at St Mary's, 1968





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The following is a translation of the 1911 Act of Union:

"Monsieur,  
Colleague and Brother in Jesus Christ, with open arms in the love of the Savior,  
I receive you among us, and I accept your oath of fidelity to His Beatitude, the Ortho-  
dox Patriarch and his holy Synod of Antioch, since those who hold our faith and wish  
to be united with us have never been prevented from joining us.

Praying God to bless you, and not only you but all those who come to us with you,  
we bless you in the name of His Beatitude the Patriarch and of the Holy Synod of Antioch.


Your Colleague and Brother in Jesus Christ,

GERASSIMOS MESSARRA,  
Prince Archbishop and Metropolitan,  
Orthodox Church of Beyrouth.

5th August, 1911.

# MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

## Documents issued by the Holy See, 1983

  
**CONSIGLIO**  
PER GLI  
AFFARI PUBBLICI DELLA CHIESA  
IL SEGRETARIO  
N. 1245/83

**NUNZIATURA APOSTOLICA IN ITALIA**  
Allegato II al Rapporto N. 15412/83  
del 5 Marzo 1983

DAL VATICANO, 3 marzo 1983

Eccellenza Reverendissima,

A nome di Sua Eminenza il Cardinale Prefetto, presentemente al seguito del Santo Padre nel Suo viaggio in America Centrale, mi pregio di fare riferimento allo stimato Rapporto N. 14902/82, in data 1° settembre 1982, con il quale l'Eccellenza Vostra Reverendissima trasmetteva copia della lettera del Vescovo della "Old Roman Catholic Church" Frederick Linale, desideroso di completare la propria genealogia episcopale.

Come Le fu a suo tempo comunicato telefonicamente, questo Consiglio ha chiesto a Mons. Annibale Ilari, Docente di Storia Benedettina nell'Università di Cassino, di svolgere le necessarie ricerche. E' ora giunta la risposta dello studioso, il quale ha potuto risalire di sette generazioni episcopali nella genealogia in parola.

Con piacere Le rimetto copia della lettera di Mons. Ilari e del suo allegato. Penso che sarebbe preferibile far giungere la documentazione al Vescovo Linale tramite la Nunziatura Apostolica a Londra, che potrà giudicare dell'opportunità o meno della trasmissione.

Profitto della circostanza per confermarvi con sensi di distinto ossequio

di Vostra Eccellenza Reverendissima  
dev.mo

*+ Michele Ilarini*

A Sua Eccellenza Reverendissima  
Monsignor ROMOLO CARBONI  
Nunzio Apostolico in Italia

ROMA

(con allegati)

# MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

MORR. PROF. ANNIBALE ILARI  
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Riccardo Forster 127

DISCENDENZA EPISCOPALE DI MONS. FREDERICK LEBLANS  
VESCOVO DI OBER - Glow

1° SCIPIONE REBIBA (c. 1504-1577)  
vescovo titolare di Ariccia (15 marzo 1541 - 1551)  
vescovo suffraganeo di Chieti (1541-1549)  
vicario generale di Napoli (1549-1555)  
vescovo di Mottola (1551-1555)  
arcivescovo di Pisa (1555-1560)  
arcivescovo di Troia (1560)  
patriarca titolare di Costantinopoli (1565-1573)  
cardinale del titolo di S. Pudenziana (1556-1565)  
cardinale vescovo di Alano (1573-1574)  
cardinale vescovo di Sabina (1574-1577)

morì a Roma il 23 luglio 1577, sepolto nella chiesa di  
S. Silvestro al Quirinale (via XXIV Maggio)..

Fonti: G. Van GULIK - C. EPEL, Hierarchia catholica medii et recentioris, III, Munster, 1923, p. 35 (IX,5) e passim.

N.B. Il card. Scipione Rebiba molto probabilmente è stato ordinato vescovo dal papa Paolo IV quando era Gian Pietro Carafa arcivescovo di Chieti, però non si ha nessuna prova. Nessuno storico, e tutt'oggi è in condizione di dire chi abbia ordinato vescovo il card. Rebiba, per cui conviene copiarla di questa, ed altre genealogie episcopali.

2° Il card. Scipione Rebiba del titolo presbiterale di S. Anastasia il 12 marzo 1566, nella Cappella Foline del Palazzo Apostolico in Vaticano ordinò GIULIO ANTONIO SALTORO arcivescovo di Santa Severina con l'assistenza di Annibale Caracciolo, vescovo di Isola, e di Giacomo Cesare de Giacomelli, vescovo di Belcastro.

Fonti: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, manoscritto Vaticano Latino 12312 ff. 218v-219r ; Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea Annad. XIII, 33 f. 6r

3° Il card. Giulio Antonio Santoro del titolo presbiterale di S. Bartolomeo all'Isola Tiberina, il 7 settembre 1566, basilica dei Ss. XII Apostoli, arcivescovo di Santa Severina, ordinò GIROLAMO BURNIERI vescovo di Ascoli Piceno con l'assistenza di Giulio Lasetti, vescovo di Reggio Emilia, e Ottavio Parmavicini, vescovo di Alessandria.

Fonti: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, manoscritto Urbinate Latino 1054 f. 451r.

*Annibale Ilari*

# MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

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 Riccardo Forster 127

4° Il card. Girolamo Berneri (1540-1611), vescovo suburbicario di Albano, il 4 aprile 1604, nella cappella della Sacristia Apostolica in Rom., ordinò GALEAZZO SANVITALE, arcivescovo di Bari, con l'assistenza di Claudio Rangoni, vescovo di Piacenza, e di Giovanni Ambrogio Caccia, vescovo di Castro.  
 Fonti: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea Armad. XIII, 33, f. 115rv

5° Mons. Galeazzo Sanvitale (c. 1554-1622), arcivescovo di Bari, il 2 maggio 1621, ordinò, nella cappella privata della residenza cardinalizia presso S. Pietro, il card. LUDOVICO LUDOVISI del titolo di S. Maria in Traspontina, arcivescovo di Bologna, con l'assistenza di Cosma de Torres, arcivescovo tit. di Adrianapoli, e di Ottavio Ridolfi, vescovo di Ariano.  
 Fonti: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea Armad. XIII, 33, f. 159v.

6° Il card. Ludovico Ludovisi (1595-1632) del titolo presbiterale di S. Maria in Traspontina, camerlengo di Santa Romana Chiesa, il 12 giugno 1622, nella basilica patriarcale di S. Maria Maggiore, ordinò LUIGI CAETANI patriarca titolare di Antiochia con l'assistenza di Galeazzo Sanvitale, arcivescovo di Bari, e Vulpiano Volpi, arcivescovo di Chieti.  
 Fonti: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea Armad. XIII, 33, f. 262v.

7° Il card. Luigi Caetani (1555-1642) del titolo presbiterale di S. Pudenziana, il 6 ottobre 1630, nella Cappella Paolina del Palazzo Apostolico del Quirinale, GIOVANNI BATTISTA SCANAROLI (o Scanaroli) vescovo titolare di Sidone con l'assistenza di Antonio Ricciulli, vescovo di Umbriatico, vicegerente del Vicariato di Roma, e di Benedetto Landi, vescovo di Possombrone.  
 Fonti: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, man. scritto Urbinate Latino 1100 f. 615r

8° Mons. Giovanni Battista Scanaroli (1579 - 1664), vescovo titolare di Sidone, il 24 ottobre 1655, ha ordinato vescovo di Frascati il card. ANTONIO BARBERINI junior con l'assistenza di Lorenzo Cavotti vescovo di (\*)  
 Fonti: Dictionnaire d'histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastique, XVIII, 177  
Segue quindi la genealogia episcopale secondo la lista trascritta da mons. Frederick Lirale

N.B. Il card. LUIGI CAETANI, il 6 ottobre 1622, ordinò nella stessa celebrazione altri tre vescovi: Pegrini, vescovo di Assisi; Loschetti, vescovo di Ascoli Piceno, ed Ulderico di CARPEGNA, vescovo di Gubbio. Dalla discendenza del card. ULDERICO di CARPEGNA si ha

Paluzzo Paluzzi degli Albertoni Altieri 2 maggio 1666  
 Vincenzo Maria Orsini, poi Benedetto XIII (3 febr. 1675)  
 Prospero Lambertini, poi Benedetto XIV (16. VII. 1724)  
 su questa linea si trova Giovanni L. Mastai Ferretti, poi Pio IX (3 giugno 1827)

e lo stesso card. Sebastiano Maggi (26 luglio 1953) attuale prefetto della S. Congregazione dei Vescovi.

*Luigi Lirale*

Inizia e di Antonio Pottoni

## MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



The Holy Star of the Old Catholic Orthodox Church

MATHEW AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT



James Bartholomew Banks

APPENDIX

ON THE PRESENT-DAY POSITION OF  
THE UTRECHT UNION REGARDING  
THE ENGLISH AND UNITED STATES  
OLD CATHOLIC GROUPS

The Utrecht Union has made clear thus far that there is no current possibility for those groups in the Old Catholic movement in Britain or indeed the USA to seek intercommunion, concordats of amity or any other type of relationship with it unless their churches are sufficiently wealthy to own substantial church property and have large numbers of clergy and laity.

In the United States, the Union took the decision to recognise only the Polish National Catholic Church, and no competing movements to it. The PNCC began its separation from the Union over the issue of women priests in 1997 and was eventually expelled from the Union in 2003, although its cathedral in Toronto reconciled with the Union on its own in 2004. Also in 2004, the Old Catholic Church in Slovakia seceded from the Union, again over the issue of women priests and the blessing of same-sex unions. Both the PNCC and the OCCS are now independent denominations.

Despite the position of the Union on the smaller churches as outlined above, there have been several bishops of such bodies who are in fact in communion with the Union by virtue of their simultaneous status as

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missionary bishops in the Philippine Independent Church (Aglipayan). The Philippine Independent Church, which is also in full communion with the Church of England, entered into communion with the Utrecht Union in 1965. Its episcopal succession, which is obviously independent of the Mathew line, is recognised as valid both by the Church of England (from which it originates) and the Utrecht Union. This gives rise to the unusual phenomenon of bishops who are in succession both from Mathew, via Old Catholic lines, and his *bête noire* Randall Davidson, whose succession passes into the Philippine Independent Church.

A further tacit acknowledgement of the validity of the Mathew line by the Union was indicated in the consecration of the founding bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Hungary of the Utrecht Union, Fr. Vidor Deák. Deák's consecrator, of necessity, was none other than the Presiding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, Adriaan Gerard Vreede, who had himself been consecrated by Wedgwood.

The Utrecht Union may be the largest lineal descendant of the Old Catholic movement, but it is not the only such descendant, nor are those churches that are not affiliated to it in any way lesser heirs to the heritage of Gul and Mathew - the Utrecht Succession. Because succession in the Catholic Church vests in individual bishops, not purely in this or that denomination, every bishop who has been validly consecrated in the line of Mathew inherits the full and unimpaired apostolic succession that he himself inherited from the Utrecht Union bishops Gul, van Thiel, Spit and Demmel. Just as the Utrecht Union retained its validity even after it had



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separated from Rome, the successors of Mathew, who represent the widest possible spectrum of theologies and individuals, retain their validity and apostolic history despite their separation from Utrecht. They preserve the freedom of conscience that characterises the history of Utrecht's own diocese as recounted above.

## ERWIN KREUTZER AND ALBERT DUNSTAN BELL; THE MARIAVITE SUCCESSION

Perhaps surprisingly in view of the events described above, a further Utrecht Union line has apparently passed into the smaller churches some years after Mathew. This results from the reported consecration of Albert Dunstan Bell by Erwin Kreutzer, Old Catholic (Utrecht Union) Bishop of Bonn, Germany. Kreutzer and Bell were both admirers of Adolf Hitler.<sup>ccxlvii</sup>

Kreutzer himself was in direct apostolic line from Gul. It is said that assisted by Utrecht Union bishops Henricus Johannes van Vlijmen, 13th Bishop of Haarlem (himself consecrated by Gul), and Johannes Hermannus Berends,

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<sup>ccxlvii</sup> See Old Catholics and Nazism, *The Guardian*, 19 December 1935, p 13. "A churchly declaration of admiration for Herr Hitler and National Socialism...was made by Dr. Erwin Kreutzer, the Bishop of the Old Catholic Church in Germany, when he took the oath of allegiance to the State before Herr Kerrl, the Minister for Church Affairs, yesterday. "Our Church," declared Bishop Kreuzer... "feels itself associated with the Third Realm in heartfelt devotion. We thank it because it has respected the individuality of our small minority... I greet the Leader"...In the course of his reply expressing his satisfaction with the loyalty of the Old Catholic Church, Herr Kerrl reaffirmed that National Socialism stood for "positive Christianity" and added, "The future belongs to those churches which know best how to unite racial and human interests within the framework of universal Christianity."

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Bishop of Deventer, Kreutzer consecrated Bell subconditionally on an unknown date in 1939. Bell was a bishop of the NAORCC<sup>ccxlvii</sup> and in turn consecrated Edgar Ramon Verostek for the NAORCC, who was active in consecrating other bishops, and who thus ensured that the line from Kreutzer has spread widely within the Free Catholic movement.

The Kreutzer consecration of Bell is likely significant, albeit tentatively so pending more secure evidence surrounding the event, because it means that many of the smaller churches may not only have a lineal descent from the Utrecht Union that is not through Mathew, but one that dates from well after his time.

It should also be pointed out that a further Utrecht link is provided through the Mariavite line of Kowalski, which passed into Mar Georgius' organisation in 1955 and thus to many other groups.

Both of these lineages provide a link within living memory that - just as the Mathew succession - reinforces that, although there may be a hopefully temporary separation between Utrecht and her independent descendants, that link is forever imprinted upon living history.

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<sup>ccxlvii</sup> However, Carfora came to disbelieve Bell's assertion that he had been consecrated by Kreutzer, and so he deposed him.

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Much of the scholarship of the Free Catholic movement has been published privately, through independent presses, colleges and guilds as well as by churches themselves. Often, these lack exact details of publication and dates. Where this is the case, as much information as is available is given below.

Wherever possible, I have preferred to work from digital resources in preparing a book of this kind, aware that digital resources are generally more frequently updated and more recent in origin than their paper counterparts. Where both a digital version and book version of a text exist, it is the digital version that I have consulted as a primary text.

Alexander, Mar (Bertil Persson)

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John Kersey was educated at grammar school in London and at universities in Europe, Africa and Central America. He holds doctorates in divinity, education and the humanities. He was a lay-worker for twelve years in a number of different denominations before serving two non-Apostolic ministries in London. The decision of the latter community to seek Apostolic ordination brought him into contact with the Old Catholics, and since 2006 he has been responsible for leading ministries that have had direct contact with their tradition. He currently leads the Apostolic Episcopal Church, a Continuing Anglican church, and the Abbey-Principality of San Luigi, as well as holding representative office for the Order of Corporate Reunion.

He has taught and held management positions in further and higher education, and in 2003 was one of the founders of European-American University, an international network of campuses in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Today, he serves as President and Director of Academic Affairs of this organisation and as a scholar is concerned primarily with historical aspects of ecclesiology, education, and music. His books include "Education Without The State" (2009), "Joseph-René Vilatte (1854-1929): Some Aspects of his Life, Work and Succession" (2011), "The Radical Traditionalist Today" (2015) and several editions of classic Liberal Catholic texts.