

LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

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to all members of the GES presided by the Rt. Rev. Ian Hooker, and to:

TO ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN OUR CHURCH

This is a short report on the important happenings the past months on the 9th June 2003 our 'new' Liberal Catholic Church was inaugurated at Naarden, Netherlands.

In this Church, based on the original Liberal Catholic doctrine, all degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders are to be open to suitable male and female candidates.

Moreover the entire Episcopate and all Clergy of the former Liberal Catholic Province of the Netherlands are re-integrated as full members of the General episcopal and Clerical Synode respectively, without restriction.

The inauguration was made possible, after a unique input of a policy group together with members and clergy of the Dutch Province. It took almost six months to reach a crucial decision: separation from the current General Episcopal Synod, though with a possibility of reunification on certain conditions.

The decision was taken and announced on the annual 'Landdag' - a national church gathering - on Whitmonday after Pentecost Mass. At this meeting Tom Degenaaars was appointed Presiding Bishop and Frank den Outer Regional Bishop of the Netherlands. Three suspended priests were re-installed with immediate effect.

It has to be emphasized that most of our Dutch members having voted to support that decision, we still feel to be Liberal Catholics, basing our work on the same doctrine and the same liturgy. Our philosophy differs from that of the 'old GES' in that we recognize a real Church democracy and complete equality and equivalence of men and women for the law of Christ, which is the law of love and compassion. This will also require a significant change in our interpretation of the canonical oath of obedience in our Church, taking into account that our own conscience together with national laws and international charters must prevail when it comes to applying church rules and regulations.

At an episcopal meeting at Grindsted in Denmark on 2nd and 3rd July this year, it was agreed to offer mutual intercommunion with the Liberal Catholic Church in Sweden and Belgium. This means that traveling clergy will be authorized to serve and celebrate within the territories of Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands..

Finally a vote of thanks to clergy and members of the Dutch Liberal Catholic Church who so successfully have contributed to the continuation and wellbeing of our church in the Netherlands.

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