

INTERNATIONALE ALT-KATHOLISCHE BISCHOFSKONFERENZ DER UTRECHTER UNION  
INTERNATIONAL OLD-CATHOLIC BISHOP'S CONFERENCE OF THE UNION OF UTRECHT

PRÄSIDENT : DER ERZBISCHOF VON UTRECHT

Amersfoort, 7 July 2006  
Arch.nr.N.21

The Rt. Rev. Gerard La Plante  
715 East 51st Avenue  
Vancouver B.C. Canada V5X 1E2  
CANADA

Dear Bishop LaPlante,

As already mentioned in the email of 25 April 2006, written on my behalf by my secretary Mrs. Folkers, the request of the Old Catholic Church of British Columbia to become a member of the Union of Utrecht was discussed at the last session of the International Old Catholic Bishop's Conference (IBC), that took place from 26-31 March in Switzerland.

It is a pleasure for me to inform you, on behalf of the Bishop's Conference, about the positive result of that discussion. The bishops invite you to take part in their conference and are ready to welcome your church as a member of the Union of Utrecht after a period of introduction to one another.

As you know the Union of Utrecht is a communion of churches and therefore the bishops are very concerned about the integration of a new member. They want to be careful and therefore they consider this period of introduction as a very important one. It must become a period of exchange and common reflection which grounds our future relationship as sister churches. Experiencing our common commitment to the Old Catholic identity and its realization nowadays, will offer us the best opportunity to become real partners.

In the opinion of the bishops this period of introduction should last 6 years, until 2012. During this period you will have a special status within the Bishop's Conference allowing you to join in all of the work of the conference but you will not yet have the right to vote.

Next to your participation in the Bishop's Conference, the bishops propose the following initiatives to be taken before 2012.

1. It would be interesting to create some opportunities for your clergy to reflect on and to orientate themselves to the Old Catholic theology like it has taken shape within the Union of Utrecht. Therefore we propose to organize a week of theological reflection for them, every other year (three times). Professors of our faculties will be happy to accept an invitation to lecture on important Old Catholic themes.
2. Almost every year an International Old Catholic Theologian Conference is organized in Europe. It would be of help to send some of your clergy to it. Those conferences are not only of importance because of their content, the encounter between the participants often creates fruitful links that are important for the cohesion of the Union of Utrecht.
3. The IBC expects new members of your clergy to have had the same training as the Anglican Church of Canada expects from their clergy.
4. The IBC asks you to contact the Saint John's parish of the Polish National Church in Canada during the next year and to set up a common strategy for collaboration and exchange.
5. The IBC invites you to visit our European churches. We are ready to organize a European trip for you which will give you the opportunity to be introduced to our churches and bishops. Perhaps this visit can be organized following your attendance at the IBC next year.

We do hope, dear Bishop LaPlante, that those initiatives will enable our clergies and ourselves to grow into a closer relationship with one another which should result in a normal membership of the Union of Utrecht in 2012.

Towards that moment the IBC also has to reflect on the validity of the ordinations within your church. As you represent a real ecclesiastical community and as you certainly had the right intention with ordaining, we do not expect major problems concerning this issue.

Checking our files at this point, we concluded we did not yet receive the official certificates of your election neither of your ordination. May I request you to send us these documents, as it is requested in the Guidelines of the IBC with respect to the recognition of a church as independent Old Catholic Church of the Union of Utrecht.

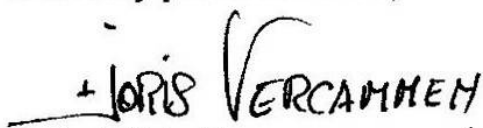
Dear Bishop LaPlante, we hope your church will be able to finance the proposed initiatives as no church of our communion has the possibility to invest financially in it. Above this we are aware that the process of integration will not only cost money, but also particularly human energy and we are ready to do our best in creating excellent conditions to support it. We hope you will understand that we do not intend to make admittance superficially high and that you will understand our concern about both the cohesion and the identity of the Union of Utrecht, being a communion of churches, as already said before.

The integration of the Old Catholic Church of British Columbia within the Union of Utrecht is certainly a divine challenge and a spiritual adventure to all of us. Therefore we do believe that the Holy Spirit will guide us on the way to one another. We thank the Lord for inviting us to open our communion and we believe you are a gift to all of us. We pray for you and your church that you may be strengthened in your calling and enjoy the love and the peace of the Lord in your midst.

Dear Bishop LaPlante, I hope to receive an answer from you to this letter in which you declare yourself ready to go the proposed way of integrating your church into the Union of Utrecht. I already would like to inform you that next meeting of the IBC is intended to be held from 4-8 February 2007, also in Switzerland. I hope you will be able to attend this meeting.

I am looking forward to meet you!  
May the Lord bless you and your church!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Joris A.O.L. Vercammen  
President

# First Report

## Summary of the Old Catholic Church of BC

### And the Utrecht Union of Old Catholic Churches

#### Introduction

Starting in the summer of 2000, due to an uncharitable view of the Old Catholic groups in America on the Internet by the German Old Catholic Church, Bishop Gérard LaPlante – who knew the then Vicar General of the German Old Catholic Church Fr. Hans-Werner Schlenzig – came to the defense of these groups. Under the advice of Fr. Schlenzig and Bishop Joachim Vobbe of the Old Catholic Church of Germany, we started correspondence with the Utrecht Union. Letters, memos, faxes, etc. were sent and received.

*Attached is a listing of all the documents and letters.*

#### Long application process

On the 13 March 2002, the Rt. Rev. Michael Ingham, Bishop of the Anglican diocese of New Westminster, answered a letter sent by the Utrecht Union (20 February 2002) " ..enquiring about his knowledge of the Old Catholic Church of BC." His response was positive but not factual. This letter caused a strain in the relationship of the Old Catholic Church of BC and Bishop Michael Ingham; in protest members, clergy, and friends of the Old Catholic Church wrote to Bishop Michael about it. A scheduled meeting to be held between Bishop LaPlante and Bishop Ingham was cancelled by him on 11 April 2002. To the credit of Bishop Ingham – he was misinformed – cordial and fraternal relations were resumed and are continuing to this day.

In a letter dated 11 June 2004, Bishop Vobbe informed Mr. Don Roy (Vice President of the Board of the Old Catholic Church of BC ) – in German – concerning the admissibility of the Old Catholic Church of BC into the Utrecht Union. He stated " that in a discussion with the Vicar General Schlenzig I only mentioned that it would be of advantage, if you would make an official application to join the International Bishop's Conference" .

*It is to be noted that due to Bishop LaPlante, the Old Catholic Church of Germany gained as members Mr. Jürgen Alsbach, his wife, and later his infant daughter Lina Sophie who was baptized by Bishop LaPlante at St. James Church (Jakobuskirche), in Koblenz, Germany on 2 June 2006. He is on the board of the Church. Another couple, Mr. & Mrs. Benno Riehl - also from Koblenz, were married at St. Raphael's Old Catholic Church, Vancouver, Canada, in January 1991 and joined the Old Catholic Church of Germany via St. Raphael's Old Catholic Church. Their two daughters were baptized at St. James Old Catholic Church (Jakobuskirche) in Koblenz, Germany.*

Further letters from the Utrecht Union and its representative Archbishop Vercammen followed. On the 21 January 2005, the International Bishops' Conference asked the Old Catholic Church of BC to pay for the travelling expenses and lodging of the Rev. Fr. Jürgen Wenge for a personal contact, to "...send a theologian to you with the aim to become more familiar with your situation... Unfortunately it is impossible for the IBC to pay for the visit of its representative. Therefore we kindly request you to pay for his travelling (flight Germany/Canada in economy class) and to host him during his visit... it should be clear that the IBC is taking your request very seriously." The letter was signed by Mrs. A.M. van Kasteel-Folkers, the Adj. Secr.

### Acceptance

In a letter dated 7 July 2006, sent to Bishop LaPlante by the Presiding Bishop of the International Old Catholic Bishops Conference of the Utrecht Union the Most Rev. Joris A.O.L. Vercammen, he stated *"...the Bishops invite you to take part in their conference and are ready to welcome your Church as a member of the Utrecht Union... We thank the Lord for inviting us to open our communion and we believe you are a gift to all of us."*

In June 2006 – as stated earlier – Bishop LaPlante went to baptize Lina Sophie Alsbach at St. James (Jakobuskirche) Old Catholic Church, Koblenz, Germany assisted by the Old Catholic Priest of the parish, the Rev. Fr. Ralf Staymann.

We also received an inquiry from Dom Klaus Schlapps of the Order of Port Royal (Old Catholic) from St. Severin in Germany on June 30, 2006, asking Bishop LaPlante to supervise and incardinate some of his clergy in North America. Bishop LaPlante referred this matter to Archbishop Vercammen because he did not want to interfere with the diocese of the German Old Catholic Church.

### International Old Catholic Congress in Freiburg, Germany, 7 – 11 August 2006

In a letter sent to Bishop LaPlante on 6 July 2006 by Dr. Frauke Schmitz-Gropengiesser of the local congress committee, she stated: *"We are pleased that you intend to participate in the Old Catholic Congress in Freiburg"*. Reservations for the room, travelling, expenses – including the congress fee - were paid by Bishop LaPlante, so the Bishops of the Utrecht Union were well aware of Bishop LaPlante's visit to the congress.

On Wednesday 9 August 2006 at 3:00 pm, a celebration of the Holy Eucharist of the Union of Utrecht commemorating 75 years of the Bonn Agreement with the Anglican Church was held at St. Martin's Roman Catholic Church in Freiburg, Germany. Celebrants were Archbishop Vercammen, Archbishop Rowan Williams (Anglican Church), Bishops of the Utrecht Union and non-members of the Utrecht Union also participated: The Most Rev. Godofredo J. David, Supreme Bishop of the Independent Philippine Church, the Bishop of the Swedish Lutheran Church, the Most Rev. Anders Wejryd, the Rev. Canon Gregory K. Cameron, Deputy Secretary General of the Anglican Communion and others. To his surprise, Bishop LaPlante was not invited to participate, contrary to the letter of acceptance *"..as a gift to us ...are ready to welcome your Church as a member of the Utrecht Union..."* see the letter of 7 July 2006 by Archbishop Vercammen. Bishop LaPlante was seated with the guests of other denominations - the Roman Catholic Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Evangelical Church of Germany, etc. – and not one word of being accepted as a new member was mentioned while every other non-member was publicly welcomed.

In a meeting he brought this up with Archbishop Vercammen and told him of his disappointment and feeling of betrayal by their actions contrary to their written statements. Archbishop Vercammen told him: *"You are in the Union! When you will come back next - February 2007 for the Bishops' conference – please tell them of this kind of treatment and rightly make your feelings known to them " - "...you are part of the Union and can use this on your business card and letterhead."* On the next day, Thursday 10 August 2006 the Old Catholic Church of BC and Bishop LaPlante were mentioned in the meeting in the hall of the Karlschule.

When Bishop LaPlante met Archbishop Williams of the Anglican Church, he greeted the Archbishop mentioning best wishes from his brother Bishop the Rt. Rev. Michael Ingham of the New Westminster diocese in Canada, "I know, you mentioned it to me yesterday" he responded in a cold, distant manner, unfriendly towards a brother in Christ.

Upon his return to Vancouver, Canada, Bishop LaPlante called a board meeting, clergy and parishioners, and told them of his trip; that the welcome was not sincere, mentioning his experiences stated above. His feeling was not to go to the International Bishops' Conference to be held in February 2007 but to send someone to represent us. The majority voted for sending Bishop LaPlante at that meeting, despite the Bishop's reluctance.

### In the News

The Anglican Journal (official newspaper for the Anglican Church of Canada) published an article regarding our acceptance on 1 December 2006. The Canadian Press also wrote a story (27 December 2006) which appeared in the CBC (27 December 2006) and many Canadian newspapers [Toronto Sun, The Chronicle Herald (Halifax), Times-Herald (Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan) The Daily News (Truro, Saskatchewan), Daily Herald (Prince Albert, Saskatchewan), Cape Breton Post (Sydney, Nova Scotia), Niagara Falls Review (Ontario), Belleville Intelligencer, (Ontario), to name a few] – all last week of December 2006, first week of January 2007, picked it up and published the news as well.

This publicity for the Utrecht Union of Old Catholic Churches was well received and a first in Canada from coast to coast.

A front page article on the Church, its work, history, clergy was also published 10 February 2007 in the Vancouver Courier followed by another write up in the same newspaper on 8 June 2007 after the consecration of Bishop Jürgen Schmode.

### International Bishops' Conference in Wislikofen, Switzerland, 4 – 8 February 2007

On January 26, 2007, Bishop LaPlante and Fr. Claude Lacroix (Old Catholic Church of BC in Lac Beauport, Québec) departed for Europe - air travel, lodging, expenses were paid by the Old Catholic Church of BC – “as a guest of the International Bishops' Conference of the Union of Utrecht” to be held in Wislikofen, Switzerland 4 – 8 February 2007. This location is a former Roman Catholic Monastery (still belonging to the Roman Catholic Church) but operated by lay people under contract for room & board; different associations, organizations, etc. use these facilities for conferences (see [www.propstei.ch](http://www.propstei.ch)). The Chapel is still used for the locals and visitors.

The events at the International Bishops' Conference are in the report of Bishop LaPlante here included.

### The Future

Now our Church is recognized from coast to coast and continuing its “missionary work”. Our prayers and love will not cease toward all and permit me to quote a part of the sermon from Archbishop Rowan Williams on 9 August 2006 at the International Old Catholic Congress during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in Freiburg, Germany:

*After all, when God comes to live in a home or a human life, He disturbs and changes things. He is not a quiet or an easy guest, and once we have let Him through the door, we cannot trust Him to behave conventionally. Remember the invitation He accepts from Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7? Jesus may be a guest but He is quite capable of criticizing His host's hospitality and exposing*

*its limits, the fear and contempt that lie close to the surface of an apparent welcome. We may think we should like Him to come to our house; but it is not a safe assumption that we shall feel at home with Him when He arrives. The places where we live are all of them too small for Him, and only as we allow our hearts and imaginations to grow can we possibly begin to get used to this stranger who wants to be at home with us.*

Prophetic words, indeed, let's try to practice it.

The peace of our risen Lord Jesus Christ to All.

Rt. Rev. J. Gérard LaPlante



## Second Report February 2007

### *International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference Wislikofen, Switzerland, 4 – 8 February 2007*

I departed January 26, 2007, for Frankfurt, Germany and arrived the morning of January 27, 2007. I was met at the airport by, Mr. Jürgen Alsbach, from Koblenz (Simmern) Germany, a good friend of mine and the Church. He joined the Old Catholic Church in Koblenz via St. Raphael's Old Catholic Church over 14 years ago and is on the board of the Church! I baptized his daughter, Lina Sophie, last June (2006) at St. Jakobus Old Catholic Church in Koblenz. His wife, his parents, Mrs. Barbara McKenzie (Bellevue, Washington, USA), Mr. James Gee (Vancouver, B.C.), many local friends and relatives were all present for this happy occasion.

I stayed at Jürgen's residence in Simmern until February 2, 2007. He then drove me to Haarlem, Holland to meet the Old Catholic Church Bishop, Rt. Rev. Jan-Lambert Wirix-Speetjens and he took us for lunch. After, Jürgen departed for Simmern. In the evening, the Bishop took me to the Parish of Anna + Maria where the Priest, (called here Pastor) Peter Feenstra showed me the inside of the Church and old vestments (similar to the ones at St. Raphael's) are stored. His wife is another Pastor and teacher of theology – Angela Berlis who takes care of the children and Church.

I also visited another Church – large compared to the rest – near the North Sea, also in Holland. The Pastors Münch there are also a team and they lived in the rectory of the Church (3 children I believe) and here the Priest showed me a very old monstrance still being used in that Parish (Egmond aan Zee). Bishop Jan-Lambert joined me, the Priest, his wife, and two parishioners for an evening prayer service in the Church conducted by a young man with an incense burner lit during the service in front of the altar rail. The service lasted about half an hour. I was surprised because last August in Freiburg, Germany Archbishop Vercammen told me that it was not part of the Old Catholic tradition. I was a guest of the Bishop of Haarlem at a local restaurant and then he drove me back – about one hour – and arrived at Archbishop Vercammen's residence at 11:30 pm. I stayed at this house for two nights.

#### Saturday 3 February

In the morning Archbishop Vercammen took me by train to Utrecht to visit the cathedral, the Dean, and questioning for about 2 hours by Dr. Angelis Berlis. As mentioned earlier she is

married to Pastor Peter Feenstra and she stated that "they have a tradition that the consecration of Gene Robinson was not correct, that despite their reputation the Dutch have high morale, etc." Again I was surprised at all of that, and told her that the 'Robinson Case' should be discussed with the Episcopal Church of the USA, and that Archbishop Vercammen was at the installation of the Lady Bishop, and he, as the representative of the Union of Utrecht, should raise these concerns. It has nothing to do with me or our Church. She also asked me if we have "Canon Law"! "No," I replied, "Send us yours!" The Dean asked me why there was a list of my Episcopal succession, and suggested it should be removed. Archbishop Vercammen added that to say on the Internet that we are the sole representative in North America should also be removed from the Internet site as not to offend the Episcopal Church – just say "Utrecht Union". This was done when I talked by phone to Fr. Jürgen the next day. I do not use the internet and am not interested in it. Fr. Jürgen does all the internet work for our Church.

After this visit of Utrecht with Angela and the Dean (by the way: Angela is the one I met in Freiburg last August and on the morning of the second day sat with her for a coffee and told her at that time that it was not very polite and strange that as a new member of the Utrecht Union, I was not invited to concelebrate, while non-members were invited such as the Church of Sweden and the Independent Philippine Church, and she left excusing herself – the next day the Old Catholic Church of BC was at least mentioned.) Archbishop Vercammen was surprised that I knew her already. I learned that she was the President of the committee of the organization for the August 2006 celebration! We took the train back to Amersfoort where the Bishop's house is situated. It belongs to the estate of the Old Catholic Church and very plush and in a wealthy area – the house is very spacious and modern and upon a large piece of land (for Holland.) Certainly not a poor district. The former seminary for the Old Catholic Church is about 5 minutes from the Bishops' residence. It is very well built and it was financed by "The Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA and the Polish National Catholic Church of the USA" (Entrance Plaque). It ceased to be a seminary after 10 years. It rents to different agencies and the Chapel is rented to a group of Russian Orthodox, who moved often over disputes, I was told.

It was about 1 p.m. Saturday, February 3, and Archbishop Vercammen told me that he was going to visit family members in Belgium, and he would be back at 11 p.m. We stopped at the seminary, where the Priest (Pastor) of the Parish Ss. James and Augustine was preparing a group of about 15 people to be lay readers. Archbishop Vercammen gave me the key of the house. I served myself coffee and toast in the 'seminary' kitchen as the caretaker told me that he is hired and not a believer of that faith! So the Pastor van der Velde, who is also the Pastor at The Hague, told me that Archbishop Vercammen asked him to take me to his Church at The

Hague. He explained the lay readers, paintings on the wall of the former seminary of Jansenists people – mostly French – from Port Royal were given asylum in Holland. I told him at the end that he forgot "Dominique Marie Varlet". "I know" he said. We were going to meet at 3 p.m. I waited until 3:34 p.m. and he and a lay reader (who told me that he just joined the Church two months ago) live at The Hague on the same street. He drove us with his small car to The Hague, about 1 ½ hour drive. Upon arrival at The Hague this driver visited with us the Palace where the Queen of Holland received dignitaries etc. – not open to the public.

The driver went to his apartment and next the Priest took me inside this residence, he received me well and after his partner arrived they showed me the inside of the Church, upstairs Chapel, hall where the synod met, etc.; then they took me for supper at a local Chinese restaurant. After more discussion, they took me to the train station, paid my ticket and told me that they would have liked to drive me back, but the train which takes an hour, is faster. After a 10 minute walk from the train station, I arrived at Archbishop Vercammen's residence at 11:30 pm – had a glass of wine with the Archbishop and his wife and told him about the good reception by the Priest of Ss. James & Augustine Church at The Hague.

#### Sunday 4 February 2007

On Sunday, morning got up at 5:00 am, had breakfast with the Archbishop and departed by train to Amsterdam. There we flew to Zurich and by train to Baden, Switzerland and were met by a Professor, who belongs to the Christ Catholic Church of Switzerland (Old Catholic). We had a small lunch at the rented monastery (Wislikofen, R.C.) and went back to pick up Fr. Lacroix and Bishop Vobbe of Germany. Holy Mass was said by Bishop Mueller and sermon by Archbishop Vercammen. The only Mass being said for the 4 days. Every evening a kind of Vesper was said in German, Polish, Czech, not a word of French of course! The monastery is owned by the local Roman Catholic diocese, but administered by contracted lay people. It used to be a Benedictine monastery. A chapel is used by the locals and group visitors.

When we were on the train, I happened to asked Archbishop Vercammen if he had ever heard of Serge Theriault. Much to my surprise, the Archbishop said he had *received a letter* from Theriault complaining about the Old Catholic Church of B.C.'s acceptance by the Utrecht Union. This is the first I had heard of the letter. The Archbishop said that Theriault was "frustrated" by our acceptance and took issue with us being the North American representative of the Utrecht Union. This letter was written July 4, 2006, *over 8 months ago* and this is the first I heard of it! When was the Archbishop planning to bring this matter to my attention? I would not even know of its existence if I did not *happen* to mention Theriault's name to the Archbishop. I asked Archbishop Vercammen for a copy of the letter. He said that he would provide me a copy when

he returned to the monastery. The following day, Monday, when I still had not received my copy – I again made my request to the Archbishop and was *finally* given a copy on Tuesday.

Theriault has corresponded with me since 1974 (see the file) and wrote that I was the most serious of the evangelical movement in Canada! (See: De Quebec à Utrecht; Laval Thesis; his letter is included). Theriault is not telling his whole story. Not a word of having been with the Anglican Church of Canada for over 10 years and telling me that he left after "10 years of hell!" I told Archbishop Vercammen to check with Rt. Rev. Michael Peers (former Primate). That evening I contacted Fr. Jürgen to send the "Theriault file" of correspondence to Archbishop Vercammen. It's up to him and the Utrecht Union to evaluate the accuracy of Theriault's information, together with his deliberate omission of his own personal history, before passing judgment. I regret that I had not even been given the courtesy to comment on the letter and answer any potential questions this letter may have raised. This seems deceitful.

#### Monday 5 February 2007

So Monday was my presentation of our Church. I first showed them a map of Canada, how big and vast our country is compared to Europe. Explained our First Nations, Métis, etc. and passed our literature from Bishop Mack – The Anawim – Prayers, Holy Eucharist (our own), Facts about the Old Catholic Church of BC, Photos, etc. Suddenly Bishop Vobbe – when he got the calendar given to us by the funeral home – took it and started shaking it and saying, "This calendar has the 15<sup>th</sup> of August as the Assumption of Mary that this is not Old Catholic." I could not believe a former Roman Catholic Priest talking this way. I explained that these calendars are free and distributed all over the Catholic Churches in the lower mainland, to no avail. He went on to say that in our book of "Facts of the Old Catholic Church of BC" that the line of Matthews succession is there and is not recognized by Utrecht. To that I stated that it was already discussed and in the letter of acceptance by Archbishop Vercammen, it stated "...you are a real ecclesiastical community and as you certainly had the right intention with ordaining, we do not expect major problems concerning the issue" (7 July 2006) and that under the Statutes of the Old Catholic Church "...when a Bishop is duly elected by a board, chapter, people it is accepted. All my papers were sent and duly registered in Victoria in 1973 and my consecration papers, etc. (ordination) were also sent. We actually sent the documents all three times we were asked! All pertinent material was also provided to Fr. Wenge on his paid visit to investigate us. He was provided with pamphlets about the church, all liturgies used by us and additional copies of anything he requested.

Bishop Vobbe went on again in an angry manner – stating that the Anglicans were the first missionaries in America. Here again I corrected him and told him “you’re in error, the first missionaries in Canada and America were Catholics and French – facts are facts – and were Jesuits and Récollets” and reminded him that when he talked about Matthews succession, the R.C. Church since Pope Leo XIII does not recognize Anglican orders and in Canada we called that “the Dutch touch” when an Anglican Bishop is consecrated and a Bishop of the Union of Utrecht participates; and again, why now?

Bishop Vobbe first complained about Matthew's succession (he was consecrated by Gerardus Gul of Utrecht). Again, this is history -- I am not responsible. I told Bishop Vobbe the problem with most of you is that you are former Roman Catholic Priests (Vobbe, Vercammen, Heitz, and Wirix-Speetjens) and it showed up again in their discussions. I told them that they are trying to run this like a little Vatican. He continued complaining about Mariology because we recite the rosary. I told him that many High Church in the Anglican Communion have it. He complained about the Assumption of Mary. I said call it “dormition” then like the Orthodox. Again I reminded him of my cultural background; for the Acadians “People of the Assumption” the 15<sup>th</sup> August is a holiday in many parts of Europe, including Germany, Austria, Italy, etc. and that this kind of discussion is very improper and insulting to me and Fr. Lacroix, and was fruitless and out of context.

I told him about a huge painting in the Episcopal building in Seattle of the Episcopal Church (St. Mark's) and when visiting in November 2005 with Rev. Fr. Dr. Pete Strimer, I pointed out this painting of the Assumption of Mary, to that he replied that it was a pagan Goddess! What can one say!

Bishop Vobbe complained then about the Blessed Sacrament service. Again, I reminded him that on my visit to 2 Churches of the Utrecht Union the Priests told me that these services are part of their liturgy. Here I also told Archbishop Vercammen that last August he also told me that it was not part of the Old Catholic tradition. In the Church in Egmond, Holland – one of the largest build by the Old Catholics – the Priest Harald Münch showed me a monstrance so old and antique that the insurance won't cover it if left at the Church when not being used! Bishop Vobbe then went on about the Liberal Catholic Church teaching reincarnation. “Not true,” I said. I was consecrated by the Liberal Catholic Church branch (non-theosophical) and reminded Bishop Vobbe that one of his Priests (very popular and well liked) believed in reincarnation. I knew because Fr. Wenge told me about it last year while on his ‘investigation tour’ of our Church in November 2005. Bishop Vobbe in a sign of hand just said that he kicked him out. I said, “Sadly that Priest lost his life a few weeks later”. Bishop Vobbe again complained about the facts – about the line of succession being printed, complained about us having saints! So

here again I told him of an example: St. Francis of Assisi is also venerated by the Anglican Church, see the Blessings of Animals, etc. and what's wrong with "Communion of the Saints?"

In short, it is unbelievable that after seven years of hard work, time, effort, and the expenditure of about \$12,000 in travel and related expenses; my travel twice from Vancouver to Germany, Fr. Wenge's trip to Vancouver and Fr. Lacroix to Switzerland -- it comes to this petty discussion where most of them talked about tradition and being Bishops (majority former R.C.), theologians, like Angela Berlis, who came to the Old Catholic Church at 16 years old, etc.

Archbishop Vercammen explained to them that our Church removed theosophical teaching over 30 years ago, that I was consecrated by the non-theosophical section of the Church, so the introduction was a disaster. But I was transparent and was told by our board 'be yourself' and that is what I did! Another point that evening from Archbishop Vercammen, he was upset by our request to consecrate Fr. Jürgen as my successor. Again I pointed out that it was their rules I was following! He complained about Fr. Jürgen being ordained in 2 different Lutheran bodies. Again I told him this is their rules. I really don't know what triggered all of that. Why, after being accepted, suddenly this change toward us? All this information has been openly acknowledged by us. This should not have come as a surprise to them. They had already been informed of this during their past inquiries and visit by their representative.

When the representative of the Episcopal Church of the USA, Bishop W. Michel Klusmeyer, diocese of West Virginia spoke, he first presented a personal letter (not read) to Archbishop Vercammen from the new Presiding Lady Bishop. Archbishop Vercammen was at her installation. He did not participate, and when it came to Holy Trinity Anglican Church and the complaint from Bishop Epting about Holy Trinity, I just read the letter of the Rev. Dr. Pete Strimer, of the Episcopal diocese of Olympia, Seattle, Washington from the same Church – saying: " ... *I have checked with our Canon to the Ordinary and we see no problem with a relationship between the church you mention and the Old Catholic Church with whom we remain in communion.*" and he said: "What can I say!" All is documented. I mentioned to him that when Fr. Wenge, representing the Archbishop and the Utrecht Union, visited, he came along with us (myself, Fr. Jürgen Schmode, Mr. Jean Doucet) and met Rev. Dr. Peter Strimer at St. Mark's Episcopal Church and Bureau to tell him of our intention to join the Union and that I was also Bishop for Holy Trinity Anglican Church (Redmond). That day, we all concelebrated at Holy Trinity. What's the problem?

That evening (Monday 5 February) Archbishop Vercammen told me that a meeting will be held with the Bishops but not with me and Fr. Lacroix. I thought that was very curious to specifically exclude us and guessed that we would be the topic of the exclusive meeting. In the morning

Archbishop Vercammen told me that the request from us to consecrate Fr. Jürgen was not accepted – and after supper that night he will talk to me and Fr. Lacroix. At the dinner table Bishop Vobbe said to Fr. Lacroix “You are a poor church and a church for the poor”! After supper only Archbishop Vercammen and Bishop Müller were sitting at the table with Fr. Lacroix and me. He started to say how sad he was, how he feels very bad, how we do good work, how he was going to write a letter to Bishop Michael Ingham explaining the situation; that we should be under ‘the umbrella’ of the Anglican Church’. I brought up the first letter sent to Bishop Michael suggesting we be integrated with his Church. This letter created a lot of turmoil within our Church. The clergy, the board and all parishioners, wondered why the Utrecht Union was not integrated themselves with the Anglican Church. The Union does not appear to be practicing what they preach. We respect each other’s traditions and we expect the same respect from all other religious groups.

Archbishop Vercammen kept apologizing and being sorry, etc. for the action taken at the meeting. So in one night we are out of the Utrecht Union! I told him how deceived and sad I felt and never will trust them – and departed. Fr. Lacroix and I did not participate for the rest of the session. Later on in the evening Bishop Müller from Switzerland went to visit Fr. Lacroix in his room and offered him money; “how can he survive in Quebec, etc.” And Thursday Archbishop Vercammen gave me a book “Prayers for All Occasions” and wrote: “To Bishop Gérard, In Friendship, Peace of the Lord be with you” +Joris -- and informed me that he did not sleep at all following the (closed door) meeting.

Words are easy – and now the consequence? My friend Jürgen Alsbach, who joined 14 years ago, whose daughter I baptized, and who sits on the Board of Parish in Koblenz, felt disillusioned and let down. I asked him to stay with the Old Catholic Church regardless, for the sake of his young family.

I told Archbishop Vercammen I came in good faith and departed betrayed and humiliated – so be it. The future will tell. Their churches are empty and if it were not the money they get from the Governments of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Czech, Dutch, most of them could not survive, and to see a church like ours where Priests worked scared them. I told them – they also have many differences, example: Switzerland permits same sex marriage “and even have a special service for common law”. Bishop Vobbe is adamantly opposed to it, and so are the Czech and the Polish. So life will go on.

Bishop Vobbe told me: “You are always welcome to concelebrate when in Germany!” From my pocket I showed him my rosary and said to him: “I will continue to say it.” And he replied “It’s

not forbidden." So we departed. On arriving in Koblenz, I did concelebrate mass at St. Jakobus Old Catholic Church with Fr. Staymann.

### Conclusion

The Utrecht Union is more powerful on paper than in reality. The church claims to have 20,000 members. Yet, my friend Jürgen Alsbach who has been attending every Sunday for 14 years at St. Jakobus Old Catholic Church in Koblenz, says there are only about 10-12 people each Sunday.

On the whole I feel deceived and disappointed. They don't want anybody else joining the Union – especially I believe from North America! It took us over 6 years to join. Then in one day, they told us, we reconsidered – you are no longer a member of the Utrecht Union. The reasons given – too long of a distance, not the same history ("they have it", we don't) Example: Archbishop Vercammen did not even know that the founder of Old Catholicism in Europe, Bishop Dominique Marie Varlet, was the Episcopal Vicar of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec and travelled all the way to Louisiana as a missionary Bishop!

PS: After my return to Germany, the Priest of St. James Old Catholic Church of Koblenz, Germany, Rev. Fr. Ralf Staymann came to visit me at Mr. Jürgen Alsbach's home on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006. Mr. Alsbach told him at that time, that as far as he is concerned the trust in the German Church is gone. But because he has a child, he will continue to attend. His Bishop is Bishop Gérard in Canada and he is loyal to him and because of him he has contributed \$40,000 each year for at least ten years. The same is felt by the other members of the Old Catholic Church of Koblenz, who joined them via St. Raphael's Old Catholic Church in Vancouver, BC. I encouraged him not to leave the Church for the good of his family.

Fr. Staymann also gave me the liturgical calendar of the Old Catholic Church of Germany at that time. When I checked this official calendar of the German Old Catholic Church, they, too, recognize the Assumption of Mary on August 15<sup>th</sup>. So again, Bishop Vobbe contradicted himself. Why was the Bishop so mad about *our* calendar when the feast day is noted on *their* calendar as well?

We do want to continue to be on good terms with the Anglicans and all religions. We hope to have a relationship with the Anglican Church of Canada with some kind of covenant. We have met and corresponded with the Anglican Archbishop of Québec, Rt. Rev. Bruce Stavert, in Lac Beauport regarding support for our two priests in Québec represented by Fr. Lacroix. The Archbishop has kindly offered different churches in the region for our use.



On the whole, I found the entire experience with the Utrecht Union -- from the 6 years of correspondence, to the first time I visited them in August 2006, until this past meeting in February 2007 -- to be disappointing and disheartening and an almost fruitless waste of time and money – to say nothing of the emotional toll it has taken on me personally. In the future, I hope that anyone seeking association with the Utrecht Union will be treated more fairly.

Bishop Michael Ingham of the Anglican Church of Canada, diocese of New Westminster, Vancouver, BC knows of our struggle and has supported us generously throughout the years in many different ways. He met Fr. Jürgen Wenge, representative of the Utrecht Union and Archbishop Vercammen, and was pleased like many other Anglican Bishops of our acceptance. It is also a deception for them; however, our mutual respect, friendship, and our common goal of evangelization in our country are continuing.

# # #

## Report: The Old Catholic Church of BC and Bishop Serge A. Theriault

Bishop Theriault's 'voluminous' correspondence is part of the archives of the Old Catholic Church of BC. In the 1970's Fr. Theriault asked to be incardinated in the Old Catholic Church of BC. In a letter dated 16 November 1981 he asked to be consecrated by the Old Catholic Church of BC.

16 November 1981

Dear Gérard,

Included a press release concerning the creation of the "Ecumenical Society of D. M. Varlet" for the board of the francophone mission. I hope it will be of interest to you and we hope that you will be a member.

I was elected as the responsible of the mission, which is a cooperation under the Government of Québec. Our Parish of St. Bernard of Clairvaux continues slowly and we have now a sub-deacon who studied at St. Paul University, Ottawa. We are in very serious difficulties with the Anglican Church of Canada for 2 years, and the authorities refuse to recognize our mission as an homogeneous francophone group. It is very possible that we are forced to become 'autocephalous'. I don't wish it, but in a case of the impossibility of an agreement, we will have to continue our project independently.

Give me news about yourself, your Church, and the Liberal Catholic Church of Ontario. Also, tell me if it is possible to obtain the Apostolic Succession from your group in the eventuality that our Francophone mission is obligated to go alone.

Pleasure to read from you.

Sincerely in Christ.

(signed)

Serge A. Theriault, Priest

Responsible of the Francophone Mission

20 December 1983

"... time has come for us to unite our talents and wealth! There is nothing to expect from others! It's up to us to create our own force, the rest will be given to us."

3 January 1984

He mentioned that they are now members of the National Council of Community Churches" and they are more "dynamical" than the Utrecht Union. He suggests working together here instead of wasting energy with the Utrecht Union, even if they are open to it.

He wrote two theses and in "De Québec à Utrecht" he stated on page 13 & 14 a brief history of the Church in Vancouver, the apostolic succession, etc. and writing on page 14:

"This group (the Old Catholic Church of BC) is the most serious of all the movement of the evangelical movements in Canada. (Translated from French)".

The second thesis is about the life of the Dominique Marie Varlet "Vie et Oeuvre de Dominique-Marie Varlet (1678 – 1742) – grand vicaire de l'évêque de Québec et père de l'épiscopat vieux-catholique d'Utrecht – avec la correspondance se rapportant à la Nouvelle-France (1713 – 1724) " in: Dépôt légal à la Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec au mois d'avril 1982.

In a French newspaper "Le droit – 28 mars 1978" a write up on Fr. Theriault as being the only Priest of the Episcopalian Church (The Anglican Church of Canada), and the English newspaper "The Citizen" on 25 February 1978 wrote about it. Fr. Theriault worked for the Anglican Church of Canada for many years. His parish was known as "St-Bernard de Clairvaux" and 1989 he stated in an announcement that after reflection he decided not to pursue any longer to work for the French-Canadian Episcopalian Church (Anglican) (letter of 1<sup>st</sup> September 1989 from Ottawa.)

On 14<sup>th</sup> September 1988 in a personal letter he wrote (translated from French):

My dear Gérard,

Your last letter from a previous date woke me up (Captain of a small boat) but was telling the truth. In any case, the facts confirmed your point of view, our board has decided recently to brake (links), to abandon our relationship with the Anglicans "The Episcopal Church" and to utilise only the name "Old Catholic". I feel much better, because for 11 years I was reduced to no power and was waiting in vain for "accommodations" that never came.

In practise this situation gives me much work, because we must leave the Anglican Churches (Hull and Orleans) and redo publicity, etc. In this context I would like to use your blue pamphlet about the Old Catholic Church of BC which you have sent me and I find it well done. Will you give me permission to change it from British Columbia for Québec and Ontario in French? Also, if you have any other documentation which could be used by our brothers and sisters, it would be welcome.

I almost got a contract for Vancouver in December. I would have gone to visit you. I am sure of other possibilities. I worked for the "formation of supervisors" for the Federal Government. If you come in the East, let me know. We must finally meet and speak. I am more motivated than ever and looking forward to work together for the developing of our Old Catholic Churches.

You have hit in the thousands in your last letter. I took time to answer, to get things evaluated. Now it is done – and the future belongs to us."

It was a pleasure to read from you again. In Christ.

(signed)

+ Serge Theriault

Bishop Theriault 19 years later wrote to Archbishop Vercammen and Bishop Müller of the Union of Utrecht, protesting about the admission of the Old Catholic Church of BC into the Utrecht Union (letter of 4 July 2006). I leave the reader to his or her own conclusions.

Translation of a letter from Fr. Serge A. Theriault 27 February 1978

27 February 1978

Father Serge A. Theriault  
Parish of Hull  
Anglican Church of Canada

The Rev. Fr. J. Gérard LaPlante  
St. Raphael's Parish  
715 E 51st Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5X 1E2

Dear Brother and friend:

It is true that I have not given you any news for many months. There has been many changes in my 'ecclesiastical life'; I am now an Anglican Priest.

I was re-ordained 'sub-condition' last 30 November by the Bishop of Ottawa, and now I am working as a 'dominical vicar' Hull Parish. I celebrate Holy Eucharist in French every Sunday at 10am and engage to "frenchise" the Church in Québec.

Our Church is now called "The Episcopal Church of Canada" for the Québec region, showing the 'new mentality' which was instated at the General Synod in Calgary last August. You will find included a write-up in "The Citizen" of Saturday, concerning the activities of the Church, Hull, reposting the "frenchisation".

I learned with joy that you have broken the links with the Liberal Catholic Church – Theosophical. I knew that your attachment to the Apostolic Catholic was stronger and links were not of significance. What is the 'Liberal Catholic Church of Ontario'? Is it the Liberal Catholic Church International of Daw and Company? If so I don't believe there is much to gain with this affiliation.

Why don't you think of joining the ranks of the Utrecht Union?

As you are a living parish, the Polish National Catholic Church would accept you without problem. Anyway, these problems concerned you more than myself and you certainly have taken the best path.

As for myself, I believe that outside Utrecht, there is not much hope for an "authentic" and satisfactory Catholicism. If it interests you, I could get you to get in touch with one of my friends who work at the Old Catholic Mission in France (Utrecht Union).

I continue to study theology full time at the 'College Dominican d' Ottawa', and very satisfied of the courses received. I have completed the pastoral master of the 'Universite St-Paul', but I did not like the attitude of the Oblate Fathers. In my situation as a Priest Catholic, but not Roman, I find the Dominican Fathers more

open-minded and their theology serving less directly the interests of "Papism" and "Romanists" .

I wish you much success in your new ecclesiastical option and to believe of my religious sentiments in Our Lord.

(signed)

Serge A. Theriault, Priest  
47F Promenade Woodfield  
Ottawa, Ontario



**ÉGLISE CATHOLIQUE-CHRÉTIENNE - CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**Ordinariat des vieux-catholiques d'Amérique**

Bishop's Office  
Bureau de l'Évêque

30 Briermoor Crescent, Ottawa, Ont.  
Canada K1T 3G7 (613) 738-2942 Fax (613) 738-7

06.07.04

The Most Rev. Joris Vercammen  
President  
Old Catholic Bishops Conference  
Kon. Wilhelminalaan 3  
Amersfoort, The Netherlands

The Rt Rev. Fritz-René Müller  
Secretary  
Old Catholic Bishops Conference  
Willadingweg 30  
Berne, Switzerland

Dear Archbishop Vercammen:  
Dear Bishop Müller:

I was prompted to write this letter to you when I got the information that at the last Bishops Conference (IBC) of March 2006, it was decided to offer the former theosophical Liberal Church of British Columbia, now called Old Catholic, a status within IBC. My goal is to draw the attention of the IBC of the existence of our church and explore with you the possibility to include us in any dialogue that can lead to status for Old Catholics in Canada.

Our church was the first Old Catholic Ordinariate in America. It was incorporated 13 February 1890 under Bishop Rene Vilatte, consecrated in 1892 by the Syriac Patriarchate of Antioch. The Ordinariate is a religious corporation in Canada with right to marry and register births in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. I am the third Ordinary in succession to Bishop Vilatte. More information can be found on our church website at the following address: <http://ccrcc.ca>

Our founding clergymen, R. Vilatte and Jean-Baptiste Gauthier, were trained and ordained priests in Berne. I myself studied at the Old Catholic Faculty earning the Th.D. degree in 1983. I also published books and articles on Catholic Reform and Old Catholicism in North America, including articles in *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*. See attached resume for detail.

Our doctrinal formularies, catechism and liturgy have been influenced by the Christian Catholic Church in Switzerland and close rapport was developed in the 1980s. Bishop Leon Gauthier came to visit us in 1980 and through him I was put in touch with Berne professors Kurt Stalder and Peter Amiet who supervised my Th.D. thesis on Msgr. D.M. Varlet at the origin of Old Catholicism.

We were surprised to learn that the former Liberal Catholic Church (LCC) in British Columbia (St. Raphael's) led by the Rt Rev. Gerard Laplante is now a Utrecht Union constituency. From what I know, the B.C. church still uses the LCC liturgy with filioque



in the creed, benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, etc. They have statues, say prayers to the saints and angels, say the rosary, say mass in front of the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the monstrance. For us, this church is not Old Catholic in the sense of Catholic Reform as held by Bishop Ed Herzog, Dr. Eugene Michaud and Fr. Hyacinthe Loyson, and taught and practised by our jurisdiction.

We understand that not being in the membership of the Utrecht Union, we have no entitlement to question its functioning and the decisions made by the IBC. But we are together in the World Council of Churches because we are a constituency of the International Council of Community Churches<sup>1</sup> which is a WCC member communion. It is in that context that I voice our concerns and express our desire for entering into dialogue with you. We still have to cope with the consequences of the rejection of our ordinariate and bishop Vilatte by IBC in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It would be very much appreciated if we could prevent new misunderstandings and work together at developing a meaningful and united Old Catholic Church here in Canada. And we are open to consider applying to join the Utrecht Union if it is the will of God that our dialogue lead to it.

In Christ's service.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Serge A. Theriault". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Serge A. Theriault  
Ordinary

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<sup>1</sup> Documentation attached.



Synode Eglise Vieille Catholique d' Utrecht  
Wislikofen (Suisse)  
4 au 8 Février 2007

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Dimanche 4 février.

17 hrs

Ouverture de la Session par une Célébration Eucharistique officiée par Mgr. Muller, Evêque de Suisse. L' homélie est prononcée par Mgr. Boris Vercamenn, Archevêque d' Utrecht.

18 :30 hrs.

Repas Fraternel.

19 :45 hrs.

Rencontre de tous les membres afin d' établir l' ordre des sujets qui seront traités lors des prochains jours .Mot de Bienvenue de la part de l' Archevêque d' Utrecht à notre égard. Geste fort apprécié !

En fin de soirée Mgr. La Plante me délègue afin de faire la visite des Eglises en Suisse et en Allemagne.

Lundi , 5 février.

En ce début de session Mgr. La Plante est invité à parler de notre Eglise et de l' oeuvre qu' il y accomplit depuis plus de 40 ans. La présentation de sa Foi en la Vierge Marie..... en offrant à l' assistance un calendrier sur ce thème, a fait réagir l' Evêque de Allemand,( Mgr. Vobbe) qui s' est violemment opposé à un tel culte et particulièrement aux Dogmes de l' Immaculé Conception et de l' Assomption de la Sainte Vierge.

Une offense grave à l' égard de Mgr. La Plante qui en plus d' être Accadien ,est de descendance indienne. La Sainte Vierge a une place privilégiée dans sa vie et la Foi de notre Eglise. Il a su exprimer à toute l' audience qu' il ne renierait jamais la Vierge sous aucune considération, car en plus Elle fait intégralement partie de sa Culture et de notre culture au Québec.



Cette partie de la session fut particulièrement houleuse et on a su qu' à partir de cet instant on sentait très bien que l' on ne nous désirait plus dans le giron de l' Eglise d' Utrecht.

Comme il est décevant de prendre conscience qu' une fois de plus, la Loi a primé sur l' Amour. L' Eglise d' Utrecht avait une belle occasion de démontrer son ouverture et d' accueillir en son sein une Eglise de même souche, d' une même succession et surtout d' un même fondateur qui sommes toutes a vécu au Québec(1713-1718) en la personne de Mgr. Marie Dominique Varlet. Oui ! ils veulent eux aussi l' Unité dans l' Uniformité aux même titre que l' Eglise Catholique Romaine. Ils reproduisent les mêmes erreurs qu' ils ont reprochée à l' Eglise Catholique Romaine.

Nous sommes profondément peiné de constater que les principes théologiques, les Dogmes continuent de diviser la chrétienté. Et pourtant le Seigneur nous rappelle dans son Evangile : Celui qui dit aimer Dieu qu' il ne voit pas et qui n' aime pas, n' accueille pas son frère qu' il voit , est un menteur ! Combien de temps vivrons-nous les uns les autres dans un tel mensonge ? Si nous tournions davantage nos regards vers le Christ, vers ce qui nous unit, au lieu de ce qui nous divisent... que nous cessions de croire que nous possédons l' Autorité et la Vérité , mais bien au contraire, que nous ne sommes au fait que les humbles serviteurs de l' Autorité et de la Vérité qui est Dieu...comme le Visage de l' Eglise serait différent.

Sainte Thérèse d' Avila disait : Si voulez savoir à quel point vous aimer le Bon Dieu, regarder comment vous aimez et accueillez vos frères et sœurs !

Quelle désolation ! Quelle perte de temps tous ces Comités et ses réunions à n' en plus finir ! au lieu d' aller à l' Essentiel, de maintenir de belles Célébrations Eucharistiques avec tout ce sens du sacré. Tout au contraire , l' Eglise d' Utrecht comme bien d' autres s' est protestantisée, a délaissé sa Tradition d' origine et a commis un grave erreur en salariant son Clergé qui sont devenus des fonctionnaires cléricaux . Et l' on s' étonne que les Eglises se vident. Nous ne pourrons vivre longtemps dans cette opulence ! Ils nous faut vivre simplement parmi les pauvres, partager avec eux, aimer et accueillir inconditionnellement tous ces Enfants de Dieu....considérer la Vie Sacramentelle comme une vrai nourriture pour l' âme plutôt que de la réserver à une certaine élite. Jésus a accueilli tout le monde, sans exception et Il est mort sur une Croix...hors la Loi.....On a malheureusement oublié !



Au même titre que les autres grandes Eglises pourquoi l' Eglise d' Utrecht n' accueille-t-elle pas en son sein une branche plus Traditionnelle ? N' y –t-il pas chez les Anglicans le High Church ? Maintenant l' Eglise Catholique Romaine permet elle aussi la célébration de messes Tridentines ? Quelle belle occasion l' Eglise d' Utrecht vient de manquer ! Et dire que l' on ose parler encore d' Œcuménisme !

Mardi 6 février :

Après les prières et le petit déjeuner, la session recommence. On y parle de Spiritualité. Vers 10 :30 hrs Mgr. La Plante vient me chercher en pleine conférence. Il est bouleversé et m' affirme que plus rien ne va ! Il a rencontré Mgr. Vercamenn qui lui a suggéré que notre Eglise soit plutôt sous la juridiction Anglicane du High Church. Une réunion spéciale en soir-e avec Mgr. Vercamenn est prévue afin de' en discuter.

En effet, Mgr. La Plante, Mgr. Vercamenn, Mgr.Muller (Suisse) et moi-même, nous nous sommes réunis afin de discuter de l' avenir de notre Eglise dans l' Union d' Urtecht. Voici les points discutés :

1. Le Synode n' a pas apprécié notre Présentation , particulièrement notre Mariologie.
2. Les raisons pour lesquelles nous voulions adhérer à l' Union d' Utrecht n' ont pas été émises clairement.
3. La proposition anticipée de faire consacrer le Père Juergen à l' Episcopat a été perçu comme un geste opportuniste de la part de notre Eglise.
4. Nos Eglises sont géographiquement trop distantes l'une de l' autre.
5. Notre défense des Dogmes de la Vierge est inacceptable pour la Foi de l' Eglise d' Utrecht.
6. Toutefois nous n' avons pas discuter ouvertement de l' Ordination des femmes et des unions de même sexe.

Lors d'une séance extraordinaire convoquée par Mgr. Vercamenn, immédiatement après le repas du soir, en ce 6 février 07, ce dernier nous expliqua en présence de Mgr. Müller, Évêque de Suisse, sa déception profonde de nous pouvoir nous accepter officiellement dans l'Union d'Utrecht.

Malgré tous les efforts déployés, après avoir cherché une solution à cette situation particulière, il n'y avait d'autre choix que le retrait immédiat de notre Eglise de l'Union d'Utrecht.

Certes, Mgr. Vercamenn était conscient des sommes importantes qui ont été investies dans ce projet ainsi que de l'implication énorme d'énergie humaine qui sommes toutes, n'ont pas donné les résultats escomptés.

L'Archevêque d'Utrecht était aussi déçu de nous, de la tournure des événements. Nous osons croire à la sincérité de ses sentiments ! Cet état de fait lui ont démontré amèrement les limites de l'Œcuménisme de son Eglise au même titre que l'Eglise Catholique Romaine et toutes les autres. Nous avons senti que le Synode avait plus de pouvoir que sa propre Autorité ! Il n'a pas compris la raison pour laquelle l'Eglise Anglicane, en la personne de Mgr. Ingham nous avait demandé de nous rattacher à l'Union d'Utrecht ! A ce propos, Mgr. La Plante a toujours cru que les anglicans se seraient sentis offensés sans que nous passions par l'Union d'Utrecht ! mais tel n'est pas le cas, aux dires de Mgr. Vercamenn.

Ce dernier nous fit donc la proposition suivante afin de nous exprimer tout le regret ressenti de ne pouvoir nous accepter dans le giron de l'Union d'Utrecht.

Il nous a promis qu'il ferait parvenir à Mgr. Ingham (Évêque Anglican de Vancouver ainsi qu'à Mgr. Starvet, Archevêque Anglican de Québec) une lettre de RECOMMANDATION dans laquelle il expliquerait toutes les raisons pour lesquelles l'Eglise Vieille Catholique de CB. devrait être davantage sous leur juridiction (tout en gardant son autonomie). Ceci nous éviterait des déplacements en Europe, chaque année et d'être dans l'obligation de recevoir des théologiens pour l'accomplissement de la formation théologique de notre Clergé. Nos relations avec l'Eglise Anglicane étant bonnes, ceci n'aura que des effets positifs pour maintenir nos liens fraternels et d'être reconnus légalement dans les provinces concernées.

Cet heureux compromis nous permettra de sauvegarder notre Identité particulière qui se veut Traditionnelle dans sa Liturgie et Libérale au niveau de sa Pensée.



Mercredi 7 février .

Mgr. La Plante et moi-même restons à l'écart du Synode.

Jeudi 8 février.

En après Dieu soit loué ! Jüergen, un ami très loyal de Mgr. La Plante vient nous chercher. Un entretien s'est établi entre l'Évêque d'Allemagne et Jüergen, au sujet de son implication future au sein de l'Eglise Vieille Catholique de sa Paroisse. Une décision est à venir !

Départ pour Neuchatel et la région du Valais où Mgr La Plante rencontre un couple qu'il a marié depuis plus de 20 ans.

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## Commentaires

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Il fut surprenant d'apprendre que l'Archevêque d'Utrecht, Mgr. Boris Vercamenn, ne savait pas que Mgr. Marie-Dominique Varlet fut grand Vicaire de Québec de 1713 à 1718.

Le 5 février 2007 au soir, Mgr. Vercamenn rassemble ses Évêques dans une petite salle, sans avoir invité bien sûr, Mgr. La Plante, afin de discuter du sort de notre Eglise. Cette salle sera dénommée par Mgr. La Plante « La Salle des Longs Coûteaux » Ce fut durant ces instants qu'ils décidèrent de nous exclure de l'Union d'Utrecht.

Mgr. La Plante, se doutant qu'un événement important était entrain de se passer, il se teint à l'écart et entendit clairement le nom de notre Eglise dont il était parfaitement question.

Mgr. Vobbe (Évêque d'Allemagne), me fit la remarque suivante au cours d'un repas, à savoir que nous étions des prêtres ouvriers et une Eglise de pauvre parmi les pauvres.

Nous nous sommes aperçu à quel point l'Eglise d'Utrecht s'était Protestantisée . Cette Foi et ses Rites d'origines ont laissé place à une désacralisation. Mgr. La Plante exprime le sentiment qu'au lieu de nous appeler Eglise Vieille Catholique d'Utrecht, nous aurions meilleur temps de nous appeler Eglise Vieille Catholique ( Traditionnelle) afin de sauvegarder la Tradition d'origine de l'Eglise Vielle Catholique.

Ces événements vécus ici lors du Synode en Suisse nous démontre l'importance de garder notre Indépendance sur le plan Liturgique. Nous voulons demeurer fidèles à la vrai Tradition de l'Eglise Vieille Catholique d'origine, demeurant libre dans nos idéologies , mais profondément attachés à la beauté spirituelle de nos Célébrations que nul ne pourra nous ravir!

Nous croyons que le High Church Anglican nous respectera dans ce choix après nous avoir si chaleureusement accueillis et respecter, voire même encouragés et soutenus pour le moins dans la Province de Québec.

Puisse la Divine Providence guider notre route, afin que notre humble Mission soit toujours sous la Protection du Seigneur et de la Vierge Marie. Puisse aussi , les générations à venir, maintenir cette Foi inébranlable aux vrais valeurs de notre Eglise Vieille Catholique de CB. pour que le message du Christ y soit toujours proclamé avec Amour et Liberté!

En ce 8 février 2007.

Père Claude Lacroix  
Secrétaire.