

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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American National Catholic Church Welcomes Fr. Joseph Harmon

The Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM, Presiding Bishop of the American National Catholic Church (ANCC), joyfully welcomes Fr. Joseph Harmon as the latest priest to incardinate into the ANCC.

Fr. Joseph brings a wealth of pastoral and administrative experience to the ANCC. A graduate of Cornell University and The General Theological Seminary, he served as a priest of the Episcopal Church for four decades in a number of capacities, including parish ministry, participation in diocesan and national councils and committees, and most recently as president of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark Standing Committee.

He is also a licensed member of the Pennsylvania bar, having earned his Juris Doctorate from the Widener University School of Law (now Commonwealth Law School) in Harrisburg. As a priest-attorney, Fr. Joseph feels a close kinship with another lawyer-churchman: the twelfth-century Thomas Becket.

The martyred saint, says Fr. Joseph, was “a protector of the institution of the Church against the encroachments of the Crown. I, too, am an institutionalist. While I recognize my primary role as a pastor, much of my mindset is geared to the church as institution and my training as both priest and lawyer have affirmed that posture as a part of my priestly vocation.” His calling, he believes, is “to defend the Body of Christ, to encourage the growth of the Body of Christ among us, and to celebrate the life in the Body of Christ.”

Fr. Joseph’s decision to become an ANCC priest is the culmination of a lifelong attraction to the Catholic tradition. “It has been my joy to serve the Episcopal Church as a priest for over 41 years, where I was nurtured and formed,” he says.

“In leaving the Episcopal Church to enter the American National Catholic Church, I do so reluctantly but with the certainty of God’s Holy Spirit guiding me to a path I have felt called to throughout my entire life. The ANCC’s door to Catholicism is one I have hovered about for many

years. Now it is my joy to cross that threshold to fully embrace this new ministry as a National Catholic priest.”

His decision is also the ANCC’s joy. “We in the American National Catholic Church celebrate with Fr. Joseph the continuation of his ministerial priesthood in our jurisdiction,” commented Bishop George. “We are honored that he has found with us a path to continuing ministering to the people of God.”

The American National Catholic Church is an inclusive Catholic community, independent of the Roman Catholic Church, dedicated to making the world a more caring place. Guided by a presiding bishop, the ANCC celebrates the same sacraments as the Roman Church and follows the spirit of reform initiated by the Second Vatican Council. Although sharing core theological and liturgical practices with Roman Catholicism, the ANCC differs on several major points, such as married clergy, female priests, divorce and re-marriage, same-sex marriage, and lay leadership. The Church has parishes across the U.S. and a host of ministries to the alienated, under-served, and forgotten. For more information, visit www.TheANCC.org.

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