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**A THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN
THE ANGLICAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES: THE CASE OF
WOMEN'S ORDINATION**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **Petronella Bwalya Bweupe**, declare that

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy (a diocesan congregation of the Catholic Diocese of Mansa, Zambia) and to all the people who have lost their lives to the deadly pandemic:

COVID-19

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
ACC	Anglican Consultative Council
ACSA	Anglican Church of Southern Africa
ARCIC	Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission
ARCUSA	Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the United States of America
ARCJPC	Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission
AUSCP	Association of United States Catholic Priests
CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
CTSA	Catholic Theological Society of America
ECUSA	Episcopal Church in the United States of America
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>
EWC	Episcopal Women's Caucus
FiF	Forward in Faith
GAFCON	Global Anglican Future Conference
HV	<i>Humanae Vitae</i>
IARCCUM	International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission
II	<i>Inter Insigniores</i>
LEANs	Local Ecumenical Action Networks
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MA	<i>Mortalium Animos</i>
MOW	Movement for the Ordination of Women
OS	<i>Ordinatio Sacerdotalis</i>
PCPCU	Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
RCWP	Roman Catholic Women Priests
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SC	<i>Sacrosantum Concilium</i>

UR	<i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i>
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
WCC	World Council of Churches
WOC	Women's Ordination Conference
WOSA	Women's Ordination South Africa
WOW	Women's Ordination Worldwide

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ABSTRACT

The restoration of unity among Christians is at the centre of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded only one church. However, many Christian churches present themselves to the world as the true heirs of Christ. Although Christians claim to be followers of Christ, they differ in mind and practice and each take their different paths as if Christ were divided. For the Vatican Council Fathers, such divisions contradict the will of Christ, scandalise the world and disrupt the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to all nations. Theological thinkers have extensively debated on how the practice of women's ordination have dominantly challenged the unity between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. It is in this context that the study examines the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches on a gendered ministerial position of the two churches. It explores in detail how women's ordination is an issue of divergence between the two churches, hindering their progress to full communion. Within the wider context of the mainline churches, the dissertation applies the South African context in examining how matters surrounding women's ordination have influenced unity at the local level. This study was motivated by the question of how current approaches to ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches impact on issues of gender. To explore the ecumenical dialogue on women's ordination in the two churches, the study is informed by the theoretical frameworks of feminist ecclesiology, and African women's theologies. The methodology is purely theological. Using the available literature, the research examines the efforts in the ecumenical dialogue as established by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). A look at some selected Second Vatican Council documents which have provided a theological direction to ecumenical relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian churches are considered. Given the nature of the study, the correspondence between Canterbury and Rome on women's ordination from 1975 to 1986 greatly informed the study. It also relied heavily on the official statements from the Lambeth Conferences from 1920 to the present day. Finally, the study turned to receptive ecumenism as a preferred method in ecumenical dialogue between the two churches.

Key Terms: African Women Theologians, Anglican, Ecumenical Dialogue, Feminist Theologians, Gender, Lambeth Conference, Receptive Ecumenism, Roman Catholic Church, Vatican II, Women's Ordination

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

The practice of the ordination of women and of gay people, have been at the centre of the division between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. The two churches have offered diverging responses on ethical problems of gender, homosexuality, contraception, and abortion. The ordination of women and people in same sex unions add further challenges to their full communion (Sedgwick, 2017:2; Sherlock, 2014:15; Olver, 2015:418). Based on the available literature and on my own research, it is evident that many people who have written on the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches have concentrated on doctrinal issues. Within the ecumenical movement, the two churches have made significant progress in addressing differences of faith towards their full communion. Similarly, on ethical issues, the two churches have committed their efforts to issues of war, justice and human trafficking while paying little or no attention to issues of gender and major differences in their ecumenical dialogue regarding these issues remain visible (Sedgwick, 2017:2).

In this study, I argue that in as much as many people have developed voluminous documentation on the unity between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, disparities on a gender approach to ministry is visible and have caused major challenges that have greatly impaired their journey towards full visible unity. Peter Sedgwick, an Anglican theologian serving on the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III), an ecumenical body mandated to foster bilateral dialogue between the two churches, affirms that there has been limited or no engagement on issues of gender in the ecumenical dialogue for these two churches. He also insists that serious ethical questions such as contraception, homosexuality, abortion and gender issues are at the centre of divisions between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches (Sedgwick 2017:2).

Based on the available literature, it is apparent that there is not much scholarly research on the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches concerning gender issues. African Episcopal conferences from both churches have also not paid much attention to this issue, especially from the perspective of dialogue. This study is both unique and essential, as it tries to fill these gaps by analysing and bringing awareness, contributing to the existing literature from the gendered perspective. My major aim in this research project,

therefore, is to propose a more adjusted view on gender that reflects and addresses the needs of the contemporary time so that the two churches may collectively and ecumenically witness to the world.

1.1.1. The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission

Since the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsay, to Pope John Paul VI in 1966, the two churches have committed to overcome their historical divisions and attain the full ecclesial unity after centuries of living apart (ARCIC III, 2017 Preface; The Malta Report). This visit was followed by the establishment of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), with the mandate to foster ecumenical progress between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. This body is managed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the Anglican Consultative Council. The ARCIC intends to identify a common ground between the two churches and to examine and resolve the doctrinal differences that have been obstacles to achieving the ecclesial communion that the two churches seek (ARCIC III, 2017: Preface).

The initial phase of the ARCIC was conducted from 1970 to 1982. Prominent themes during this period include doctrines on the Eucharist Ministry and Ordination and Authority in the Church. This stage is referred to as the ARCIC I. The second phase was from 1983 to 2011, commonly known as ARCIC II. Here issues on the doctrine of Salvation, Communion, teaching Authority and the role of Mary the mother of God were discussed. The third phase of the Commission, ARCIC III, which runs from 2011 to the present, is concerned with the fundamental issues regarding the Church as Communion and ethical issues (ARCIC III, 2017: Preface). ARCIC I, II, and III. ARCIC II highlights that the mandate of the commission is to evaluate and address the doctrinal differences that have been obstacles to achieving the ecclesial communion that the two churches seek. Hietamaki (2010:92) observes that for Adrian Hastings, the main task of the ARCIC was a supervisory role, where it was mandated to supervise the Anglican and Roman Catholic relations on various levels of pastoral care. This was not limited to seeing to the actual implementation of various stages towards full communion, and had the emphasis on investigations into the possibility of intercommunion and the study of *Apostolicae Curae* (RC Leo XIII 1896), including a thorough examination of the Anglican ministries (2010:92).

The Anglican–Roman Catholic dialogue is the most developed bilateral dialogue with regard to ecumenical relationship since the Catholic Church’s official entry into ecumenical

dialogue with separated Christian churches. Through the ARCIC, the two churches have generated and made critical evaluations and provided responses to ecumenical issues. Major statements that have been issued so far include: the Doctrine on Eucharist (1971), Ministry and Ordination (1973), Authority in the Church I (1977), Authority in the Church II (1981), Salvation and the Church (1987), Church as Communion (1991), Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church (1994), Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III (1999) and the place of Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ (2005); these have been extensively debated. The chapter traces the transformation of the Catholic Church's self-understanding of ecumenical relations by a short presentation of the ecumenical approach from the First Vatican Council to the Second Vatican Council. In this chapter, the key research question and sub-questions are highlighted. The chapter also explains the objectives of the study. It concludes by providing the structure of the study.

1.2. Ecumenical Developments in the Roman Catholic Church

1.2.1. Ecumenical Efforts before Vatican II

Pesch (2006) explains that in the past the Catholic Church saw the ecumenical movement as a place of meeting which people from all walks of life could attend; Christians and non-Christians were eligible, and hence, the Church of Rome saw it as a meeting which housed large audiences of unbelievers and those who have turned away from Christ. From this understanding, Rome could not attend such meetings; neither would any Catholic be allowed to participate in such gatherings, lest they concede to a false Christian religion that has detached or separated itself from the true church. It follows then, that the only possible way to unity within Christianity was to advocate for a 'return' of all the separated Christian churches to the one true church of Christ to which they once belonged (Pesch 2006:9). According to Pesch, this approach is clearly stated in the encyclical letter *Mortalium Animos* promulgated by Pope Pius XI in 1929. He states that the encyclical stated a clear 'NO' by the Roman Catholic Church to all initiatives from the ecumenical movement. He observes that this harsh rule was addressed in 1948 with the founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Amsterdam, when the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, which has since changed to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, formulated some guidelines which supported participation in dialogue on faith. The Church of Rome allowed bishops to critically study the practices and doctrines of the separated Christian churches. Pesch adds that the efforts toward reunion were disrupted by Rome preventing Catholic observers of ecumenical meetings from entering Evaton, the city where the plenary meetings of the WCC

were held. However, Pesch notes that not all hope was lost. The Church of Rome records the first ever ecumenical meeting in 1956, when Pope Pius XII, to the amazement of the entire world, held a private encounter with a Protestant bishop, Otto Dibelius of Berlin (Pesch 2006:9).

1.2.2. Ecumenical Shift of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council

The earliest ecumenical encounter between Anglican and Roman Catholic churches were held for the first time in 1960 when Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher visited Pope John XXIII at his Vatican palace. Longenecker (2014), a former Anglican priest, explains that Pope John XXIII's election as Pope brought new beginnings in the ecumenical sphere of the Catholic Church in relation to the separated Christian churches when he created the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity. He says, in 600 years, the visit of Archbishop Fisher marked the first from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Vatican. According to Longenecker, on during this historical the Pope encouraged the Anglican Church to return to the Catholic Church which according he considered the only church of Christ. Responding to the Pope, Archbishop Fisher indicated that it was of great importance for the two churches make progress together than focusing looking back. Here the bishop expressed the impossibility of the Anglicans getting back to the Catholic Church. (:2). Pope John XXIII suggested that Archbishop Fisher meet with Cardinal Augustin Bea, who was heading the Secretariat for the promotion of Christian Unity at that time, to facilitate 'an official channel of communication' between the two churches, and allow the Anglicans to be among the observers to the Second Vatican Council.

Pesch (2006:28), provides an interesting reflection on the unfolding events of the Second Vatican Council. He states that the council fathers made a major shift in the Catholic Church concerning ecumenical dialogue; prominent documents to this effect are the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* and *Lumen Gentium*, the Constitution on the Church. FitzGerald (1996:134) observes that *Unitatis Redintegratio* recognized the importance of Christian unity and affirmed the involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in ecumenical dialogues. In its introduction, *Unitatis Redintegratio* states that,

The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the lord founded one church and one church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the lord but differ in mind and go different ways, as if Christ were divided. For the synod

fathers, such divisions only contradict the will of Christ, scandalize the world, and damage the Holy cause of preaching the gospel to every creature (UR #1).

Additionally, Sherlock (2014:3) asserts that *Unitatis Redintegratio* marked the official entry in ecumenical dialogue not only between the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian churches, but also with the Anglican Church, which among the separated Christian churches is highlighted in the document of having a special status with the Catholic Church. For Sherlock, the Decree has greatly informed the (ARCIC). Hietamaki (2015:7) concedes that during this historical gathering, the Roman Catholic Church moved away from its traditional understanding of ecumenism as a 'return' of the separated Christian churches to the Church of Rome.

Mark Langham (2014) is a Catholic priest who served as secretary to the Vatican's dialogue with the Anglican and Methodist churches from 2008 to 2013 at the (PCPCU). Langham explains the main functions of the council. As the initiative of the Second Vatican Council with the responsibility to oversee the bilateral talks between the Catholic Church and other Christian churches. He observes that it is mandated to foster ecumenical talks internally in the Catholic Church, and to actively participate in dialogues at a wider level with other separated Christian churches. (2014:2). He explains that in order to fulfil its mandate, the PCPCU has two sections, the Eastern and the Western. According to him, the Eastern section manages relations between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches; they include: Greek, Russian, Romanian, and Serbian. The Western section is in long-standing dialogue with the churches of the Reformation, the Lutherans and Reformed churches, among them Calvinists, Presbyterians and the Church of Scotland, the Methodists and Anglicans. He notes that there are current engagements with the Baptists, Pentecostals, the Salvation Army, and the Old Catholics, and, most recently, with the Mormons. For Langham, the work of the PCPCU has changed the manner in which the Catholic Church relate with the outside world and the separated churches in the past five decades. It is now able to acknowledge that there exists within them elements of catholicity (2014:3). One can definitely argue that without the PCPCU, there would be not be ecumenical encounters in the Roman Catholic Church.

1.3. Key Research Question

How does the current approach to ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches impact on issues of gender? It also aim at addressing the following sub-research questions.

1.3.1. Sub-research Questions

- What is the current state and focus of the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches?
- What place, if any, is afforded to questions of gender in ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches?
- What contributions might increase the visibility of gender issues in ecumenical dialogue for fostering full communion between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches?

1.3.2. Objectives of the Study

- To explore the current state and focus of ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.
- To identify if there is any place afforded to questions of gender issues in ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.
- To track and examine contributions that might increase the visibility of gender issues in ecumenical dialogue for fostering full communion between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

1.3. Structure of the Study

Chapter one provides the basic introduction and background to the study. It sets out the objectives of the study. The chapter discusses the importance of the encounter between the Archbishops of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey and Pope John Paul VI as the starting point of the long term ecumenical relationship between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. This chapter explore the ecumenical potential of the Roman Catholic Church before and after the Second Vatican Council in order to appreciate the shift made by the Catholic Church in relating to the separated Christian Churches and to the outside world. The structure of the study is also presented in chapter one.

Chapter two is a presentation of the literature review. It highlights the implications of women's ordination to the desired full communion between the Anglicans and the Catholics.

It also explores how ARCIC has proved an important tool for the ecumenical journey between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. It discusses the purpose of ARCIC and the key themes that have guided their bilateral dialogues and the achievements that have been made since the initiation of the commission.

Chapter three offers the methodology of the study. It also provides the theoretical frameworks that the study will use. In this chapter, proponents of feminist ecclesiology and African women's theologies as critical theories of liberations are explored.

Chapter four considers the position of the Anglican Church on women's ordination. It explores how this has caused internal schism and the means applied to address the divisions within the Anglican Communion. The chapter also tracks the Catholic Church's self-understanding on the ordination of women. It identifies the teachings of the magisterium on women's ordination and examines the internal reactions that have arisen from the position of the church on women's ordination.

Chapter five examines how women's ordination has proved to be a barrier within the ecumenical dialogue between the two churches. It focuses on the gendered dimension of ordination, establishing significant correspondence that has occurred between the authorities of the two churches on the matter. It shows how women from both churches have responded to the state of affairs concerning women's ordination. The chapter also indicates how feminist thinkers have contested and named the non-ordination of women as oppressive in the patriarchal and hierarchical structures.

Chapter six contextualizes the study. It examines the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in South Africa. The chapter ends with some theological reflections of the study.

The seven and final chapter concludes the study by providing a summary of the study, presenting the limitations and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction.

The previous chapter was an introductory chapter. It laid down the basic introduction and the background to the study and presented the objectives of the study. Chapter two is an extensive presentation of the literature review. The chapter explores the views of theological thinkers who have extensively discussed the topic under study. The literature review has been categorized in two sections. In the first section, I highlight how the ordination of women has been a contentious issue within the respective churches and a challenging issue in their ecumenical dialogue. Although the ordination of gay people is not part of the discussion, it is included in this section as it causes further challenges and divisions within the Anglican Church and in the ecumenical dialogue between the two churches. The second section discusses the ecumenical body which has fostered the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. The section discusses the fundamental themes and the successes in the bilateral talks between the two churches.

2.2. Anglican and Roman Catholic Ecclesiologies.

A clear understanding of the ecclesiology of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches will guide a self-understanding of the two churches in the matters of moral ethics. In his book chapter titled, 'Anglican ecclesiology', Avis (2008b:202) provides an outline, indicating the features of the Anglican Church. He says that although Anglicans have reverence for the Word of God and consider tradition, they also take into consideration biblical criticism, historical scholarship and what the modern society and sciences have to offer. For Avis, free and honest discussions and pastoral endeavours are elements that sustain Anglicanism. Richard Lennon (2008:236) in his work, *Roman Catholic Ecclesiology*, observes that the Roman Catholic Church, since the Council of Trent (1545–63), has been an institutional church guided by order and authority sustained by the First Vatican Council's definition of papal infallibility. These characteristics of the Catholic Church are based on three principles: Jesus being the founding figure of the church and the appointment of Peter to lead the flock, and the church's role as the means of salvation and its authoritative power over all except God. However, Lennon is quick to mention that the advent of the Second Vatican Council brought a great change in the self-understanding of the Catholic Church, where the institutional church made a shift to much more flexible images. For instance, the encyclical of Pope Pius XII on the church, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943), understood the church as the

mystical body of Christ, moving away from the church as a 'perfect society', while *Lumen Gentium*'s chief image of the church is the people of God.

The Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the United States of America (ARCUSA) provides a significant contrast in the understanding of moral teaching between the Anglican and the Roman Catholic churches. In their work, 'Ecclesiology and Moral Discernment: Seeking a Unified Moral Witness' (2014), the members observe that the uncoordinated moral teachings of the Anglican Church are prone to possible error and correction and provide difficulties in comparisons in the manner in which the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church provide their teachings. In this context, the Roman Catholic Church is directed by the supreme and authoritative teaching of the Magisterium in collaboration with the bishops, or by the bishop of Rome who, acting together with the bishops, leads the body of bishops. The individual churches of the Anglican Church are episcopally managed and self-governing, with shared bodies or 'instruments for consultation and the articulation of teaching across the communion' (ARCUSA 2014:10).

The ARCIC III highlights that the main responsibility of the Commission is to resolve and examine the historical differences that have been obstacles to achieving ecclesial communion that the two churches seek (ARCIC III, 1). Since the establishment of the Commission, the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches have discussed a range of doctrinal, ecclesial and moral issues in their bilateral dialogues (Root 2015:3). The most contentious differences in the ecumenical talks by the two churches are of a moral nature. They include gender and sexuality issues.

In Ministry and Ordination, (Elucidation 1973#5; ARCIC I, 1973 #2), the Commission acknowledged that the practice to ordain women has caused for the two traditions serious barriers towards their reconciliation (#5). In their works, Conway (2008:572) and Holmes (1987:14) highlight that the ordination of women has threatened the ecumenical progress between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. Holmes explains that, to this effect, there have been exchanges of communication from both authorities. For example, Pope John Paul II reacted to the decision by writing a letter to Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury in 1984. In this letter the Pope raised serious concerns about the growing numbers of Anglican provinces training women and allowing them to be ordained as priests. According to the Pope, such activities deter the progress to full unity (1987:14). In response, Runcie conceded that the issue of ordaining women to the ministerial priesthood by the Anglicans is

a divisive and controversial matter in the dialogue and within the Anglican Church. (Holmes 1987:14). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in their statement on the ordination of women, observes that the current issues of women's ordination to priesthood and episcopate have become persistent issues in the two churches. The bishops affirm that since 1976, the authorities in the Roman Catholic Church have strongly maintained that only males are eligible to exercise priestly ministry (USCCB Statement on Women's Ordination #5). However, they note that the differences on the matter will not affect the works of ARCIC towards its goal.

In their statement on Morals and Discernment, the Anglican and Catholic bishops acknowledged that the differences in content, specificity and detail in the moral teachings in the two traditions is indicated by the manner in which authority is exercised. (ARCUSA 2014 #4). According to ARCIC, the differences that have arisen between the two churches are serious (#88). Thus, from the past, the Commission observed that although the two churches have failed to reach consensus on critical matters concerning their teaching on morals, they have both maintained 'the same vision of human nature and destiny fulfilled in Christ' (ARCIC 1994 #96).

Sedgwick affirms that there has been limited or no engagement on issues of gender and sexuality in the ecumenical dialogue of the two churches. He also insists that serious ethical questions are at the centre of divisions between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches (Sedgwick 2017:2).

2.3. Anglicanism and Catholicism on Women's Ordination and Gay People

The ordaining of women to priesthood does not only poses a challenge to the bilateral talks among the two traditions, but is also seen as a matter of concern within the Anglican Church. For example, Hannaford (2004:7) and Rowell (2004:139-140) explain that the decision made by the General Synod of the Church of England in 1992, which allowed women to be ordained to the priesthood, has caused a lot of divisions within the Anglican Church. Those who are opposed to the practice maintained that the ordination of women is not in accordance with the apostolic tradition of the church. They observe that the challenge that the Church of England face is to urgently put in measures to prevent further divisions and give pastoral care to those who refuse the practice (Hannaford 2004:75; Rowell 2004:139-140). The Eames Monitoring Group Report (1997) affirms to the seriousness of the divisions caused by the Anglican Church allowing women to priestly ministry. According to the Commission, this

necessitated the Lambeth Conference to appoint a separate commission with the mandate, through consultation, to foster reception and to maintain communion within the church and offer pastoral guidance to those who are seriously hurt by the practice (Eames Monitoring Group Report 1997:3). The Commission acknowledged that it had become very difficult to maintain unity in the Anglican Church after the consecration of a woman as bishop. To this effect, another commission has been set up in order to monitor how the church is struggling to maintain the highest possible levels of unity and provide guidance on how to live with diversity and reception in the process (Eames Monitoring Group Report 1997:3). Richardson (2004), in his book chapter titled 'Reception and Division in the Church' observes that the concept of reception has played a major role in highly debated talks concerning the ordination of women (Richardson 2004:124).

Eamon Conway in his work entitled *Ministry*, highlights that within the Catholic Church, the limiting of priestly ordination to male celibates has posed serious challenges in many countries with elderly priests and the diminishing of vocations to the priesthood. This situation, he says, has forced the non-ordained lay faithful to fill the gap and perform duties meant for the ordained (Conway 2008:572-753). The official teaching on the exclusion of women from priesthood in the Catholic Church is found in the Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994). In this Apostolic Letter the Pope stated that;

whether, in order that, all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (Lk 22:32), I declare that, the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgement is to be definitively held by all the church's faithful (OS #4).

This teaching on women's ordination was followed up by a communication to the presidents of the bishop's conferences around the globe, written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. The letter was in the affirmative of the declaration on the exclusion of women from the ordained ministry and stated that the position of the church that it has no power whatsoever to ordain women as indicated in the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* 'to be held definitively, is to be understood as belonging to the deposit of faith' (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, 1995:8).

Currently, Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, re-enforced the teaching of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. He states that; 'the reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the spouse who gives himself in the Eucharist is not a question open to discussion, but it can prove especially divisive if sacramental power is too closely identified with power in

general' (EG 104). Hanna mentions in response that according to the Pope, women are seeking for power (2014:1-2). Gaillardetz (1996:5) and Dulles (1996:2-3) concede that, in this case, the teaching is infallible and abiding to all, because it is based on scripture and used in accordance with the traditions of the church (Gaillardetz 1996:5; Dulles, 1996:2-3). However, both authors argue that this teaching has brought about conflicting understanding, because according to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, the biblical witness on the teaching is inconclusive (1996:5; 1996:3).

The apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* received negative reactions from Catholic theologians. For example, the Catholic Theological Society of America engaged a team which recorded their findings in the document 'Tradition and Ordination of Women' (1997). Here, the team concluded that the Apostolic Letter is mistaken with regards to its claim on the authority of this teaching and its grounding in tradition (1997:208-222). According to Lash, Rome has failed to present convincing arguments from Scripture or tradition, as claimed by the letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (Lash 1995:1544). Sullivan strongly disagrees with the claim of 'infallibility' made by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, arguing that the conditions for such an infallible teaching have not been met (1995:1646). Similarly, Johnson disagrees and states that the reasons given by the authorities in Rome: scripture, tradition, or theology, do not justify the exclusion of women from ordination (1996:8-10). In this context, she says, even though theologians have reverence to the authorities of the church, they should strongly question the position of the church on the matter (:8-10). Further to this, Graff observes that women's ordination like most of the developments in the church came about as a belief in Jesus Christ as the risen Lord, thus were not intended by him. (1996:6-11). However, Dulles (1996:11) indicates that the debate on allowing women to priesthood is ecumenical, because it creates divisions between Catholics and other separated Christians. In Dulles' view, if the Catholic Church was to permit women to be ordained, new divisions would emerge between it and the ancient churches of the East. He says, the Orthodox will judge Rome of conceding to the liberal Protestant's understanding of ministry (:11). Dulles believes that, even though the church has made many pronouncements on the equality in dignity of both men and women, it has not shown yet how women are to be involved in the activities of the church if they are excluded from priesthood. (:14). He adds that there is a need for further explore the possibility opening the door to women deacons (:14).

2.4. Anglican and Roman Catholic Bilateral Dialogue

ARCIC was initiated in 1966 with the view to foster ecumenical progress between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. This body is managed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Anglican Consultative Council. This Commission intends to identify a common ground between the two churches (ARCIC III, 2017: Preface). The two churches have engaged in three phases since the inception of their dialogue: ARCIC I, II, and III. ARCIC II highlights that the mandate of the Commission is to evaluate and address the doctrinal differences that have been obstacles to achieving the ecclesial communion that the two churches seek. Hietamaki (2010:92) observes that for Adrian Hastings, the main task of the ARCIC was a supervisory role, where it was mandated to supervise the Anglican and Roman Catholic relations on various levels of pastoral care. This was not limited to seeing to the actual implementation of various stages towards full communion, and had the emphasis on investigations into the possibility of intercommunion and the study of *Apostolicae Curae* (RC Leo XIII 1896), including a thorough examination of the Anglican ministries (2010:92).

The Anglican–Roman Catholic dialogue is the most developed bilateral dialogue with regard to ecumenical relationship since the Catholic Church’s official entry into ecumenical dialogue with separated Christian churches. Through the ARCIC, the two churches have generated and made critical evaluations and provided responses to ecumenical issues. Major statements that have been issued so far include: the Doctrine on Eucharist (1971), Ministry and Ordination (1973), Authority in the Church I (1977), Authority in the Church II (1981), Salvation and the Church (1987), Church as Communion (1991), Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church (1994), Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III (1999) and the place of Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ (2005); these have been extensively debated.

2.5. ARCIC: Purpose, Themes and Accomplishments

2.5.1. Purpose

There have been ecumenical encounters between the Anglican and the Roman Catholic churches since 1960 when Archbishop Fisher visited Pope John XXIII in Rome (Longenecker 2014:2). From the beginning of the Second Vatican Council one notices significant progress in the ecumenical encounters between the two churches. Sherlock (2014:3) observes that these bilateral dialogues were initiated by the visit of Archbishop

Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI in 1966. This visit has fostered a collective pilgrimage between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches after long centuries of living in their separate ways.

The initial phase of the ARCIC was conducted from 1970 to 1982, co-chaired by Henry McAdoo Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, and Alan Clark the Roman Catholic bishop of East Anglia. Prominent themes in this period include Doctrine on Eucharist, Ministry and Ordination and Authority in the Church. This stage is referred to as the ARCIC I. The second phase was held from 1983 to 2011, chaired by Mark Santer, Frank Griswold and Peter Carnley, all from the Anglican Communion, and Cormac Murphy and Alexander Joseph Brunett from the Roman Catholic Church. Issues on the Doctrine of Salvation, Communion, Teaching Authority and the Role of Mary the Mother of God were discussed. The phase is commonly known as ARCIC II. Within this second phase, a commission of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on the Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) was created comprising 13 member bishops from each church. The ARCIC III is the third phase of the commission which has run from 2011 to the present. This phase is co-chaired by the most Rev Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham from the Roman Catholic Church and most Rev Sir David Moxon, former Archbishop of New Zealand from the Anglican Church. The phase is concerned with the fundamental issues regarding the Church as communion (ARCICI III, 2017: Preface).

2.6. Themes.

2.6.1. ARCIC I, Eucharistic Document (1971)

The fundamental theme of this Commission was the concept of *koinonia*. The two churches expressed that *koinonia* informs the self-understanding of the church as a mystery. In its statement the Commission explored the New Testament images, referring to *koinonia* to clearly understand the New Testament imagery. For the two churches, *koinonia* is of great significance as it highlights its relational dimensions. It defines the relationship between the individual Christian and Christ and among fellow believers. In this context, ‘the Christian church is a church of *koinonia*, the Eucharist an effective sign of *koinonia*, the episcopate is a service of *koinonia* and primacy is a visible link and focus of *koinonia*’ (Final Report #6). It is worth noting that in the statement, the Commission links the broad themes of Eucharist, Ministry and Ordination and Authority in the Church to *koinonia* (ARCIC 1, Final Report. Ministry and Ordination # 6; Sagovsky 2000: 21; Hietamaki 2010:93).

In the initial document concerning the Eucharist, the Commission sought a shared vision on the nature of the Eucharist as described in the scriptures and in the teachings of the early church. It was agreed that the Eucharist should be understood in terms of a 'once for all' and as an *anamnesis* (memorial) (ARCIC 1, Eucharistic Document #5). According to the Elucidation-Eucharistic Document 1979:#2, the sacramental reality of the 'once for all' finds its expression in the word *anamnesis*. For example, in the liturgical language the ancient church used the word *anamnesis* to commemorate the redemptive mission of Christ in their Eucharistic celebrations. Certainly, this is understood to be a one-time sacrifice that conveys the present benefit, since by celebrating the Eucharist the church shows gratitude for the total self-giving of Christ and also identifies itself with the will of Christ who sacrificed himself on behalf of humanity (Elucidation #3). The statement on the Eucharist makes clear that by using the word *anamnesis*, it refers to Christ instituting the Eucharist as a memorial of the totality of God's reconciling action in Him (#5). In the final report on the statement on their Eucharistic Document, the two churches agreed that they have reached a 'substantial' (#12) agreement concerning the Eucharist. The commission stated clearly that should there be any divergences, they are to be resolved:

We believe that we have reached substantial agreement on the doctrine of the Eucharist. Although we are all conditioned by the traditional ways in which we have expressed and practiced our Eucharistic faith, we are convinced that if there are any remaining points of disagreement they can be resolved on the principles here established. We acknowledge a variety of theological approaches within both our communions (Final Report: Eucharistic Document #12).

Hietamaki (2010:105) emphasises that 'substantial' agreement or 'consensus' is understood as significant progress towards organic unity; a substantial consensus is when there is complete agreement between the two parties on critical issues where 'doctrine admits no divergence, which means that by engaging in substantial agreement the two churches confirm that doctrinal differences cannot be accepted. Locke (2009:169) observes that ARCIC 1 brings out the difference between Christ being present in the Eucharist and matters of personal faith. According to him, the sacramental reality of the Eucharist is not influenced by the faith of the individual receiving it. Similarly, in their statement on the Eucharist, the Commission elaborates that the sacramental body and blood of Christ are present as an offering to the faithful who are ready to receive him. Here, a life-giving exchange takes place when the sacramental reality is met with faith. It is from this conviction that the Commission declared that, if the Eucharistic presence is to be considered, there is need to recognize both

the sacramental sign of Christ's presence and the relationship between the individual Christian and Christ which arises from the faithful (Elucidation #8). therefore, in the mystery of the Eucharist one finds two movements within and the indissoluble unity, Christ's self-giving and the believer receiving the gift of Christ in faith (Locke 2009:169).

2.6.2. ARCIC I, Ministry and Ordination (1973)

Following the agreement on the statement on the Eucharist, ARCIC focused on the Doctrine of Ministry, with an emphasis on their collective understanding and a shared vision concerning the priestly ministry and its significance in the church. The Commission discussed the ordained ministry in the wider context of the many ministries in the church; they agree that, in both traditions, one finds a variety of ministerial functions (#2). They both agree that it is the Holy Spirit that influences and directs every baptised person, gives the charisms for one to serve not only the people of God but also renders service to the entire society. The Commission believes that the purpose of the ministerial functions is to promote *koinonia* and all the faithful 'are encouraged to a total surrender and commitment to prayer' (IARCCUM 2007, Commentary on Ministry and Ordination #50). These ministries are expressed within the Christian life: whose intended goal is to create an authentic Christian community (*koinonia*), which flows from and mirrors Christian service and is guided by Christ who is their model (#3). And also, 'in the early church the apostles exercised a ministry which remains of fundamental significance for the church of all ages' (#4). These ministries are also described in the apostolic nature of the church (#4). 'Ministerial functions' (:#5) can be seen by the special roles already performed in the early church, thus, providing evidence to the present elements of ordination. 'Some form of recognition and authorization is already required...for those who exercised them in the name of Christ' (#5). The diverse apostolic structures of the '*episcopoi* and *presbyteroi*' are the early church pastoral ministries from which 'the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon' find their origin (#6). Here, both churches agree to return the threefold ministry and remain faithful to the practice (IARCCUM 2007, Commentary on Ministry and Ordination #53).

The Commission discussed the ordained ministry as a priesthood that services all the people of God for his glory. They believe that the main purpose of the priestly ministry is to be at the service of all the Christians. (#7). The functions of these ministries are described in many images in the New Testament (#8): the priest is servant not only of Christ but also of the ecclesial community, 'he is herald and ambassador, a teacher, a shepherd, one who is lead an

exemplary life in holiness and compassion' (#8). 'Oversight' (*episcopo*), is critical to the ordained ministry (#9). Both churches agree that the episcopate is entrusted with leadership roles and bears the symbols of unity as well as the mandate to lead the church in its work. (IARCCUM 2007 #55). According to the Commission, this ministerial priesthood, supported by prayer, is responsible for celebrating the liturgy of the word and sacraments, especially the Eucharistic celebration (#10-12). Ordained ministers continue the teaching and mission of the apostles; they symbolize and maintain the apostolic tradition, which defines and is the basis of the entire church (IARCCUM 2007, Commentary on Ministry and Ordination #51).

Both churches justify their priestly language when speaking about ordained ministry; they say that, since the Eucharistic celebration is a remembrance of Christ's self-giving, 'the action of the presiding minister in reciting again the words of Christ at the last supper and distributing to the assembly the holy gifts is seen to stand in a sacramental relation to what Christ himself did in offering his own sacrifice' (#13).

The document further discusses ordination. Here the Commission brings out the inclusive nature of the priesthood, stating, Because ministry is not for itself but of the people of God and since ordination is not only meant for the person receiving it but involves the entire church, 'this prayer and laying on of hands takes place within the context of the Eucharist' (Ministry and Ordination; Elucidation #14). The Commission agreed that ordination is a 'sacramental act' by which,

The gift of God is bestowed upon the minister, with the promise of divine grace for their work and for their sanctification; the ministry of Christ is presented to them as a model for their own; and the Spirit seals those he has chosen and consecrated. Just as Christ has united the church inseparably with himself, and as God calls all the faithful to lifelong discipleship, so the gifts and calling of God to the ministers are irrevocable. For this reason, ordination is unrepeatable in both churches (#15).

They both agree that ordination is only effected by the bishop; in this case, the responsibility of ordaining the priests and deacons belongs to the bishop (#16).

The Commission acknowledged that since the publication of the statement on ministry and ordination, there has been in the Anglican Church significant progress with regard to the ordination of women. In the Anglican churches where the ordination of women has taken place, the bishops maintain that the practice does not depart from the traditional doctrine of the ordained ministry. The Commission is fully aware that permitting women to priestly ministry has disrupted the progress to the full communion that the two churches desire:

however, it holds that, ‘the principles upon which its doctrinal agreement rests are not affected by such ordinations; for it was concerned with the origin and nature of the ordained ministry and not with the question of who can or cannot be ordained’ (Ministry and Ordination Elucidation #55). In conclusion, the Commission agreed on the nature of ministry when they wrote that the Commission showed satisfaction that their conclusions represents the general agreement of the two traditions on essential matters where it is confident ‘that doctrines admit any further divisions’ (#17). Avis (2010), in his editorial in *Harvesting the Fruits of Ecumenical Dialogue*, points out that, in the thought of Walter Kasper, like other Christian churches, the two churches have acknowledged the reality of *episcopate* in its various forms even though only a partial agreement on the matter has been realised (Avis 2010: 139-141).

Locke (2009) identifies the opposing views within the Anglican Church regarding the dialogue with the Catholic Church and the Anglicans concerning Ministry and Ordination. He observes that among the Anglicans, there are those who support ARCIC’s ‘Eucharistic-sacramental ecclesiology’ (:175) and affirm that there are certain differences between the ministerial priesthood and the rest of the lay faithful (:175), hence, placing ministry in the context of Eucharistic celebration (2009:175). He says that some ‘would prefer a more Word-based understanding of church that focuses on the role of ministers in the proclamation of the Word’ (:175). Here, ordained ministry is merely seen as an extension of the priesthood of all the baptized (2009:175). According to him, in this dialogue the Roman Catholic Church was concerned with the question of identity. He says the Roman Catholics questioned whether ARCIC I was ‘identical to Roman Catholic doctrine, rather than whether it is consonant’ (:175). According to Locke, the central and authoritative structures found in the Roman Catholic Church enabled them to take such an approach because it has the authority which clearly states what Catholics believe. He observes that this is not the case with the Anglicans, who do not have such authoritative structures rendering them incapable of providing clear directions for their teachings (Locke 2009 :175).

2.6.3. Authority in the Church I: 1976-1981

In this phase the Commission addressed issues of authority in the church (Authority in the Church I and II: Venice 1976 and Windsor 1981), which was followed by the document Elucidation in 1981; further agreed upon statements were put together in the final report. In the preface of the document Authority in the Church the Commission acknowledged that it is the problem of authority that has impaired the unity between the two churches. The serious issue at the centre of the historical division is papal primacy (ARCIC I, Authority in the Church 1976).

In this document, the Commission acknowledged that the people of God are guided by the Spirit of Christ who help them to obey and carry out the will of God in service to their Christian communities and through their actions the Holy Spirit is actively present in the life of the church (Final Report, Authority in the Church I, 3). The Commission recognizes how each individual is gifted from the Holy Spirit which is genuinely distributed in the church. The two churches agreed that all the baptized share in these gifts of the Spirit (#4). According to the Commission, some individuals in the church and certain communities are granted special gifts from the same Spirit for the good of whole the church. Among such gifts of the Spirit, the gift of *episcopo* is evident (Authority in the Church I #5). Both churches recognized the place of the laity in the church when they believe that by virtue of their baptism, individuals are called to perform specific duties within the church according to their capacities, even though in most cases the non-ordained are not included in decision-making processes. (Authority in the Church I, Elucidation #4). Both churches emphasize the complementary role of authority and conciliarity of the office of the bishop. They indicate that, ‘Although primacy and conciliarity are complementary elements of episcopo, it has been noticed that most instances one has received prominence while the other has been neglected. (Authority in the Church I, # 22).

2.6.4. Authority in the Church II (Windsor 1981)

There is a link between Authority in the Church I and Authority in the Church II in the sense that the latter sought to deepen specific aspects of the former. The importance of this phase was that it addressed the difficulties which had arisen from the previous dialogue. The Commission identified as the main issues that needed to be discussed the ‘interpretation of the Petrine text, the meaning of the language of “divine right”, the affirmation of papal infallibility, and the nature of jurisdiction ascribed to the bishop of Rome as universal primate’ (Authority in the Church II, Introduction). The two churches agreed on the

significant role of the bishop of Rome in the church. They stated that, ‘...we nevertheless agree that the universal primacy will be needed in a reunited church and should appropriately be the primacy of the bishop of Rome’ (Authority in the Church II #9). Even though the Commission did not agree to the Roman Catholic Church’s claims of primacy by divine right (*jure divino*), they nevertheless agreed that the Anglican Communion acknowledges the Pope of Rome as a gift of God to the Church (Authority in the Church II #13).

The Commission agreed that the church’s authority is exercised by the college of bishops; this is so because by the virtue of their ordination they have been given ‘Divine Power’ that must be obeyed by the whole church.

Each bishop is entrusted with the pastoral authority needed for the exercise of his *episcopate*. This authority is both required and limited by the bishop's task of teaching the faith through the proclamation and explanation of the word of God, of providing for the administration of the sacraments in his diocese and of maintaining his church in holiness and truth. Hence decisions taken by the bishop in performing his task have an authority which the faithful in his diocese have a duty to accept (Authority in the Church II #17).

The above statement gives the bishops a responsibility to maintain and protect the faith. Here, in case of uncertainties the bishops collectively engage in consultation to discern the will of God.

According to the Commission, the exercise of *episcopate* is an inclusive one. It recommends that, in exercising authority, for a close collaboration and engagement in consultation with other bishops rather than exercise authority in isolation. (Authority II #19). It further states that universal ‘primacy’ (:19), is not power over the other members of the church, but a service done for and with the collaboration of the entire Christian community (Authority II #19).

Under the term ‘infallibility’ the commission strongly recommended that bishops gather in official synods and councils to resolve serious matters at a given time (#24). In these cases the bishops collectively have the task to clearly articulate the truth that must be followed by the faithful. It was agreed that ‘in specific situations, church authorities while acting together in close collaboration with other bishops may make certain conclusions on the matter without the entire assembly’. (Authority #28; Locke 2009:178).

Locke observes that while ARCIC I allows for priests and lay people to participate in decision-making processes, the document suggested that council debates on matters affecting

the church should be attended by bishops only. In this matter, one sees primacy and conciliarity interacting in the decisions on what the whole church must and must not believe. This leaves the laity with no influence on the validity of pronouncements. This means that the laity have no bearing on the authoritative nature of any decision (2009:178-179). According to Locke, this becomes a major concern for the Anglican Communion who have difficulties in accepting a highly authoritative interpretation of the episcopate. This is so because for the Anglicans, all the bishops are included in the collective individuals of the ordained and non-ordained. Thus, Anglican synods are held by bishops in consultation among themselves and with the priests and the laity. Locke makes a brief observation on the response of the Faith and Order Advisory Group (FOAG) to ARCIC and echoes the sentiments of Bishop Hugh Montefiore, pointing out that the high respect shown to bishops in the Roman Catholic Church is foreign to Anglican belief. He stresses that Anglicans recognize the right and responsibilities of the whole church to full participation in resolving faith and moral issues (2009:180). Ingram (n.d.:7) adds that the document on Authority in the Church II had serious debates concerning the universal leadership primacy of the Pope. The view was that the office of the bishop of Rome was a necessity for church unity. However, it is worth noting that the consensus was based on a concept of shared leadership in relation to Peter and Paul.

Kasper (2004:136) concedes that the position of the Pope is a complex reality, as it raises theoretical and theological challenges in ecumenical dialogue. Contrasting the exercise of authority in the two churches, Chapman (2008:508) says that the Catholic Church claims to exercise its authority in the service of the laity, while in the Anglican Communion, authority is legitimized through voting. For Chapman authority remains a major challenge not only between the Anglican and the Roman Catholic churches, but to the all Christian churches today. It is in this context that the statement on authority was of great significance for the ongoing bilateral dialogues between the Anglicans and Roman Catholics in their attempt to resolve some of the difficulties experienced towards achieving unity. The Commission agreed that there is a consensus concerning authority from both churches. However, the statement states that challenges still remain concerning papal primacy (ARCIC I, Authority in the Church I #24).

Locke (2009:176) points out that the response of the Anglican Church on authority is of great interest, because the statement has not received full recognition like the previous statements on Eucharist and ministry. Anglicans insist that the document on authority is not ‘consonant’ with their faith. Locke says that similar observations are made by the FAOG, which claims

that there is not the same amount of ‘substantial’ agreement in the Eucharist and Ministry document (:176). He highlights that, according to the Lambeth 1988 document, the bilateral talks on authority are ‘a firm basis for the direction and agenda of the continuing dialogue on authority’ (:176). Locke further observes that ARCIC 1 gave much emphasis to authority that gives special powers to the ordained ministry, with a particular focus on the historical episcopate for the resolution of controversies that arise within the church. He notes that one finds a contradiction in ARCIC when it claims that all the baptized share equally in discerning the will of God, while the laity remain passive in decision-making matters. A further observation is made that ARCIC raises critical issues when it places the laity on the receiving end, whose role is really to implement the decisions made by the ordained ministers (Locke 2009:176-177).

2.7. ARCIC II

The second phase of ARCIC sought to evaluate and debate on issues concerning the doctrinal differences that still divide the two churches. The meetings of ARCIC II ran from 1981 through to 2005. The prominent themes addressed were Salvation and the Church 1987, Church as Communion 1991, Life in Christ: Moral, Communion and the Church 1994, Clarifications and the Gift of Authority III 1999, and Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ 2005. Particular attention is given to Salvation and the Church, Gift of Authority I, II and III Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ and Church as Communion.

2.7.1. Church as Communion (1991)

Church as Communion (here after CAC) offers a different approach from the past ARCIC documents in the sense that it did not address the historical doctrinal differences between the two traditions. But pays particular attention to communion ecclesiology (Denaux, Sagovsky and Sherlock, 2005:35 (eds); Fuchs, 2008: 311). The text explores the biblical foundation of communion, highlighting salvation history which was disrupted by original sin and was reclaimed by grace. The fundamental themes point to the communion that exists between God and humanity and the rest of creation (Fuchs, 2008: 311; CAC #6-15). The section that follows is an explanation of how ecclesial communion manifests the sacramentality of the church as ‘sign and instrument’ of communion intended for humanity (CAC #16-24). Building on what the Commission said in Salvation and the Church, the text emphasises that communion is grounded in scripture, and is realized in the church; thus the church becomes the saving sign in Christ because salvation is achieved by being in communion with God

through Christ and with each other. Being the means of salvation, the church forms a community of believers through which salvation is offered for the sake of all creation (Fuchs 2008:311).

Locke (2009:165) asserts that the Anglicans, in their dialogue with the Catholic Church, have accepted its self-understanding of church as a 'Eucharistic-Sacramental' model of the church. It has been agreed that the church is 'a sacrament', or 'mystery' of Christ's continuing work of salvation on earth. In this context, the church is presented as a visible sign which brings the human race into communion with God and with one another. Being a symbol of God's salvation and the means by which humanity is saved, the church as a mystical body is the channel by which God fosters this communion and points to an eschatological reality when 'all will be one in Christ' (2009:165). According to the Commission, this role of the church as sign finds its expression in the Eucharistic celebration.

The sacramental nature of the church as sign, instrument, and foretaste of communion is especially manifested in the common celebration of the Eucharist. Celebrating the memorial of the Lord and partaking of his body and blood, the church points to the origin of its communion in Christ himself in communion with the Father; it experiences that communion in a visible fellowship; It anticipates the fullness of the communion in the kingdom; it is sent out to realize, manifest and extend that communion in the world (CAC #24).

The third part of the text addresses the relationship between communion and its apostolicity, catholicity, and holiness (#25-41). In this aspect, the church expresses its traditions and mission through the profession of faith. Thus, fidelity to the apostolic tradition becomes key for communion open to catholicity, which embraces the diversity of all people and leads them to holiness of life (Fuchs 2008:311). According to Fuchs, the text Church as Communion brings out some important aspects of the church. He says that by being in communion, the church manifests its unity, holiness, apostolicity and catholicity while bringing out its reality as one, holy, apostolic and catholic. For him, being in communion calls for diversity, that which does not cause divisions, but fosters dynamism of faith, life and witness (:315). According to the Commission, this diversity is expressed through:

The variety of liturgies and forms of spirituality, in the variety of discipline and ways of exercising authority, in the variety of theological expressions of the same doctrine. These varieties complement one another, showing that as the result of communion with God in Christ, diversity does not lead to division; on the contrary, it serves to bring glory to God for the magnificence of his gifts (CAC #36).

The text further examines the cardinal elements that are required for Christian ecclesial unity (#42-48). The cardinal elements in this ecclesial communion are spelled out; they include,

the confession of one apostolic faith, found in biblical texts and presented in creeds, common baptism and Eucharist, a shared commitment to mission, common life, sharing spiritual and material gifts, an affirmation to common fundamental moral values, ministry, oversight, collegial and primatial (2015:362; 2008:312)

In this way they bring out the significant role of the notion of *koinonia* into the ecumenical dialogue (Chapman 2015:362; Fuchs 2008:312). For the purpose of ensuring holiness, maintaining and transmission of faith, ensuring catholicity and fostering unity, certain structures are necessary. From this context, CAC points to the historical episcopate for oversight of church unity and order. Through the laying on of hands in historic succession, the church becomes an effective channel of unity to the entire church. In this context, while unity and diversity are maintained, the local church is reminded of its link to the universal church (Locke 2009:167; CAC #45; Chapman 2015:362).

Locke observes that Anglicans and Catholics agree that the historic succession brings and bonds the faithful together in the communion of all the churches, ‘through its connection with the celebration of the Eucharist’ (2009:167). The text finally affirms that a certain yet imperfect communion exists between the two churches, while acknowledging that divisive issues have to be resolved before full communion can be realized (CAC #49, 58). The Commission not only points out various forms of collaboration which have shown their common witness in action and pronouncements on social and moral issues, but it also recognizes the rich spiritual and liturgical commonalities that are shared between the two churches (CAC #52; Fuchs 2008:312).

Sagovsky (2003:21) observes that in the document CAC the commission reflected on an ‘ecumenical ecclesiology of communion’ (:21). According to him, a critical example of this church model is seen in the church structures of the Anglican Church, ‘a communion of autonomous provinces with primates’ (:21), which is understood as ‘a communion of communions’ Although the Archbishop of Canterbury is recognized as a symbol of unity, he has no ecclesiastical authority over the Anglican bishops. For Sagovsky, the incident of ordaining women to the priesthood, which took place in the

United States of America in 1976, and the consecration of women to bishops, beginning with Barbara Harris in Massachusetts in 1989, has seriously tested the unity of the Anglican Church. Using the central theological theme of *koinonia*, the Eames Commission was able to address the matter (Sagovsky 2003:21).

2.7.2. Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III (1999)

This document turned to the concept of communion with the view to provide clarity on ecclesial communion. It uses the image expressed in 2 Corinthians 1:18-20 of God's 'yes' to humanity in the saving work of Christ and of humanity's response in Christ. The Commission stressed the link that exists between the faith of an individual Christian with that of the whole Christian community:

Paul speaks of the "yes" of God to us and the "Amen" of the church to God. In Jesus Christ, son of God and born of a woman, the "yes" of God became a concrete human reality. This theme of God's "yes" and human "Amen" in Jesus Christ is the key to the exposition of authority in this statement (Gift of Authority #8).

Root (2015:3), interestingly, offers an expansion on this dialectical approach. For Root, God's divine promise of salvation in Jesus demands a positive response, an 'Amen' on the part of the believer. Through the 'Amen' of Jesus to his Father, the 'Amen' of the believer is perfected. It is this participation of humanity into the 'Amen' of Christ which fosters an authentic relationship between an individual believer and that of the church's 'Amen' (:3).

According to the Commission, this

"Amen" of the individual Christian is expressed 'in baptism, in renewal of commitment, in a decision to remain faithful, or in acts of self-giving to those in need. It is through participation that an individual, says indeed, Jesus Christ is my God; he is for me salvation, the source of hope, the true face of the living God' (Gift of Authority #11).

The Commission further expresses this in these words:

When a believer says Amen to Christ individually, a further dimension is always involved: an Amen to the faith of the Christian community... "The Amen said to what Christ is for each believer is incorporated within the Amen the church says to what Christ is to his body" (Gift of Authority #12).

Henn (1999:4) observes the web of interconnectedness between personal faith, the faith of the local church and the manner in which scripture and tradition are received and the catholicity

which unites the local church affirms the ‘Amen’ to God in response to God’s ‘yes’ to humanity (Henn 1999:4).

According to Denaux, Sagovsky and Sherlock 2016:124), the concept of a ‘yes’ and ‘Amen’ becomes a key element to the statement’s exposition to authority in the church. The concept clearly demonstrates the authoritative power of Christ which is realized in his perfect communion with the Persons of the Trinity. From this understanding, the Commission claims that: ‘the *sensus fidei*’ enables each individual Christian who seeks to commit their life to Christ and are full members of the church to fully participate and contribute to the wellbeing of the church’s life, each one according to her/his capabilities (#29). According to the Commission this is called ‘synodality’ (#34), which fosters a comprehensive ecclesiology. Rush (2018:24) concedes that Pope Francis in his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium* (#136) expresses the need to listen to each member of the church.

According to Locke, Gift of Authority raised fundamental questions on the self-understanding of the Anglican ecclesial authority. For example, Anglicans argue that the decisions of some provinces in permitting the ordination of women were not collectively made, because they have brought serious reactions and divisions within the Anglican Communion (2009:184). Gift of Authority creates an awareness among Anglicans for the need of the universal primacy to offer guidance so that unilateral decisions that may divide the church further are avoided. Locke mentions that according to Gift of Authority, the Anglican Communion is exploring the possibility of setting up authoritative structures within provinces; the Commission asks if Anglicans can consider and embrace a central authority that can make decisions on behalf of the whole church especially in specific situations (Locke 2009:184). To both churches, the Commission recommended that:

Anglicans be open to and desire a recovery and re-reception under certain clear conditions of the exercise of universal primacy by the Bishop of Rome. For Roman Catholics, to be open to and desire a re-reception of the exercise of the primacy by the Bishop of Rome and offering of such ministry to the whole church of God (#62).

In conclusion, the Commission agreed on how the concept of ‘Amen’ plays a critical role in both traditions concerning their journey to full communion:

The web of unity which is woven from communion with God and reconciliation with each other is extended and strengthened. Thus the “Amen” which Anglicans and Roman Catholics say to the one Lord comes closer to

being an “Amen” said together by the one Holy people witnessing to God’s salvation and reconciling love in a broken world (Gift of Authority # 63).

According to Henn, this ‘Amen’ is a significant element with regard to authority in the church (1999:4).

2.8. ARCIC III (2011 until the present)

The bilateral dialogue between the two traditions has entered its third phase. This phase is referred to as ARCIC III, which began in 2011. Its responsibility is to foster the acceptance of the work of ARCIC that was accomplished previously and to explore the Church as Communion, with emphasis on matters to do with authority and the ecclesial communion. The ARCIC III responds to the Common agreement of Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams when they met in 2006. The declaration identified two significant areas for the future of ecumenical dialogue between the two churches, ‘the emerging ecclesiological and ethical issues making the journey difficult and arduous’ (ARCIC III, 2011: Preface). Here, the Commission pays particular attention to explore ‘the Church as Communion, Local, and Universal. (Rush 2018:1). Rush observes that the document intends to develop previous works, however, it focuses on two themes: ‘Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal church come to discern right ethical teaching’ (2018:8). According to Rush Church as Communion provides the fundamental communion ecclesiology. To this effect ARCIC III has prepared two draft documents. The first presents the five agreed statements from ARCIC II that are to be received by the two churches. The second document highlights matters of ecclesiology (ARCIC III, Preface; Rush 2018:1).

Rush (2018: 5) observes the different approach taken by the statement, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church – Local, Regional, and Universal* (ARCIC III), (hereafter, *WTW*). He notes that for the first time in the dialogue of ARCIC the concept of ‘receptive ecumenism’ is used in the dialogue between the two churches. He says, according to *WTW*, the process of receptive ecumenism,

Involves being prepared both to discern what appears to be overlooked or underdeveloped in one’s own tradition and to ask whether such things are better developed in the other tradition. It then requires the openness to ask how such perceived strengths in the other tradition might be able, through receptive learning, to help the development and enrichment of this aspect of ecclesial life within one’s own tradition (2018:6).

Rush is fascinated by the thoughts of Joseph Ratzinger on the spirit of openness in ecumenical dialogue. He says, for Ratzinger, ‘There is a duty to let oneself be purified and enriched by the other’ (:6). According to Rush, what is of interest is the manner in which WTW understands receptive ecumenism as a way of caring, that ‘sharing a gift that the other may need is not a matter of proving who is wrong or better than the other, but rather, in Christian charity, of helping the other because they are in need and are experiencing tension and difficulties in their ecclesial life’ (2018:6). For example, Anglicans and Roman Catholics have differences specific to each in their understanding of practices and structures and in their use of terms. The purpose here is not to resolve these differences, but, as Rush points out, it is to ‘ask how each might be a resource for the other so that what is experienced as grace and beneficial in one might help address what is less developed in the other’ (Rush 2018:6).

For Rush, the driving force of growing together into the fullness of Christ is the common urgency within the two communions. He says that since church structures support the mission of the church, any initiative to make these structures more effective should not be denied. For him, such humility lies in receptive ecumenism which has guided the work of ARCIC III. He states that since their historical divisions, the Holy Spirit has guided the two traditions; hence, the instruments of communion that each tradition has developed through its history should be ‘a token of divine providence’ (:13), which the other, through the Spirit, should receive. From the Catholic Church’s perspective, he claims that WTW raises great opportunities for Roman Catholic receptive learning from the Anglican tradition across all levels of communion, local, regional and universal (Rush 2018:13).

2.9. Achievements

The Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church have made tremendous progress in addressing their historical, doctrinal and ecclesial differences that have kept them apart for centuries, even though this has not yet led to formal mutual recognition. Through their official theological dialogues (ARCIC), the two churches have made significant agreements in important areas such as: the Eucharistic doctrine, Ministry and Ordination, and Authority. IARCCUM is an extensive elaboration on the achievements made by the bilateral dialogues between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. The two churches are in agreement that although there exists ‘imperfect communion’ between them, they have reached some commonalities that will foster how they work together. The Commission notes that from the ARCIC statements, the Anglicans have positively embraced the Eucharist and ministry texts by stating that the documents are ‘consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans’

(IARCCUM 2007 #2), while the Roman Catholics have agreed that the statements have greatly strengthened the consensus in those specific areas.

While acknowledging that specific areas need further attention, the area in which the two churches have reached consensus is that of authority. The forty years of theological dialogue between the two traditions have enhanced their growing closer together. They have claimed that the things that they have accomplished together are much more important than those that remain dividing them (IARCCUM 2007:4). According to IARCCUM, other significant partnerships have been developed between Anglicans and Roman Catholics alongside their theological dialogues. These developments have since been witnessed by Archbishop George Carey and Pope John Paul II when they said: throughout the globe, the two churches have worked together, especially in celebrating certain sacraments such as baptism, have conducted common prayer and recognize each other as a people belonging to one family. For example, their common witness is demonstrated in current issues affecting the world such as ‘globalization and fragmentation, growing secularism, religious apathy and moral confusion’ (IARCCUUM 2007 #3). Evidence has shown that Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops hold consultative meetings and common prayers. Both traditions call upon the other during their conciliar meetings as observers. The ongoing joint declarations between the Archbishops of Canterbury and the Pope point to a serious communion that is already shared and a call for continuing together on the way to visible unity (2007:4). For the Commission, the harvested fruits of the forty years of the bilateral talks call for a celebration:

As we review the experience of our churches it becomes clear to us how increased interaction has led to greater mutual understanding, and at the same time how this greater awareness of the extent of our shared faith has set us free to witness together more effectively. We celebrate and praise God (IARCCUUM 2007 #93).

For the Commission, the greatest achievement by the two churches is the faith that they share in common which is to be understood as a divine gift (IARCCUUM #93).

2.10. Conclusion

Chapter two was an extensive presentation of the literature review of the thesis. It explores the views of theological thinkers who have discussed at length the topic under study. The literature review has been categorized into two sections. The first section explained the understanding of the gendered ministry by the two churches and its implications in their ecumenical dialogue. We saw how the ordination of women has been and continues to be a contentious issue within the respective churches and a challenging issue in the ecumenical dialogue. The second section was an exploration of the Anglican and Roman Catholic bilateral talks. Its importance is in highlighting the relationship that has existed between Anglicans and the Roman Catholic Church, initiated by authorities from both churches to enter into critical dialogue in order to resolve the historical doctrinal differences that have been at the centre of their divisions. We have seen in this chapter how the concept of communion effects the link of all themes in the bilateral dialogue between the two churches. We have also seen how the issue of women's ordination becomes a cross-cutting matter in their dialogue. The chapter also brings out how the ecclesial structures in the two churches affect the manner by which authority is exercised. This in turn informs how decision-making structures are open to full participation of their members. In this chapter, one is presented with the positive results in the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglicans and Roman Catholics which are the goal of their reconciliation, but also of full communion. The Commission is positive that although there remain unresolved issues, the journey travelled so far calls for an establishment of new relationships towards Christian unity. The next chapter examines the position of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches on the ordination of women. It explore how debates and practices on the matter have caused divisions within the two churches.

CHAPTER THREE.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter was an extensive presentation of the literature review. It highlighted important themes from prominent theological thinkers who have discussed at length the topic under study. Chapter three provides the methodology and the theoretical framework of the study.

Russell Bernard (2006:4) defines methods as the ‘study of how we do things’. It is also about strategic choices that the researchers make as they plan to conduct their study. In this scenario, the researcher may prefer either to conduct interviews, do a participant observation, conduct an experiment, a group discussion, or one can trace and unpack materials from the library or archives. The study will be a desk top study; it will heavily depend on the already established information.

3.2. Methodology

The research is primarily theological. In this context, a theological analysis of the study focus was made. The research traces and unpacks the debates of the ecumenical encounters concerning the two traditions under study from 1910 until today. It explores the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church focusing selected issues on gender and sexuality, looking at some selected Second Vatican Council documents which have provided a theological direction to ecumenical relationships with separated Christian churches with a focus on the Anglican Church. This research also turns to the official church teaching of the Anglican Communion on gender and sexuality matters. For this, documents such as the Lambeth Conference resolutions in the years from 1920 to the present time were extensively considered. Given the nature of the study, the research relied heavily on the agreed documents of the ecumenical engagements of the two traditions. In this context, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) documents are analysed; more focus is given to the ARCIC 1994 document, *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church and ARCIC I 1970–1982, Ministry and Ordination*. These documents discuss in detail the gendered dimension of the ecumenical dialogue and bring out major differences on gender and sexuality issues that still separate the two churches. ARCIC III, from 2011 to

date, was important to this study, as it continues discussing issues present in the previous ARCIC ecumenical dialogue.

Finally, the study turns to receptive ecumenism as a critical method in contemporary ecumenical dialogue. For example, Murray (2008a:12), Vaz James (2019:12) and Pizzey (2016:243) all highlight the importance of receptive ecumenism in bilateral dialogues, as it offers an opportunity for mutual learning. O’Gara (2008:26) understands reception as a gift exchange in ecumenical dialogue, where each Christian communion which enters in ecumenical dialogue has something to offer to the other. For her, ecumenical dialogue is a divine gift, where partners meet each other and receive the gift that each has to offer. Pecklers (2008:108) proposes that the encounter between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches provide a learning process for each tradition in the manner in which authority is exercised, as the manner in which authority is structured strongly influences the participation of women and questions of human sexuality in faith communities.

The research data was sourced from both published and unpublished materials such as books from the University of KwaZulu-Natal library and from other recognized institutions, articles in academic journals and internet sources relating to the study and included documented materials and unpublished dissertations relating to the research topic. The literature collected facilitated conclusions made on the research question and sub-research questions it sought to answer, with clarity and enough background knowledge about the nature of the debate. There was no empirical research such as surveys or interviews necessary to complete the dissertation.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

The study applies the concept of feminist ecclesiology as its theoretical framework. It reflects on the feminist ecclesiology of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Rosemary Radford Ruether and the critical ecclesiology of Natalie Watson. The three feminist women theologians have provided a critical feminist evaluation of the ecclesial structures in their respective churches (Watson 208:464). Further, the study turns to the theories of African women's theologies as expressed by two prominent African women theologians, Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Isabel Phiri.

Feminist ecclesiology was developed in the early 1980s with the coming of the women-church movement. This women-church movements claim that 'women are church and have always been church' (:464). This becomes the driving force for women to claim their citizenship and their rights to full participation in the ekklesia of women. The concept of women-church encourages women to gather in small liturgical communities where they share their own stories and reflect on their own experience of the church. Watson observes that although the women attend church in great numbers, they have been in most cases faced exclusion in leadership positions and have not added their voices in the shaping the nature and the life of the church. However, in spite of male domination, women together with a few men have 'experienced the church as a place where they can create their own discourse of faith' (:462). Feminist ecclesiology aims at 'reclaiming the Christian church as a space where women's discourse of faith are possible and a conscious choice to claim and reclaim their being church for women' (:462).

Watson defines the two-fold task of feminist ecclesiology; she says:

On the one hand it means a critical and constructive feminist critique of existing ecclesiologies and on the other the critical reflection on the praxis of the church as it is experienced by women which may lead to alternative structures and ritual practices (:462).

Watson names three events that opened the door for women's engagement in the life of the church. According to her, the Second Vatican Council opened discussions on all aspects of the life of the Catholic Church; the emergence of the feminist movement, especially the second wave; and the development of the debates on the ordination of women in the Protestant traditions and the rejection of the same debates in the Roman Catholic Church (:462). According to Watson, these three events brought about feminist ecclesiological

debates. For her, the Second Vatican Council made a tremendous shift in the life of the Catholic tradition when it opened the doors to the outside world and to other Christian churches outside its walls. However, the same church that called for renewal opened up the doors to society denied women ordination to priesthood and later on closed all debates concerning the matter. She points out that the second wave of the feminist movement brought consciousness among women of their being oppressed and excluded in patriarchal structures and called for their inclusion in the same structures. She mentions that on the other hand, the debates on the ordination of women that arose in the reformed traditions ushered in the first women ever, Costance Coltman, to be ordained in the Congregationalist church in 1917. The practice continued in the 1960s through to the 1970s and consequently in 1987 and 1994 both in the reformed and Anglican churches respectively (:463). Watson looks at Fiorenza and Ruether as the proponents of feminist ecclesiology. She observes that the two authors focus on liberation theology using the concept of base ecclesial communities as liturgical space for women. According to her, the two feminist theologians offered deep reflections on the concept of women-church and have pioneered the models of feminist ecclesiology (Watson 2008:469).

3.3.1. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's Ecclesiology.

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's theological work has its background in Pastoral Theology and the New Testament. These have influenced her work concerning women-church. She was the first woman to have been admitted to the School of Theology at the University of Wurzburg in Germany. Her dissertation under the title "Dervergessene Partner: Study of women's role in the Church in the light of the contemporary debate" was published during the time of the Second Vatican Council. Being influenced by the theology of the Second Vatican Council, her thesis gained wider coverage within the Church (Fiorenza 1993: 13-14).

Fiorenza argues that women should demand for their ordination as bishops if they are to fully participate in the life of the Church. For her, ordination to the ordinary priesthood means only a participation in the clerical system at its lowest level and deprives women from their full participation. It follows then that women's ordination would only be an exploitation by the church without having any transformative power. Fiorenza argues that in order to achieve women's emancipation, which is the goal of the radical women's movement, women should not only be admitted into the hierarchical structures of the church, but demand a complete transformation of the actual structures. Fiorenza states that in fact this transformation reflects

the theology of the Second Vatican Council, even though these thoughts of the Council Fathers are yet to be realized (1993:31-32).

Fiorenza observes that Vatican II turned to the concept of the priesthood of all believers and made three important theological shifts from Trent's teaching on the ecclesial office.

First, where Trent uses the word "hierarchy" (:33) when speaking of ecclesial office, the Constitution on the Church prefers the expression "ecclesiastical ministry" '(ministerium ecclesiasticum)' (:33).

Second, whereas Trent uses *Divina ordinatio* with reference to the threefold division of office (bishop, priest and deacon) Vatican II understands ecclesial ministry as "divinely instituted" (:33) (*divinitus institutum*).

Thirdly, according to Tridentine teaching the ecclesiastical hierarchy consists of bishops, priests and deacons, whereas according to Vatican II ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in these different orders' (1993:33).

Attempts such as these pave way to democratic changes in the hierarchical structures of the Church. Hence, the ecclesiology of Vatican II reaffirm the New Testament understanding of the election, sanctity and priesthood of all the faithful. In this context, the title "Priest" refers not only to Christ but to all the believers (Fiorenza 1993:31-32).

In her own understanding, *ekklesia* is a term that depicts women-church. According to her women-church calls for women's full participation in the life of the church as she stressed in her keynote address in Ottawa, on the 22nd July 2006, called the Assembly as the *ekklesia* of women who have gathered in the discipleship of equals. According to her, this gathering was of great importance is the *ekklesia* of women because:

- (1). They have heard the call of divine wisdom and have been sent out as her women ministers to proclaim her invitation.
- (2). To celebrate their struggle for a just church and to renew their vision for the world free of oppression.
- (3). To celebrate their baptismal call and to share with each other their lived and variegated gifts as ministers of Divine Wisdom- Spirit.
- (4). To proclaim that women are the image of God and the representative of Christ-Sophia. (2006:1).

Turning to the first letter of Saint Peter 2: 9-10, Fiorenza affirms that Women too are: "A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that we may proclaim the mighty acts of Wisdom- Sophia who have called us out of darkness into God's marvellous light" (2006:1). These statements from the Apostle Peter attest to the vision of the

Second Vatican Council fathers who affirmed the radical equality and priestly dignity of the people of God, of all those who by the virtue of their baptism have been called, to witness to the mighty deeds of Divine Wisdom-Sophia around the world (2006:1). In her work, Fiorenza understands that the recognition of women as full ekklesial citizens with all rights and duties is central to this vision of a kingdom of priesthood, a radical democratic church. It demands a new theological articulation and self-understanding of ministry and the church. It insists with post-Vatican II theology that “ministry as a gift of the Spirit is more fundamental and comprehensive than order. It requires a feminist articulation of Catholic identity not as sameness but as rich diversity and variegated giftedness in the power of Divine Spirit-Sophia’ (2006:2). Fiorenza attests that this diversity was proclaimed by the Council Fathers in *Gaudium et Spes* when they said “by Divine institution Holy Church is structured and governed with a wonderful diversity” (Fiorenza :239). Further she cites the same Fathers who in the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church said: “Hence there is in Christ and in the Church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex” (:239) and to support this argument the council fathers quoted Galatians 3:28 (Fiorenza 1993:239).

It is in this context that women in the church have called for their recognition ‘as human and ecclesial subjects rather than as objects of patriarchal power’ (:239). However, this call for transformation of ecclesial structures has met with constant rejection by Rome (1993:239). Fiorenza is saddened that:

While Catholic women have denounced structural and personal sin of patriarchal sexism and have claimed our ecclesial dignity and responsibilities, the Vatican has appealed to the authority of Christ, of the Apostles, and of tradition in order to legitimate patriarchal church structures and exclude women from sacramental, doctrinal and governing power on the basis of sex (1993:239).

For her, the efforts for women to claim their ecclesial dignity and rights is beyond the mere ushering of women into the patriarchal hierarchical structures through ordination, but a denouncement of patriarchal authority and “power over” (:239), which is at the centre of women liberation in society and church and also represents the vision of clergy women in other Christian Churches (1993:239). In her work, Fiorenza is calling for a shift from women ordination to a radical transformation of patriarchal ecclesial structures to the community of the discipleship of equals. This concept of equals was envisioned by the early Christian community and is also described by the Second Vatican Council. In her own words Fiorenza expressed that: “The ekklesia of women or women-church seeks to bring to consciousness

that women are church and always have been church” (:240). According to her ecclesia of women promotes the human and ecclesial authority and powers of women and is also concerned with their lives and needs (Fiorenza 1993:240).

3.3.2. The Ecclesiology of Rosemary Radford Ruether

Rosemary Radford Ruether is known to be one of the proponents in the development of Feminist theology. In her work in the theology of Women-Church, she seeks to present the Women-Church concept as an alternative way for women being church. She does not only bring out the experience of women as the ones oppressed by the patriarchal church, but she also focus on the experience of feminist liturgical base communities (1983:201;2011:67). Her emphasis is on women’s practice of faith and of being community rather than a traditional ecclesiology and theological self-understanding of the church. According to Ruether, the starting point of women-church as an alternative theological space is the lived experiences of local Christian communities and a critical transformation of a patriarchal church. She asserts that in fact the first task of the church is a transformation from sexist structures as working towards liberation (1983:201). She says:

Feminist liberation theology starts with the understanding of church as a liberation community as the context for understanding questions of ministry, creed, worship, or mission. Without a community committed to liberation from sexism, all questions such as the forms of ministry and mission are meaningless. Conversion from sexism means both freeing oneself from the ideologies and roles of patriarchy and also struggling to liberate social structures from these patterns (:201).

For her this is the nature of the church that speaks to women’s experience. Ruether believes that feminist liturgical communities are “liberated zones” (:205) created within the parameters of the institutional church. According to her, these are different groups that arise from the various needs of the people who take part in them; hence they are likely to ‘take on as many or as few functions of the church as they choose’ (:205). Such communities and parallel structures within the institutional church should not be seen as a separation from the patriarchal church, but are created in order to provide for women space to discover their own spirituality and theology and their potential to work towards a just society (1983:205).

According to Ruether, feminist base communities are parallel structures within the patriarchal ecclesial community which spiritually sustains their members. She writes:

The exodus out of the institutional church into the feminist base communities would be for the sake of creating a freer space from which

to communicate new possibilities to the institutional church. The relationship between the two becomes a creative dialectic rather than a schismatic impasse (1983:206).

It follows then that feminist base communities become not only liberative means but are also critical alternative structures within the patriarchal church as they challenge the institutional church and seek transformation (:206). Ruether bemoans the lack of representation of women in the liturgical life of the church. According to her, this is so because only male clergy have the sacramental power, the root cause of clericalism. She defines clericalism as that which 'disempowers the people and turns them into "laity" dependant on clergy' (:206); she mentions that clericalism is a form of status that provides all power of sacramental celebration, decision-making and theological knowledge to the ordained, while the laity remain passive recipients (1983:207).

Ruether calls for the 'dismantling of clericalism' (:207) as it creates divisions. Here women are excluded from taking leadership roles, while the male laity are permitted to take up subordinate roles within the patriarchal church. She emphasizes that 'Feminist liberation communities must dismantle clericalism, which is an understanding of leadership as rule that reduces others to subjects to be governed' (:207). This dismantling of the symbols of patriarchy allows for transformation of ecclesial structures and fosters enabling ministries that empower the faithful to effectively witness to the Gospel values. She argues that it is by creating such form of ministry that liberation of communities is realized (1983:207). Hence, hers is not to incorporate women into the existing clerical structures but to dismantle these clerical, patriarchal models of church and create egalitarian Christian communities (2011:63). She argues that:

It is important to be clear that the Catholic women's ordination movement has never simply called for the inclusion of women in the existing clerical hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Rather they envision a reform of the church to create a more egalitarian community. Women can only take their place as ordained priests as part of a renewed priestly ministry in a reformed church (2011:67).

She argues that women ordination is not the issue in such debates, but clerical hierarchy was the major problem and the inclusion of a few women in these clerical structures won't solve such a problem. The creation of feminist liturgical communities, where everybody participates freely to show their spiritual and theological giftedness will be more liberative and enable for equality as opposed to the dividing nature of the hierarchal ecclesiology of the clergy (Ruether 2011:67).

Ruether observes that in the gospel of Luke, we find narratives that uplift the typology of women as people of faith. She is confident that oppressive and dominating structures can be replaced by liberating structures and a 'preferential option for the poor' (:156). She points to Mary of the Magnificent as the perfect symbol of the poor of society through which just structures can be attained in the church. According to Ruether, women are the poor and most oppressed; they can become the models of faith and their liberation becomes cardinal for the church (Ruether 1983:156-157).

3.3.3. The Ecclesiology of Natalie K Watson.

Natalie Watson is an Anglican feminist theologian, with a theological background from German and English universities and churches. While the theology of Fiorenza and Ruether focuses on the nature and praxis of the church, with emphasis on liberation theology, applying the concept of base ecclesial communities in a feminist context, Watson's own work aims at reflecting on re-reading of ecclesiological texts and language, arguing that the model of base communities have their own limitations. She proposes the need to look at the many other options of being church that are more liberating where women can find space for their redemption (Watson 2008:469).

Watson (2002:4) observes that feminist ecclesiology is one field that advocates for equal opportunities for humanity and inclusion in the church. In the views of Watson, this field of theology originated from an experience of the past, this situation influences the church's self-understanding. (:4). She poses that a critical review of ecclesiology fosters a reposition of theology and church which has greatly been dominated by men (2004:6). She further observes that feminist ecclesiology, as a theology, has the church as its context, where women should be accorded full participation. She explains the twofold tasks of feminist ecclesiology when she writes: 'It does not involve thinking and speaking theologically about particular institutions in which the church exists, but goes beyond this focus on the institution in discussing a variety of different models by which the church describes itself in theological terms' (:9). For her, critical questions should be raised as to whether the patriarchal model of church promotes the concept of women-church. According to Watson (2008:484), feminist ecclesiology is a theory that recognizes issues of sexuality as a forgotten area of ecclesiology and asserts that this has greatly contributed to oppressive behaviours within Christian churches. (:484). She believes that this feminist ecclesiology as a theory aims at reclaiming Christian faith communities as a place where women freely discuss ways and means of

repositioning themselves in church communities (484) Watson identifies two major responsibilities of feminist ecclesiology. She says on the one hand, it means a rougher examination ‘a critical and constructive feminist critique of existing ecclesiologies and on the other, the critical reflection on the praxis of the church as it is experienced by women which may lead to alternative structures and ritual practice’ (Watson 2004:484).

Watson believes that feminist theology can offer to the Christian church a constructive critique of all ecclesiological structures and aspects of church life. For her, feminist ecclesiology provides for women consciousness to fight for their full affirmation /acceptance and celebration of their own being church. She observes that feminist ecclesiology’s core task is to bring about social justice where right relations and mutual respect is promoted. Watson states that in fact such struggle ‘embodied in a variety of different historical patterns and institutional and para-institutional bodies is where the ekklesia of women, men and children exists and has always existed’ (2008:472). She proposes a narrative ecclesiology, where women’s lived experiences reflect the nature of the trinity. According to her, the church is such place which can provide space for women to listen to their own voices. She says that this “hearing into speech”, ‘is essentially sacramental and as such creates the fabric of the church’ (:472).

Watson sees feminist ecclesiology providing a critical shift on the self-understanding of the church. In this context, critical questions are asked about ‘who is the church?’ rather than the usual asked questions about ‘what is the church?’ are asked (:472). One notices that, here, feminist ecclesiology seeks clarity on who the church is made up of rather than defining the church. In this feminist theology, the church is seen as a place where women can ‘flourish and celebrate their being made in the image of the divine’ (:472). She describes feminist ecclesiology as a dynamic and inclusive nature of the church. She writes:

The key characteristic of feminist ecclesiology is that it is essentially an open ecclesiology. The church is not a closed community in which someone is in and others out, but it is a round-table community where everyone regardless of gender and sexuality, is welcome and affirmed (:473).

One agrees that feminist ecclesiology rejects the patriarchal mentality of inclusion and exclusion, where others are “in or out” (473). Feminist ecclesiology is dynamic by nature, it calls for participation, social justice, conversion and it embraces all as belonging to the same humanity. Feminist ecclesiology provide for women communities within the Christian tradition that nature their spirituality. It is in these same communities where women feel

connected to each other and to their own lived experiences. Here women do not only feel valued but also experience their own individual representation as part of the tradition (Watson 2008:473).

3.3.4. African Women's Theology

Oduyoye (2001:23), highlights that African women theologians' approach to theology is contextual, reflecting on the lived experience of women in relation to religious structures and political and economic exploitation. For her, African women's theology significantly contributes to African theology, as it seeks to include women's experience 'in the faith statements of Christianity' (:23). Oduyoye situates women's theology in two contexts: she says, firstly, women's theology makes a contribution to Christian theology in Africa so that it may bring out the real situation faced by all regardless of their status in society (:23); secondly, women's theology pays particular attention to the prevailing lived experiences of the people (:23) in the sense that it is shaped within the African context rooted in the reality of economic exploitation, political instability and militarism. Besides causing poverty, these contexts have religious and cultural implications for the lives of the majority of humanity in Africa. Hence, women's theology functions within the context of a liberating theology (Oduyoye 2001:23).

Additionally, Isabel Phiri (2004:20) observes that African women theologies are a theology that seeks to liberate women from all sorts of oppressive structures both in society and in ecclesial communities. Phiri places African women theologies in the broader context of feminist theology which is further located within the context of liberation theology. In her view, African women's theologies:

Are a critical, academic, study of the causes of women's oppression: particularly a struggle against societal, cultural, and religious patriarchy. It is committed to the eradication of all forms of oppression against women through a critique of the social and religious dimensions both in African culture and religion (:20).

The struggle against oppressive structures is the interest of African women theologians because it is not only the root of their methods of doing theology, but it also provide them their identity as Africans. She asserts that African women's theologies, just like African theology, belong to the family of liberations theologies that resist all forms of oppression (2004:16). Phiri observes that African women's theologies begins its theological reflections with the lived experiences of women. She calls for a critical inclusion of all women's voices

in the struggle against oppressive forms of patriarchy, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, capitalism, sexism and globalization (:20). She mentions that African theologies blame the Gospel to be the major contribution to oppressions both in society and in religious settings (2004:16). Phiri is quick to identify the two faces of the Christian religion. She notes that:

On the one hand, Christianity is part of colonialism, racism and sexism, and on the other hand, the Cristian gospel encourages the struggle for liberation and recognition of injustice in the church and in society (:21).

In her view, African women's theologies emphasize on the liberative aspect of the Bible. In this context the Bible is read from a woman's perspective, raising consciousness, reminding them of their task to reclaim their human dignity and Christian womanhood. Here, women pay particular attention to how women shared their lives with Jesus and their witnessing to the gospel in serving the marginalized in society (:21). According to her, biblical stories of women have shaped African women's Christology which seeks the inclusion of all men and women in mission and leadership positions. This type of Christology invites all to collectively reject and name the sinfulness of patriarchy. She is confident that African women's theologies can encourage advantaged women such as the ordained women in Christian ecclesial communities to create space for conversion and the empowering women for liberation in the very ecclesial communities (Phiri 2004:22).

3.4. Conclusion.

This chapter was a presentation of the methods which the study will apply. It also explored the theoretical frame works of the study. We saw that the study will use the desk top approach and will heavily rely on the already published materials from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and other reputable libraries. Internet sources will also enrich the study. The chapter also explored the theoretical frameworks that will inform the study. It used the lenses of feminist ecclesiology and African women's theologies. We saw how both feminist ecclesiology and African Women's theologies as theories have demonstrated that feminist theology can transform patriarchal and institutional Christian churches and replace them with alternative liberating liturgical structures where the human dignity of both men and women can be realized. The next chapter discusses the position of both churches on women's ordination.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANGLICANISM AND CATHOLICISM ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the official entry of the Roman Catholic Church into ecumenical relations with other separated Christian churches. It also examined the purposes and themes of the ARCIC. This chapter discusses the position of both churches on women's ordination. Women's ordination has been a persistent and controversial issue within the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church. The Catholic Church has maintained that women cannot be ordained as priests and although the Anglican Church has opened the doors for women to priestly ordination, within it there exists differing views on the matter; while some support the ordination of women, others totally reject the practice. The chapter first explores the teaching of the Catholic Church's magisterium concerning women's ordination. It looks to the biblical foundation, tradition and the example of Christ to support the exclusion of women from priesthood. However, this understanding of the church authorities has been highly contested by some Catholic theologians, scholars and advocates of women's ordination within the church. Uhr (2001:1) states that the struggle toward the full inclusion of women in the Catholic Church is 'the long day Saturday' between 'Good Friday and Easter', coupled with 'suffering, aloneness and feelings of unutterable waste only too well', but also a 'dream of tomorrow's liberation and the church's rebirth'. The chapter's exploration of the position of the Anglican Church traces how the debates concerning the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate have evolved over time. It discusses divisions brought about by the practice and the measures taken to resolve such differences within the Anglican Church.

4.2. The Position of the Catholic Church on Women's Ordination

The position of the Catholic Church on women's ordination can be traced back to 1976 when Pope Paul VI wrote a declaration, *Inter Insigniores* in favour of excluding women from the ministerial priesthood. He provided fundamental reasons which include the unbroken tradition in the church. It indicates that it has never been the intention of the Catholic Church to admit women ordained ministry either as priests or as bishops to ranks of the (#1). The declaration upholds that 'by calling only men to priestly order and ministry in its true sense, the church intend to remain faithful to the type of ordained ministry willed by the Lord Jesus

Christ and carefully maintained by the apostles' (#1). It explains that since the medieval and scholastic period, this practice has never been challenged (#1). Moreover, it claims that this is the practice shown by the Lord himself who did not consider women to be among his apostles (#2). Also stated is that, the community of the early church maintained the manner in which Jesus related with women (#3). Lastly, is the notion of the 'permanent value of the attitude of Jesus and the apostles' (#4). Here the claim is that church should not depart from the practice of the Jesus and the apostles (#4).

According to Rakoczy (2004: 242), *Inter Insigniores* did not end the debates about women's ordination. She observes that ordinations of women were practiced in the Catholic Church, for instance, the ordination of about six women in Czechoslovakia to minister to the persecuted underground church (:242). She says that this led Pope John Paul II to issue his controversial apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, which reaffirmed the position of *Inter Insigniores* wherein the Pope stated that:

In order that all doubt may be removed regarding the matter which pertains to the church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (Lk 22:32) I declare that the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgement is to be definitely held by all the faithful (#4).

The Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith (CDF), in support of the apostolic letter, wrote that, 'whether the teaching that the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women which is presented in the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* to be "held definitively", is to be understood as belonging to the deposit of faith' (Ratzinger 1995:1). In the affirmative, the CDF went on and declared that 'this teaching requires definitive assent, since, founded on the written word of God, and from the beginning constantly preserved and applied in the tradition of the church, it has been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal magisterium' (Ratzinger 1995:1).

4.2.1. The Infallibility of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* on Women's Ordination

Before responding to its content, theologians debate the authoritative status of the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. For example, Dulles (1996:1646) and Gaillardetz (2014:3) assert that, by this teaching, the Pope was reaffirming a teaching that was infallible and was not making the teaching infallible (1996:1646; 2014:3). Gaillardetz adds that this apostolic letter was merely an affirmation of what the Pope himself and Pope Paul VI taught concerning the ban of women from the ordained ministry (1996:4). For Gaillardetz (1996:4),

the statement, ‘to be definitively held’, did not express a theological argument, but rather pointed to the ‘formulation of the teaching itself’ (:4), that is, the infallible teaching of the ordinary universal magisterium (Gaillardetz 1996:4). Theologians raised serious concerns about the infallible claims of the apostolic letter (Gaillardetz 1996:4; Lash 1995:1544). They argue that, for a teaching to be raised to the level of infallibility, it should comply with the teachings of Vatican II, as set forth in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (Lash 1995:1544; Gaillardetz 1996:4). *Lumen Gentium* #25.2 states that;

The infallibility promised to the church resides also in the body of bishops when that body exercises supreme teaching authority with the successor of Peter. To the resultant definitions the assent of the church can never be wanting, an account of the activity of that same Holy Spirit, whereby the whole flock of Christ is preserved and progress in unity of faith (LG # 25.2).

It follows that the teaching is infallible when something is taught in communion with the college of bishops dispersed around the world (Gaillardetz 1996:5). Gaillardetz (1996:5) and Lash (1995:1544) explain that following this teaching, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* was not to claim infallibility, as it did not meet the set conditions because it was not an exercise of the ordinary universal magisterium of the entire college of bishops, but that of the ordinary papal magisterium (Gaillardetz 1996:5; Lash 1995:1544).

Sullivan (1995:1646) explains that to refer to something as ‘pertains to the deposit of faith... means that it is a truth revealed to us by God’ (1995:1646). He adds that the official position of the church’s teaching on infallibility is established in three ways: ‘it should be in consultation with the bishops, the universal and constant consensus of the catholic theologians and the common adherence of the faithful’ (1995:1646). According to him, none of these were considered by the CDF, making it difficult to ascertain how the teaching can be claimed infallible (Sullivan 1995:1646).

Le Bruyns (2013:243) observes that the teaching allowing priesthood only to male celibates was not at the same level of the ‘hierarchy of truths’ (:243), even though it has been a traditional practice of the Roman Catholic Church. It was not in the same ranking as the truths of revelation such as the incarnation, resurrection, or the doctrine of the divinity of Christ (2013:242). He explains that this understanding encouraged the advocates for women’s ordination, who include bishops, priests and the lay faithful, to call for a change of mind on the church’s position (Le Bruyns 2013:243). However, he contends that the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* closed the debates on women’s ordination and the teaching was raised

to the status of ‘the church’s divine constitution’ (:243), and a definitive teaching in the church according it a central place. This means that anyone who dissents or rejects this teaching or any practice against it is either excommunicated or is faced with severe disciplinary charges (Le Bruyns 2013:243). Rakoczy (2004: 244) cites an example of excommunication, where seven women from the Catholic Church were ordained to the priesthood on 9th June 2002 on the borders of Germany and Austria by two bishops, at the time were not in good standing with Rome for some reasons, Romulo Braschi from Argentina and Rafael Regelsberger of Austria. The ordination took place on a boat on the German-Austrian border. The seven women have since been excommunicated by the Catholic Church (Rakoczy 2004:244).

4.2.2 Principles Guiding the Exclusion of Women to Priesthood

Theologians observe and explain the principles guiding the exclusion of women to the priesthood. These include biblical, traditional and theological reasoning (Dulles 1996:4; Johnson 1996:8-10; Gaillardetz 2014:2). They assert that the biblical claim is based on the conviction that by selecting only men among the twelve apostles, Jesus clearly limited ministerial priesthood to men. They say that the apostles remained faithful to this practice by choosing men to the priestly office (Gaillardetz 2014:2; Dulles 1996:4). The traditional argument states that the Catholic Church has always maintained its unbroken tradition of conferring sacred orders only on men and that those who dissent from the practice and ordain women to priesthood or permit them to perform priestly functions have been denounced as heretical (Gaillardetz 2014:2; Dulles 1996:4). The theological foundations of the teaching posits that the ministerial priest shares in a representative way in the office of Christ as bridegroom of the church, and therefore, must be like Christ, of the male sex. The argument is based on resemblance, maintaining that only a male figure could sacramentally represent Christ in the Eucharistic celebration, *in persona Christi* (Dulles 1996:9-10; Johnson: 1996:8-10). From this understanding, no woman has this needed capacity to adequately represent Christ. (Dulles 1996:5). Additionally, Dulles (1996:5) and Ferrara (1994:710) say that the official teaching of the magisterium has strongly maintained that the ministerial priesthood cannot be exercised by women. Here, the thinking of the magisterium has its grounding and authority in the will and institution of Christ (Ferrara 1994:710; Dulles 1996:5).

Some theologians assert that the main reason for excluding women from the ministerial priesthood is their inferior status in society. For example, Ferrara (1994:712) mentions major scholastic theologians such as Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, Richard of Middleton, and

Durandus of Pourcain', who all lived hundreds of years ago and who argued that traditionally women are inferior by nature. According to Rakoczy (2004), this idea was clearly held by Thomas Aquinas, who believed that man is superior by nature because he has an intelligent soul, while woman even though she poses a soul with some level of intelligence was only created as a helper to man to bear children (:34). The understanding of God imaging man differently from woman, held by Aquinas, has continued to influence power in Christian theology (:35). For Rakoczy, this argument supports the claims that only priests must belong to the hierarchy of the church and [is] 'not necessarily based on a sacramental role' (Rakoczy 2004:35 1994:712). Ferrara explains that, according to Scotus and Durandus, priestly orders are instituted by Christ himself, who at the Last Supper did not include women, even his holiest mother, when he bestowed priestly orders on men and after the resurrection, gave power to forgive sins only to men (:712). One finds similarities in the arguments presented by St Bonaventure and Richard of Middleton, as explained by Ferrara (1994). He observes that for Richard and St Bonaventure, Christ chose to ordain only men and not women, because 'Public teaching does not befit women on account of the weakness of their intellect and the mutability of their affections, secondly, women's status of subjection and natural inferiority make her by nature incapable of representing the eminence of rank in which one is constituted by order' (:713). According to Ferrara, given this understanding, it follows that, 'Since women's state of subjection makes it impossible for the female sex to signify any eminence of rank; women are incapable of receiving the sacrament of order' (:714).

Lash (1995:1544) concedes that in the history of the Catholic Church, a position is held that women should not hold hierarchical office, a teaching which has stood a test of time in the history of the church (:1544), that women should by no means be allowed to serve at the altar they command the superiority status that men do (Lash 1995:1544). According to Lash, if the issue of women's inferiority is no longer the position of the Church, as it is claimed by the magisterium, then there is no critical teaching that explains the exclusion of women from being ordained. For him this matter raises new questions, and needs to be given more time, careful study, particular attention, tolerance and sensitivity (1994:1544). He states that the attempts to close the debates on the issue 'is a scandalous abuse of power' (:1544), which will seriously undermine the further authority which the Pope seeks to sustain (Lash 1994:1544). Johnson argues that the claim of male superiority over women is no longer a key factor, since it is a plain truth that women are true representatives of Christ, they image Christ, in every possible manner. 'There is a natural resemblance between women and Jesus

Christ' (8-10) with regards to their human nature and as participants in his divinity (Johnson 1996: 8-10).

4.2.3. Objections to the Principles Guiding the Exclusion of Women from Priestly Ordination

Some prominent Catholic theologians have argued in favour of the ordination of women and have raised critical objections. For example, responding to *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) created a task force which produced a report titled 'Tradition and the Ordination of Women'. On 6th June 1997, in their resolution, they stated that,

There are serious doubts regarding the nature of the authority of the teaching (that the church's lack of authority to ordain women to the priesthood is a truth that has been infallibly taught and requires the definitive assent of the faithful), and its ground in tradition. There is serious widespread disagreement on this question, not only among theologians, but also with the larger community of the church...it seems clear that further study, discussion and prayer regarding this question by all the members of the church in accord with their particular gifts and vocations are necessary to the authentic tradition (Tradition and the Ordination of Women 1997 Resolution #4).

The report indicates that out of the 248 members present during this meeting, 216 voted in the affirmative, 22 voted against and 10 members abstained (1997:295-301). Additionally, Rakoczy (2004:240) highlights that in 1975 the Papal Biblical Commission comprising seventeen members held that, the scripture in itself has not addressed the issue on women becoming priests, furthermore, they indicated that the exclusion of women should not be based on the bible as it is not sufficient enough to determine the exclusion of women to priesthood. (Rakoczy 2004:240). Dulles (1996:4), Johnson (1996:8-10) and O'Hara-Graff (1996:6-11) argue that regarding the biblical claims of Jesus conferring priesthood to males only, there is no biblical witness of Jesus ordaining anyone by selecting the twelve apostles. Moreover, it is clearly shown in the gospels that Jesus had both male and female followers among his apostles and disciples (Dulles 1996:4; Johnson 1996:8-10; O'Hara Graff 1996:6-11). Ferrara (1994:706) adds that the bible does not state whether the choosing of the Twelve would have a binding force for all time. The theological foundation is based on the reasoning of resemblance; the objection to this argument is that, according to the biblical concept, it is not necessary for a representative to have a natural resemblance to the person represented because representation is merely a dedication to speak on behalf of someone (Dulles 1996:10).

From the tradition argument, scholars claim that the issues surrounding women's ordination are recent debates in the church and therefore more time is needed for dialogue before the church authorities can decide on the matter (Dulles 1996:6; Ferrara 1994:707). Wijngaards (2001:122) argues that the traditional claims of excluding women are baseless, since tradition should be informed by scripture. He explains that for tradition to be relevant, should be based on the gospels (:122); for him, the tradition that denies women priestly ordination on a scriptural basis are unfounded (Wijngaards 2001:122).

4.2.4. Pope Francis on Women's Ordination

Pope Francis has maintained the position of his predecessors on women's ordination in the Catholic Church. In his encyclical, *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Pope reiterates the limit of priesthood to male celibates. The Pope starts by recognising the significant contributions women have made in the pastoral life of the church, saying:

I really acknowledge that many women share pastoral responsibility with priests, helping to guide people, families and groups and offering new contributions to theological reflections. But we need to create still broader opportunities for more incisive female presence in the church (EG 103).

Here, the Pope seems to raise hope in women and many people advocating for women's ordination, suggesting a way of widening women's inclusion in all structures of pastoral activity in the church. However, in the statement that follows, the Pope re-emphasises the position of the previous popes on the ban of women to priesthood:

The reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the spouse who gives himself in the Eucharist, is not a question open to discussions, but it can prove especially divisive if sacramental power is too closely identified with power in general. It must be remembered that when we speak of sacramental power, "we are in the realm of function, not of dignity or holiness (#104).

Women feel misunderstood by the Pope, that in asking for priesthood they are fighting for power. For example, Hanna (2014:1) explains that women advocating for inclusion in decision-making in the church should not be seen as women seeking for power.

Pope Francis has expressed his value for women's contribution in society and in the church. Reporting for the *New York Times*, Donadio (2013) highlights that in an interview on his return trip from Brazil, Pope Francis suggested that there is a need to expand women's participation in the church; he emphasised that there is need for the church to come up with a theology that embraces women (Donadio 2013). However, in the same interview, he maintained that 'the door' to priestly ordination was definitely closed by Pope John Paul II

(Donadio 2013). Similarly, McClain adds that Pope Francis has repeatedly spoken about the ordination of women, saying that the ‘door is closed’ (:2018:5). For Pope Francis, this should not be taken as women being of less importance. In the same press conference of 2013, he stated that, like Mary the mother of Jesus who was of greater importance than the apostles, even though the Church lacks theological expression on the significance of women in the church, women are more important than bishops and priests in the church (Francis 2013). In a similar event addressing the participants at the national congress organized by the Italian women’s centre, Pope Francis repeated his remarks on the indispensable women’s contribution in the church and the wider society:

The gifts of refinement, particular sensitivity and tenderness, with which the women’s spirit is richly endowed, represents not only a genuine strength for the life of the family, for spreading a climate of serenity and harmony, but a reality without which the human vocation cannot be fulfilled (Francis 2014).

For him this kind of contribution women make does not end in homes, nor is it a private affair, but a ‘domestic church’, which brings nourishment and prosperity in the church and in society (Francis 2014).

The position of the church on exclusion of women from ordination has not stopped them from pushing for a change of mind on the matter. For example, organizations such as Women’s Ordination Worldwide (WOW), the Commission of on Women and Church of the Belgian Bishops’ Conference and the Women’s Ordination Conference (WOC) are among women’s organizations that persistently advocate for women’s ordination, supported by some bishops, priests and religious congregations who have objected to the teaching of the church that excludes women from priestly functions (WOW: 2018; Louise 2001:1). For example, (WOW 2018) expressed their disappointment on Pope Francis’s reiteration of the closed-door position on women’s ordination. They argue that Rome’s constant ban on women’s ordination is a great source of pain not only to the women who feel called to priestly vocation, but also to the people of God who are deprived of women’s gifts and sacramental leadership (WOW:2018). Some scholars suggest that what Pope Francis can do to increase women’s participation in the church’s pastoral ministry is to open the doors for women to be ordained as deacons. In this way, he will clearly show to the world the equal dignity of men and women in the church (McClain 2018:5).

Grey (2002:6) bemoans the non-sacramental recognition of women’s contribution to church and to society when she writes,

The experience, responsibility and authority of women in caring and situations needs sacramental recognition. The recognition of what happens already, for example, in teaching and family situations the role of women in faith education, in transmission of cultural values is heavily leant upon, but not given sacramental authority. In ministries of caring, (for the disabled, the mentally ill, the dying), as well as in spiritual direction, prayer, leadership, counselling, retreats, and hospital chaplaincies, there is no sacramental recognition of what already is happening (:6).

For her these are extraordinary experiences that women authoritatively contribute to pastoral expansion in the life of the church, which are sacramental by nature, and call for sacramental recognition (Grey 2002:6).

4.3.1. Historical Developments of Women's Ordination in the Anglican Church

Women's ordination in the Anglican Church can be traced back to 1944 when Li Tim-Oi was ordained priest by Bishop Ronald Hall of Hong Kong, having been ordained as deacon on Ascension Day in 1941 (Li Tim-Oi Foundation 2010-2019; Mei 2017: 5; Holmes 1987:2). Mei explains that this ordination was taken as an urgent response to the challenges of World War II. During this time, the Japanese army restricted movement making it difficult for priests to travel (Mei 2017:5; Schjonberg 2007:1). The Li Tim-Oi foundation adds that during her deaconate Li served the Anglican Congregation in the Portuguese colony of Macao, filled with refugees from War-ton China. For three years priests were prevented from traveling to celebrate the Eucharist; because of this, the church allowed her to preside at the Eucharist as a deacon (Li Tim-Oi Foundation 2010-2019).

Mei (2017:5) affirms that, in the Anglican Church, the involvement of women in ministry began with the debates on ordination of women to the deaconate. She states that the matter whether to consider women deacons as ministers was highly contested at the Lambeth Conference of 1920. She says that the decision made in 1920 by the Lambeth Conference to recognize women deacons as ministers was disputed by the Lambeth Conference of 1930. She further explains that the 1968 Lambeth Conference report reaffirmed the position reached in the 1920 conference and allowed women to be ordained to the ministry (Mei 2017:5). She affirms that the General Conference of the Episcopal Church in the United States in 1970 modified the canon concerning the ordination of deacons and stated that the regulations apply to both men and women (2017:5); furthermore, she states that the General Synod of 1977 modified the canon recognizing the ordination of deacons to be at the same level for men and women. By that time, no one opposed the decision to ordain women as deacons. She notes

that it was only until ten years later when debates concerning women's ordination to priestly ministry that some bishops and priests objected to the practice, even though progressive changes in the Anglican Episcopal Church around the globe had taken place (Mei 2017:5).

Controversy followed Li Tim-Oi's ordination to the priesthood. While the Hong Kong diocese welcomed her ordination, the Anglican Church of England refused to accept this ordination and Reverend Li Tim-Oi was asked to resign and gave up her role (Holmes 1987:2; Mei 2017:6; Li Tim-Oi Foundation 2010-2019). During the 1948 Lambeth Conference, the Hong Kong diocese raised the issue to ordain women, but the request was turned down. Following the recommendations of the Episcopal Church of America, the Lambeth Conference of 1968 gave the mandate to all Anglican dioceses to create committees to study the issue of ordaining women to priesthood and to raise the principles of deaconesses to the same level of the ministry of deacons. This saw women being ordained to deaconate ministry in the same manner as males (Holmes 1987:2; Mei 2017:6). The committee of the Episcopal Church in America in 1970 suggested that ministerial roles of bishops, priests and deacons all be open to women, but this recommendation was rejected. The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) welcomed the ordination of women as priests by the bishop in 1971, if the practice was approved by the respective dioceses. This encouraged the Hong Kong diocese to ordain two women as priests. This was followed by eleven women being ordained to priesthood by three retired episcopal bishops of Philadelphia in 1974 without approval from its provincial synod (Holmes 1987: Mei 2017:6). According to Mei, the ordination of women to priesthood was officially accepted in Minneapolis in 1976. The practice to ordain women to priesthood spread across the Anglican Episcopal Church, in Canada in 1976, in New Zealand and Puerto in 1980, in Brazil and Myanmar in 1981, in Uganda and Kenya in 1983, in Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire and Cuba in 1984, in Ireland in 1991 and in South Africa and Australia in 1992 (Mei 2017:6).

4.3.2. The Position of the Anglican Church on Women's Ordination

The Lambeth Conference has progressively provided the Anglican Church with an official position concerning women's ordination; that is, from exclusion of women to a gradual inclusion in priestly ministry. For example, the 1920 Lambeth Conference was clear about women's participation in ecclesiastical structures of the church when they wrote that,

Women should be admitted to those councils of the church which laymen are admitted, and on equal terms. Diocesan, provincial, or national synods may decide when or how this principal is to be brought into effect (Resolution 46).

On admitting women to the diaconate, they stated that,

The time has come when, in the interest of the church at large, and in particular of the development of the ministry of women, the diaconate of women should be restored formally and canonically and should be recognized throughout the Anglican Communion (Resolution 47).

This position was reaffirmed at the Lambeth Conference of 1930 when it re-emphasized resolution 49 of Lambeth 1920, stating that,

The office of deaconess is primarily of succour, bodily and spiritually to women, and should follow the lines of the primitive rather than of the modern diaconate of men. It should be understood that the deaconess dedicates herself to a life-long service but that no vow or implied promise of celibacy should be required as necessary for admission to the order (Resolution 69).

The Lambeth Conference of 1968 addressed the matter of diaconate and provided a range of options to men and women who felt called to the ministry. In resolution 32 the conference stated, that the diaconate, combining service of others with liturgical functions, be open to: men and women remaining in secular occupation, full time church workers and those selected for priesthood. The 1968 conference rejected women's ordination and came up with some resolutions, saying that,

The conference affirms its opinion that the theological argument as at present presented for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood are inconclusive (Resolution 34).

At this particular time the conference made recommendations for further study and consultations on the matter (Paterson (1989:21). They made further suggestions as follows:

The conference recommends that, in the meantime, national or regional churches or provinces should be encouraged to make canonical provisions, where this does not exist, for duly qualified women to share in the conduct of liturgical worship, to read, to preach, to baptize, to read the epistles and gospel at the holy communion and to help in the distribution of the elements (Resolution 38).

According to Tanner (2004:59), the members of the ACC, comprising ordained and lay people, meeting in 1971 considered the concerns raised by the Hong Kong province on the issue of women's ordination. The ACC, supported the decision of the bishop of Hong Kong, assuring him of their approval should he see it necessary to ordain women to the priestly ministry, and that the council will make use of its position to encourage other regions within

the Anglican Communion to accept the decision of the diocese and continue their good relationship with them (Tanner 2004:60).

The 1978 Lambeth Conference recognized the progress made on the ordination of women that was practiced in the dioceses of Hong Kong, the Anglican church of the USA, and the church of the province of New Zealand. The conference was also aware that there were eight other churches within Anglican Church who had equally accepted or given their consent and publicly pronounced that they did not see any serious theological objections to the ordination of women to deaconate, priesthood or be consecrated as bishops (Resolution 21). The resolution agreed to the position that most of the provinces held on the matter and encouraged churches belonging to the Anglican community to maintain lines of communication with one another, including those who do not accept the practice (whether at present or in the future), (Resolution 21.5a). In addition, the bishops were for the opinion that the issue on allowing women to priestly ministry remain open for further debates within the wider context of theology and priestly ministry (Resolution 21.8). The resolution also stated that in order to avoid divisions, any decision taken to consecrate a female as bishop should be made in consultation with the episcopate, in order to prevent the office of the bishop to cause divisions as its purpose is to unite the church (Resolution 22). Tanner observes that the 1978 Lambeth Conference was not conclusive on women's ordination, but urged all bishops to respect the positions of those who were open to the practice and those who did not agree to it (Tanner 2004: 60).

The 1988 Lambeth Conference also was faced with the issues of ordination of women to the episcopate. The provinces who had many years of experience of women in priestly ministry raised issues concerning the consecration of women to the episcopate (Ground Report 1988:6). The Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA), in 1985 made the following resolution:

That the majority of the members of the house do not intend to withhold consent to the election of a bishop on the grounds of gender and now call upon the presiding bishop elect to communicate this intention to the primates of the Anglican Communion and seek the advice of the episcopate of the Anglican Communion through the primates at the earliest possible date (Ground Report 1985 #3).

While remaining faithful to the 1978 Lambeth resolution which called for extensive discussions within the provinces and consultation in the wider episcopate through the primate, the house of bishops allowed women to be consecrated as bishops (Ground Report

1985:6). The ECUSA considered that the matter be discussed by the primate meeting. Considering the issue to be an intercommunion matter, it was further referred to the Lambeth Conference for extensive debate (Tanner 2004:60). The conference saw 423 members voting in favour of women's ordination to the episcopate, 28 against and 19 abstentions.

The conference resolved;

that each province respect the decision and attitudes of other provinces in the ordination or consecration of women to episcopate, without such respect necessarily indicating acceptance of the provinces involved, maintaining the highest possible degree of communion with the provinces which differ' (Resolution 1).

Tanner (2004:61) observes that the resolutions of 1988 were inconclusive as whether or not women should be ordained as bishops. However, the conference made further recommendations that, 'Bishops exercise courtesy and maintain communication with bishops who may differ with any woman bishop, ensuring an open dialogue in the church to whatever extent communion is impaired' (Resolution 1.2). Additionally, the conference gave the mandate to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in close collaboration with the primates, to appoint a group of people (1.2). The aim of this Commission was;

To provide for an examination of the relationships between provinces of the Anglican Communion and ensure that the process of reception includes continuing consultations with other churches as well' (Resolution 1.3a) and to monitor and encourage the process of consultation within the communion and to offer further pastoral guidance (Resolution 1.3b).

Chaired by Archbishop Robin Eames of Armagh, the Commission was set up. It generated reports providing pastoral guidance and theological reflections on how the Anglican Church could live together while maintaining the highest degree of communion in the midst of diversity of opinions (Eames Monitoring Group 1997; Tanner 2004:62).

In the pastoral guidelines, the Commission suggested for the issue of women's ordination to be an open process of reception not only in the provinces, but also within the Anglican Church and the wider church. The Commission called for respect of opinion for those who favoured and those who had opposing views concerning women's ordination and consecration to be held within the dioceses and provinces, especially when decisions to consecrate women have already been made (Tanner 2004:62). The Commission suggested that,

“In the continuing and dynamic process of reception, freedom and space must be available until consensus of opinion one way or the other has been achieved”. To the provinces in favour of the practise the commission said, “Bishops and dioceses who accept and endorse the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate would need to recognise that within a genuine open process of reception, there must be room for those who disagree” (Eames Monitoring Group 1997 #41).

Tanner observes that for the Anglican church, the only possible principle that guided the process of discernment in the dioceses concerned, in the provinces and in the universal church, was the concept of reception (Tanner 2004:62).

4.3.3. Controversy Surrounding Women’s Ordination in the Anglican Church

Holmes observes that conflicts concerning women’s ordination in the Anglican Communion started with the ordination of the eleven women in the United States. There the ordination brought conflict between the authorities and the ordaining bishops. This led the house of bishops to reprimand the three bishops and declared that the laid down criterial to validate these ordinations were not followed, thus the ordinations were termed invalid (1987:3). Four theologians rejected the position of the house of bishops saying that although certain conditions were not followed the ordinations remain valid (:4). Four members of the house of bishops pressed canonical charges against the bishops who ordained the women, and the parish priests who later invited some of the newly ordained women to celebrate the Eucharist in their parishes. Additionally, the situation also made enthusiasts to urge women deacons to seek immediate ordination as priests. The Anglican Church of Canada worsened the situation of the already growing emotions and tensions by approving the ordination of women priests in 1974 (Holmes 1987:4). Similarly, the 1978 Lambeth Conference acknowledged the conflicts that existed, and still exist, between those who oppose the ordination of women and those who accept the practice, and made suggestions on how to maintain unity, when it stated:

The conference acknowledges that both the debate about the ordination of women as well as the ordinations themselves in some churches, caused distress and pain to many on both sides. To heal these and to maintain and strengthen fellowship is a primary pastoral responsibility of all, and especially of the bishops (Resolution 21.2).

Avis (2004:ix) highlights that admitting women to priestly ordination in the Church of England has caused continuous conflict more than decades after the decision of the General Synod that allowed the practice (Avis 2004:ix). Rowell (2004:139) adds that the decision of

the General Synod of the Church of England in 1992 to ordain women to priesthood was fostered by the notion of 'justice and equality' (:139), and for a critical recognition of the gifts that female priests would bring to the ministry in the church. He cites the celebrations that characterized the event from the advocates of women's ordination as well as the bitterness and devastating emotions that were expressed by others who opposed the practice. He says that those who were against the idea maintained that the decision is an unacceptable shift in the understanding of the nature of the church that is part of the 'One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church' (Rowell 2004:139).

4.3.4. The Anglican Church and an Open Process of Reception

Avis (2004:25) observes that the 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution III.2 turned to 'an open process of reception' (:25) in order to address the issue of women's ordination as bishops, a decision made by the General Synod in 1992 in the Church of England. He explains that this model of reception is one that seeks 'dialogue, mutuality and provisionality' (:25). He believes that an open process of reception is understood in the context of Communion which calls for reciprocity not only between the giver and the receiver, but also involving all concerned with the matter (Avis 2004:25). Hill (2004:107) concedes that an open process of reception was taken up by the 1988 Lambeth Conference, which recommended a reception process should there be any synodical decision that permits women to be ordained as priests which raises differing opinions. He said that the conference clearly stated that;

The fact that a synod has reached a decision does not foreclose that matter. Both sides need to work hard to ensure that the process of reception continues to be as open as possible, recognising that synodal decisions may indeed come to be overwhelmingly affirmed, or on the other hand, equally as overwhelmingly rejected (Hill 2004:108).

Certainly, one appreciates the process of reception as a continuous consultation until the issue at hand is accepted or rejected by the whole church.

Additionally, Richardson (2004:124) asserts that the concept of reception has played a major role in the self-understanding of the Anglican Church on the admission of women to priestly ministry and as bishops. He says that the Anglican Church turned to the notion of reception to encourage those who rejected the ordination of women to priesthood to remain in the church and maintain their positions when the matter was accepted by the church. In his view, the current task for the Anglican Church while engaging in a process of reception is to help those with differing opinions in the debates to maintain 'the highest possible degree of Communion

in spite of difference' (Richardson 2004:125). For the Eames Commission, the process of reception embarked upon by the Anglican Church in addressing the matter of women's ordination has been a learning journey for the whole church (Eames Monitoring Group 1997 #46). Richardson further observes that the final report of the Eames Commission also maintained, 'because we are part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, reception is never a matter for each tradition in isolation' (Richardson 2004:125). Here, the Commission saw the importance and the ecumenical implications of how the decisions made by a specific tradition affect the others.

5.1. Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that by exploring the position of the Roman Catholic Church on women's ordination, we were able to establish the teaching of the magisterium on the practice. We saw the bases of the church on which to exclude women from priesthood were biblical, theological and traditional. We have seen how this position raised critical questions on the infallibility of such teachings. We saw the objections raised against the fundamental principles guiding the exclusion of women from ordination. The chapter also demonstrated how the debates surrounding women's ordination in the Anglican Church have evolved over time. We have seen that in the Anglican Church, women have been allowed to be ordained as priests and bishops. We saw that this has caused serious divisions within the wider church of the Anglican Church. The chapter concludes that in spite of the Anglican Church being faced with conflicting views on the ordination of women, the process of reception has helped to bring together those who reject and those who accept the practice. The next chapter discusses the ecumenical implications of women's ordination between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

CHAPTER FIVE:
**WOMEN'S ORDINATION AS A DIVISIVE ISSUE BETWEEN THE ANGLICAN
AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES**

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the positions of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches on the issue of women's ordination and how the subject has caused divisions in both churches. This chapter discusses the ecumenical engagement between the two churches on the issue by partly unpacking its gendered dimension. It examines how women's ordination has proved to be a barrier within the ecumenical dialogue between the two churches. The chapter explores the disparities in the two churches in engaging women in decision-making processes in ecclesial matters. The correspondence between the Pope from the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury informs this exploration.

5.2. Ecumenical Debates on Women's Ordination between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches

There have been significant discussions concerning the ordination of women between the Anglican and the Roman Catholic churches. This is evident from the correspondence between the authorities of the two churches from the early 1970s. For example, between 1975 and 1976 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Donald Coggan, wrote two letters to Pope Paul VI, who made two replies to these letters.

Writing to Pope Paul VI on 9th July 1975, Archbishop Coggan stated,

To inform your Holiness of the slow but steady growth of a consensus of opinion within the Anglican Communion that there are no fundamental objections in principle to the ordination of women to the priesthood (1975 #2).

Being very conscious of the difficulty this decision would make for the unity which the two churches were seeking, the Archbishop wrote:

At the same time we are aware that actions on this matter could be an obstacle to further progress along the path of unity Christ wills for the Church. The central authorities of the Anglican Communion therefore called for common counsel on this matter as has the General Synod of the Church of England (1975 #3).

The Archbishop showed further commitment to future debates on the matter and indicated to the Pope that the position of the Anglican Church on the issue had been communicated to

Cardinal Jan Willebrands, who was president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and to Bishop John Howe, Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council. Responding to the letter from Archbishop Coggan, the Pope made clear the position of the Roman Catholic Church on women's ordination, saying:

Your grace is of course well aware of the Catholic Church position on this question. She holds that it is not admissible to ordain women to the priesthood, for very fundamental reasons. These include: the example of Christ choosing his apostles only from among men; the constant practice of the church, which has imitated Christ in choosing only men; and her living teaching authority which has constantly held that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for his church (1975).

Acknowledging the historical work of the joint commission between the two churches, the Pope stated further:

We must regretfully recognize that a new course taken by the Anglican Communion in admitting women to the ordained priesthood cannot fail to introduce into this dialogue an element of grave difficulty which those involved will have to take seriously into account (1975).

The Pope showed satisfaction that this matter was being discussed by the two bodies representing the two churches, while noting that 'obstacles do not destroy mutual commitment to a search for reconciliation' (#5). For Purdy (1996:246), what prompted Archbishop Coggan to write to Pope Paul VI was the conclusion of the Church of England General Synod:

This Synod, not wishing the prejudice improving relationships with the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church by removing without consultation with them the legal and other barriers to the ordination of women in the church of England, request the presidents to 'inform the appropriate authorities in those churches of its belief that there are no fundamental objections to such ordinations; and invite those authorities to share in an urgent re-examination of the theological grounds for including women in the order of priesthood, with particular attention to the doctrine of man and the doctrine of creation' (:246).

According to Purdy (1996:147), the matter of women's ordination raises issues of whether 'sacramental Communion was possible between a church which ordained women and one which did not or would not'.

In his second letter to the Pope, Archbishop Coggan turned to the Common Declaration between the Pope and Archbishop Ramsey of 1966, which gave the mandate to the ARCIC to

engage in serious dialogue on matters of faith. The Archbishop expressed the main task of such pronouncements by stating that:

‘The goal which we jointly seek is that visible unity of the church for which Christ prayed’. The Archbishop further said that ‘we believe this unity of the church will be maintained within a diversity of legitimate traditions because the Holy Spirit has never ceased to be active within the local churches throughout the world’

The Archbishop pointed to the significance of unity in diversity on the matter, by noting that;

Sometimes what seems to one tradition to be a genuine expression of such a diversity in unity will appear to another tradition to go beyond the bounds of legitimacy. Discussions within the Anglican Communion concerning the possibility of the ordination of women is at present just an issue’ (Coggan 1976 #4).

Furthermore, the Archbishop acknowledged that;

There are still many obstacles to be overcome upon that road to the restoration of complete communion of faith and sacramental life called for by my predecessor and your holiness, we nevertheless believe that in the power of the Spirit Christ’s high priestly prayer for unity will be fulfilled (Coggan 1976 #5).

In his response to the Archbishop, the Pope expressed gratitude for the sustenance of the relationship started between him and Bishop Ramsey and its fruitful extensions across the two traditions. However, he reminded the Archbishop of the seriousness of opening the door to the ordination of women, stating,

In such a spirit of candour and trust you allude in your letter of greeting to a problem which has recently loomed large: the likelihood, already very strong it seems in some places, that the Anglican churches will proceed to admit women to the ordained priesthood. We had already exchanged letters with you on this subject and we were able to express the Catholic conviction more fully to Bishop John Howe when he brought your greetings. Our affections for the Anglican communion has for many years been strong, and we always nourished and often expressed ardent hopes that the Holy Spirit would lead us, in love and in obedience to God’s will, along the path of reconciliation. This must be the measure of the sadness with which we encounter so grave a new obstacle and threat on that path (1976).

The Pope explained further to the Archbishop: ‘But it is not part of corresponding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to fail in the virtue of hope’; having said this, the Pope remained faithful to the Catholic Church’s commitment to full reconciliation between the two churches which God willed (Pope Paul VI #3). Purdy observes that while the correspondence on women’s ordination between the Pope and Archbishop Coggan was in progress, there

were important discussions being held within the Anglican Church and between the two churches. For example, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the United States of America (ARCUSA) met at Erlanger in Kentucky from 21st to 24th October 1977 to discuss women's ordination. Here, the participants acknowledged the different positions held between them; however, they concluded that the divergent views would not affect their intended goal. At the same time, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA), at Minneapolis stated that, 'The provision of these canons for the admission of candidates to the three orders, bishop, priests and deacons shall be equally applied to men and women' (1996:248). Purdy states that, according to Norgren, the new approach to ministry that allowed women into holy orders was yet to be seen if it was the will of God. He writes, experience will show if our new approach to ministry is guided by the spirit of God (1996:248). Purdy observed that what followed was a Declaration on the Question of the Ordination of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood from the CDF, which was given to the Pope. In his view, the theological presentations on ministerial priesthood in the document were key factors for the exclusion of women to the priesthood (1976:248). Purdy adds that this came when plans for the 1978 Lambeth Conference and the Anglican-Roman Catholic consultation to discuss the ecumenical implications of the ordination of women to priestly ministry were initiated. In Purdy's view, the declaration from the CDF did not prevent the Church of England from proceeding with their plans to admit women to holy orders; in the words of Bishop Hugh Montefiore, the General Synod stated, 'This synod will ask the standing committee to prepare and bring forward legislation to remove the barriers to ordination of women priests and their consecration to the episcopate' (1996:251).

The General Synod was mindful of the advantages and disadvantages of passing the motion, although objection three, which held that allowing women to priesthood will disrupt our intentions towards unity with Rome (:251) was one of ecumenical concern. According to Purdy, Bishop Montefiore's understanding of ecumenism on this issue is of great importance; he states that for Montefiore, ecumenism 'does not mean prevaricating over what you know is right in case you upset other Churches. It means doing what you know to be right and trusting that other Churches which think differently will accept you in love and truth' (:252). At this time no major conclusions were made, as the Synod thought of giving the matter more discussion and consultation (Purdy 1996:252).

Similarly, Gros, McManus and Riggs (1998) hold that the matter of women's ordination has not only raised new problems in the dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic

churches, but it has also greatly raised awareness of the significance of their agreement on authority. The authors note that in breaking the barriers to women's ordination, the Anglicans maintain that 'there are no biblical, sacramental, or confessional barriers to taking the step, if done with proper magisterial authority'; on the other hand, the Catholic Church insisted that church authorities have no ecclesial power to change sacramental practice in this way (1998:179). They assert that, in as much as the debates concerning women's ordination generate strong emotions, it also provides a chance for the two churches in dialogue to 'listen to one another in order to begin to feel for and understand different spiritualities, models of decision-making and ways of confessing fidelity to the tradition' (Gros, McManus and Riggs, 1998:179).

Emphasising the tensions in the bilateral dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches caused by the Anglican Church's decision to go ahead and ordain women, Tesfai (1996:58) observes that, in Cardinal Willebrands' own words;

The ordination of women which has taken place in some dioceses of the Anglican Communion, has set back the hopes for the restoration of fellowship with the Catholic Church. No less serious are the ecclesiological problems which these decisions entail within the Anglican Communion itself (1996:58).

Willebrands, the efforts of the dialogue between the Anglicans and Roman Catholics are seriously affected by the refusal of the Catholic Church to ordain women to priesthood (Tesfai 1996: 58-59).

Further communication on women's ordination continued between Pope John Paul II and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie and between Runcie and Cardinal Jan Willebrands from 1984 to 1986. Writing to the Archbishop, the Pope recognized the divergences that still separate the two churches. He also acknowledged the importance of the common heritage which the two churches share, not only between them, but also with other Christian churches; he stated that these differences should not prevent the Roman Catholic Church from remaining faithful to the position it holds on the matter (Letter of Pope John Paul II to Archbishop Runcie 1984 #2). Having said this, the Pope re-emphasised the position of the Roman Catholic Church on women's ordination as presented by his predecessor Pope Paul VI in the following way:

I know that your grace is well aware of the position of the Catholic Church and of the theological grounds which lead her to maintain it; indeed I am grateful that, in the recent debate in the General Synod of the Church of England, you referred to the implications of this question for Anglican

relations with the Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches. But the outcome of that debate prompts us to affirm with all brotherly frankness the continuing adherence of the Catholic Church to the practice and principles so clearly stated by Pope Paul VI (1984).

Responding to the letter, Archbishop Runcie recognized how the matter of women's ordination had become a serious challenge towards unity not only between the two churches, but also within the Anglican Church itself (1985 #1-3). For the Archbishop, a collective and comprehensive study of the matter was the possible option for moving forward:

I would therefore propose to your holiness the urgent need for a joint study of the question of the ordination of women to the ministerial priesthood, especially in respect of its consequences for the mutual reconciliation of our churches and the recognition of their ministries (1985).

For the Archbishop, at this particular time, this difficult issue called for a rapid and consolidated effort from both authorities if the desired unity was to be accomplished between them (1986 #6). The Archbishop saw it necessary to engage at an extensive level with Cardinal Willebrands on the issue of women's ordination. Writing to the Cardinal, the Archbishop showed gratitude for the honesty displayed by the Holy Father in their communications concerning the unchanged position of the Roman Catholic Church on this issue. He writes:

While some Roman Catholic theologians may suggest otherwise to Anglicans, I understand the Holy Father's letter has affirmed that the Roman Catholic Church believes that it has no right to change a tradition unbroken throughout the history of the church, universal in the East and in the West, and considered to be truly apostolic (1986).

However, the Archbishop was happy that the direction given by the Holy Father would give guidance to the people entrusted with the responsibility of the dialogue between the two Churches (#3). In his letter, the Archbishop spoke of how humanity shares in the redemptive work of Christ regardless of their gender or sex. He wrote;

It is also common ground between us that, the humanity taken by the Word, and now the risen and ascended humanity of the Lord of all creation, must be a humanity inclusive of women, if half the human race is to share in the redemption he won for us on the cross (1986 #8).

The Archbishop explained the understanding of the priestly ministry by the Anglican Church and concluded that;

...because the humanity of Christ our high priest includes male and female, it is thus urged that the ministerial priesthood now be open to women in order to more perfectly represent Christ's inclusive high priesthood (#9).

The Archbishop suggested that the matter be highly debated upon by the ARCIC, which he was hopeful it could not fail to address under the mandate given to it to resolve all matters hindering their progress to full communion (#5).

In response to the letter from Archbishop Runcie, Cardinal Willebrands stated that, 'A development like the ordination of women does nothing to deepen the communion between us and weakens the communion that currently exists; the ecclesiological implications are serious' (Letter of Cardinal Willebrands to Archbishop Runcie 1986 #4). The Cardinal went further and disputed the understanding of the Anglican Church on the redemptive aspect of priesthood which includes women, stating

...the issue, then, is the ordination of women to the priesthood and, that being so, it is clear that the question of who can or cannot be ordained may not be separated from its appropriate context of sacramental theology and ecclesiology. The practice of only ordaining men to priesthood has to be seen in the context of an ecclesiology in which the priesthood is an integral and essential aspect of the reality of the church. It is in and through the ministry of priests that the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ is a present reality, so there is real continuity between the redemptive work of Christ and the priestly office exercised both by those in the episcopal order and by their collaborators in the order of presbyters (1986).

The Cardinal reminded the Archbishop of basing his arguments using the language of priesthood and sacrament in supporting the sacramental ordination of women to ministerial priesthood. He explained that Anglicans and Roman Catholics have reached a substantial agreement on the matter in their dialogue through ARCIC I on the Doctrine of Ministry; hence, both understand fully the meaning of the sacramental nature of ministry (#8).

Women's ordination did not attract the attention of ARCIC I. Howard concedes that it was not a doctrinal issue for ARCIC I, since it has not published any evidence that the matter was ever discussed. However, there is evidence that in some countries debates between the two churches on women's ordination were being held at local level. For example, the (ARCUSA), in 1975 included on their agenda the issue of women's ordination to the priesthood and as bishops (Howard 1975:243). During this meeting, ARCUSA agreed that,

The theological exploration mentioned above has been undertaken by both Roman Catholic and Anglican theologians. Official pronouncements give no indication of any expectations of change in the present position of the Roman

Catholic Church on this issue in the immediate future. At this meeting, a number of the Roman Catholic participants felt that the implications of this matter had not been explained sufficiently to offer a final decision. On the other hand, the question of the ordination of women is expected to be proposed for action at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church of England in 1976. Anglican participants felt that discussions in the Anglican church in the United States had reached a stage where decision was becoming positive (1975:244).

Here ARCUSA acknowledged the position of the two churches. One can see how the Catholic Church has prevented further debate on the matter, while the Anglican Church has left the issue for further discernment at all levels of the church structures.

Howard observes that ARCIC recognized the importance of the concept of 'Diversity in Unity' (:245) on the issue of women's ordination, when they stated:

A difference in practice between our churches on ordination of women would inevitably raise the question of its effect upon the goal of full communion and organic unity, if this goal is thought of as requiring uniformity in doctrine and discipline concerning candidates for ordination, the problem would indeed be a serious one...the ecumenical task is to inquire whether one church can fully recognize another in the midst of differences (:245).

Seemingly, the participants were aware that diversity in unity calls for one to respect the decisions of the other. Purdy (1996:250) and Abbott (2003:5) explain that the Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group for Western Europe met at the Centro Ecumenico in Assisi from 10th to 14th November 1975 and in Versailles from 27th February to 3rd March 1978 to discuss the ecumenical implications of the ordination of women (Abbott 2003:5; Purdy 1996:250). Abbott states that at these meetings a research paper of Doyle entitled, 'The Ordination of Women: The State of the Question in the Roman Catholic Church', highly influenced the discussions. For her the paper was important because it brought out critical issues in the debate and the findings, 'that there were no theological objections to the ordination of women' (:5), were presented to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU). According to Abbott, Doyle begins by acknowledging that 'the question regarding the ordination of women is a new one in the church' (:5). She notes that Doyle's opinion is that before the debates on women's ordination, it was acceptable that only men were eligible to be ordained priests. However, reasons to exclude women began to be critically evaluated. According to Abbott, Doyle maintains that,

To ask the question today: can women be ordained to the priesthood? Is to ask the question in a way so differently nuanced from how it has been asked ever

before, that it is patently a new question. The difference is due to theological, biblical, sociological, psychological and ecumenical reasons which make it clear that the question about the ordination of women cannot be ripped off from the wider context of the emancipation of women in the church and in society at large. With completely new theological, biblical, sociological, psychological and ecumenical data which have undermined and in some cases completely destroyed many of our most cherished assumptions about what is “the nature of things”, it is clear that we are asking a new question based on a new understanding of church and world. Therefore to answer this new question: can women be ordained to priesthood? With the reply: NO, because only men can be ordained, is glossily to beg the question (Abbott 2003:5).

Abbott concludes that in Doyle’s mind, like many other advocates, it is evident that the support of women priests is a direction and work of the holy spirit who has always directed the church time in memorial (Abbott 2003:9).

Abbott and Purdy mention that a joint consultative meeting between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches was held in Versailles to discuss ‘to what extent and in what ways churches with women priests and churches without women priests can be reconciled in sacramental fellowship’ (1996:250; 2003:6). For them the important phrase is the one which stated that

Two things may be seen as ground for hope. First there is the fact that those Anglican churches which have proceeded to ordain women to the presbyterate have done so in the conviction that they have not departed from the traditional understanding of apostolic ministry...in the second place there is the fact that the recent Roman declaration does not affirm explicitly that this matter is *de jure divino*. These facts would seem not to exclude the possibility of future developments (Abbott 2003:6; Purdy 1996:250).

It was agreed that the outcome of the meeting be officially presented at the Lambeth Conference in 1978, where Bishop Daly of the SPCU made clear the position of the Roman Catholic Church on the matter. Discussions concerning women’s ordination raised serious anxieties in the Vatican secretariat. Specific concerns were that the Roman Catholic Church’s position on the issue was unclear and somehow provisional. To address this, Bishop Daly made it clear that;

It is not possible to call in question the seriousness and firmness of the Catholic Church on this matter’; and that ‘the Secretariat for the Union of Christians, of which I am a member, would no way wish to dissociate itself from the hopefulness and the commitment to a continued search for reconciliation which was clearly apparent in the Holy Father’s letters and has characterised Anglican-Roman Catholic confrontations of this “new and grave obstacle”’ (Abbott 2003:7).

Abbott says that, for Doyle, this call for reconciliation calls for the two churches to ‘remain open to what the Spirit may be saying to the Churches’ (2003:7) as they discuss the issue of women’s ordination.

The dialogue on women’s ordination has continued between the Anglican and Roman Catholic authorities. For example, Reynolds (2016:1) reports that recently Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury met in Rome on 6th October 2016. Meeting in the Apostolic Library after a joint service, the Pope and the Archbishop in their joint statement recognized the differences between the two churches, affirming that they are ‘undeterred’ ‘from seeking unity over the ordination of women and sexuality’. However, they stated further that these differences should not ‘ever hold us back from discovering and rejoicing in the deep Christian faith and holiness we find within each other’s traditions’ (Reynolds 2016:1). In his amazement, Archbishop David Maxon, the director of the Anglican Centre in Rome saw this as an historical event not only for the two churches but also for the whole Christian community, when he said this encounter, ‘marked the writing of a new chapter in the history of the Christian Church’. In the same vein the Pope called this meeting ‘a beautiful sign of fraternity’ (Reynolds 2016:1).

5.2.1. Women’s Response to the Position of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches on Women’s Ordination

Women in the Roman Catholic Church have publicly resisted their exclusion from priesthood. This resistance is evident in their creation of solidarity movements and self-ordination practices. For example, Ronan (2007) situates the movement for women’s ordination in the Catholic Church within the context of the liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, the United States civil rights movements’ rose advocating for liberation from anticolonial wars, as did the broader women’s liberation movements’ fighting for women’s rights (2007:12). Additionally, Ruether (2011) states that women’s resistance started in 1910 when the St Joan’s Alliance Catholic Women’s Suffrage Group was founded in Britain. The St Joan’s International Alliance is one among the many Catholic organizations promoting equality of women in the Roman Catholic Church. In 1961 the alliance petitioned Rome to restore the women’s diaconate. It called for both women and men to have an observer and expert role during the Second Vatican Council in 1962. The alliance also made a recommendation to the Pope asking him to allow women into holy orders. (New Catholic Encyclopaedia; Pelzel 1992:5). Catholic women suggested to the Second Vatican Council that it include in their discussion the issues on the ordination of women deacons. Ruether

explains that in 1976 women in the Catholic Church responded to the ban on women's priestly ordination by Rome. One of the influential women's groups challenging the Catholic Church's stance on women's ordination is the WOC. Ronan observes that even though WOC did not ordain women, it held extensive meetings in the 1980s and 1990s in order to address the issues of women's ordination in the church (2007:12).

The WOC was first held in 1975 in Detroit, a time when the Episcopal Church had just made its decision to ordain women. Since this time the conference continues to exist with the aim of promoting women's ordination in the Catholic Church (Ruether 2011:66). Taczak and Kraus (1996) assert that the 1975 WOC, uniting with feminists and people promoting justice, turned to the themes 'Disciples of Equals' and 'Breaking Bread/Doing Justice' (:10), suggesting the expansion of discussions beyond women's ordination to address issues of 'inclusive ministry in a renewed church' (:10). At this 1975 conference, women realized that the issue of women's ordination on its own would not resolve clericalism, patriarchy and hierarchy-kyriarchy tendencies, but that the concept of the Discipleship of Equals would deconstruct it (Taczak and Kraus 1996:10).

According to Ruether, in 1976 the 'Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood' was directed to the decision made by the Episcopal Church to ordain women and the expansion of the movement for women's ordination within the Catholic Church (2011:66). Ruether points out that the Catholic Church has made 'a dubious assertion' (:67), in the sense that it strongly affirms advocates for women's rights in the modern world while it fails to see its own exclusion of women to priesthood as discrimination against women (Ruether 2011:67). Practical actions have also characterised the oppositional views of women to the position of the church on the matter. For example, since 2002, there have been ordinations of women performed in the Catholic Church by legitimate bishops. The famous ordinations are those that were performed on the Danube River, where the first seven women were ordained by Catholic bishops to accord such ordinations an apostolic succession. Further ordinations took place at the same place in 2004 when six women were ordained. In a third incident two French women were ordained near Lyons; this was followed by nine North Americans who were ordained by the river banks of the St Lawrence. In the United States, further eight women were ordained as priests and six as deacons on a boat at the confluence of the Monongahela, Allegheny, and Ohio Rivers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2006. However, Ronan bemoans that these ordinations will not persuade the institutional church to ordain women (Ronan 2007:13).

In the Anglican Church, women have generally affirmed the ordination of women with the exception of a few who have opposed the practice. For example, the women present at the 32nd 'Triennial meeting' (:11) of 1967 demanded that the General Convention consider women deputies to have a place in such meetings. It is to this effect that the Episcopal Women's Caucus (EWC) was created on 30th October 1971 by six women who met at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. They met to share their views concerning the place of women in the Episcopal Church, be it professional women, lay or ordained. At this stage Lambeth 1968 had regarded women deaconesses as Holy Orders, while the non-ordained women were allowed to be lay readers. During this meeting in Alexandria, the women posed the question: 'When will women be priests in this church?' (:11). However, at this time the bishops failed to address the concerns of women (:11). This prompted the EWC to raise the statement: 'The Episcopal Women's Caucus is an ad hoc group of lay women (and some men), seminarians, and ordained women whose purpose is to actualize the full participation of women in all levels of ministry in the Episcopal Church' (:12). According to Whitley, the efforts of the EWC fostered the 29th July 1974 controversial ordinations of the eleven women. These ordinations were considered 'irregular' (:12) because they were conducted by visiting bishops. The ordained women insisted that they were legitimate priests since many among the church authorities recognized their ordinations. The EWC maintained that in the changing world all professions are open to women's participation and could not see 'why not the priesthood' (:12). Whitley observes that although the EWC efforts were without pain and tears, women had found themselves a place in the house of bishops with the ordination of Reverend Barbara Harris of the diocese of Massachusetts to the episcopate on the 11th February 1989. Since then women in the Anglican Church are being consecrated as bishops with some of them serving in higher positions. For example, Katharine Jefferts Schori was once voted in as presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church (Whitley n.d :14).

Donovan (1989) describes the influential presence of Anglican women at the Lambeth Conference of 1988. She observes that 'women's ordination permeated the mind-set of the 1988 Lambeth Conference to an extraordinary degree. Though the bishops wanted to talk about other issues, the international press' (:2) paid attention to the issue of women as priests, leaving the bishops with no choice but to treat issues of racism, economic exploitation and environmental degradation as secondary on their agenda. At this occasion, Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, was present and pointed out that she saw no reason for hindering women from being ordained priests. In fact, the deputy chaplain of the Lambeth

Conference was a woman, Mother Janet from the Holy Paraclete community. The greater presence of women at the conference was made possible because the conveners raised enough money towards the participation of the wives of bishops. Additionally, the EWC provided support towards the attendance of women at the conference. They providing accommodation, food and refreshments for a great number of them. They also created opportunities for bishops from around the world who were in favour of women's ordination to engage in extensive talks with ordained women and lay women. Similarly, the English Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW), established a centre where they displayed their activities. Under strict security, both women's groups (EWC and MOC) informally went to the venue of the conference and lobbied the delegates (1989:3).

According to Donovan, Lambeth 1988 marked a decisive change for women in the Anglican Communion. At this meeting, male-dominating authority was not part of the debate. Rather, the gathering was concerned about the many unnoticed challenges facing the church which needed urgent attention of the wider church: 'men and women, lay and ordained, black and white' (1989:4). Women spoke with confidence in their respective groups and in the plenary sessions and they demanded to be heard. Here, the doors for women to be 'theologians, liturgists and ethicists were opened' (:5). However, not all the women were in favour of women's ordination. Donovan asserts that 'gender did not necessarily determine a woman's position on the question of priestly or episcopal orders for women' (:5). This is evidenced by Margaret Hewitt, who in her vigorous speech opposed women's ordination, while Mary Tanner passionately defended it (Donovan 1989:5). Emphasis on the ordination of women at this conference raised issues of unity within the Anglican Church, especially if a woman was to be ordained bishop. Others believed 'the episcopate as a sign of unity in the Anglican Communion, will be impaired if women are included' (:7). On the other hand, some held that, 'the episcopate, as a sign of unity in the Anglican Communion is already impaired because it's exclusively male' (:7). Both left the meeting with hurtful feelings (Donovan 1989:7).

Forward in Faith (FiF) is an organization in the Anglican Church comprising of men and women who have strongly opposed the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate. Founded in 1992, FiF rejected the decision made by the General Synod of the Church of England on the ordination of women to the priesthood. Its main concern was to provide support to those members of the Church of England who refused to recognize women as priests in the church and those who ordained them (FiF Constitution 2015 #3a). The organization maintained at the time that the Church of England is 'part of the one Holy

Catholic Church' (1992b:1). Therefore, it cannot claim the right to make a fundamental change unilaterally, as this contradicts its nature as belonging to the one church; 'The threefold ministry of bishop, priests and deacons similarly belong to the whole church' (:1). Concerning the unity and ecumenical consideration, FiF observed that the Church of England had committed itself to promote the visible unity of the Church as willed by Christ; hence, the church's disunity is contrary to Christ's will. Their claim was that 'Ordaining women to episcopate and priesthood further entrenches disunity' (:1), when the church should work towards overcoming it. FiF reminds the Church of England that 'the Roman Catholic Church has repeatedly described it as placing "a serious obstacle" in the way. It also has grave consequences for the Church of England's own unity' (FiF 1992:1).

5.2.2. Receptive Ecumenism and Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue

In phase three of their dialogue, the ARCIC turned to receptive ecumenism, describing it as a critical method that 'involves being prepared both to discern what appears to be overlooked or undeveloped in one's own tradition and ask whether such things are better developed in the other tradition' (ARCIC III #18). They further stated that receptive ecumenism is more about 'self-examination through the prism of ecumenical dialogue and receptive learning can deepen the renewal and participation of the Church in the Trinitarian community of God' (ARCIC III #19). According to the commission, the notion of receptive ecumenism corresponds with the teachings of the authorities of the two churches. For example, Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, said that 'the richness that God has given to other traditions is also meant to be a gift for us' (EG #246). In a similar instance, in 2016 Archbishop Justine Welby of Canterbury, while preaching at Westminster during the fifty year celebration of the Anglican Centre in Rome, said that;

The habits of the centuries render us comfortable with disunity. I pray that ARCIC disrupts our disunity...it must develop its special genius of a spirit of receptive ecumenism: of asking not what we might give the other, but what we lack that God might give us through the other' (ARCIC III 2017 #18).

The commission suggested some learning points in the dialogue for both traditions. For instance, the Anglican Church can learn from the Roman Catholic synods that meet for formation, teaching, consultation and discernment, especially on specific ethical issues. Similarly, the Catholic Church can learn from the Anglican Church the inclusiveness of the entire Christian faithful in making importance decision on matters that affect them all as a Christian community, especially with regard to the consultative process in electing and

appointing of parish priests and bishops (ARCIC III 2017 #100). The commission made further suggestions as some helpful learning points for both Churches:

In some provinces, Anglicans have benefited from the Catholic Directory for Sunday worship in the absence of a priest, with deacons, lay leaders, or designated lay people leading a celebration of the Lord's Day in the form of a liturgy of the Word, with or without Holy Communion from the reserved sacrament. The Roman Catholic Church can learn from the Anglican Church ordination of women deacons, 'a fuller implementation of licensed lay pastoral assistants; the priestly ordination of mature married men and the authorization of lay people to preach' (:102).

For the commission, the fact that the lay faithful are already engaged in ministry is reason enough to expand their involvement, especially taking a deliberate move to allow women to participate in the reading of the word (#102).

Pecklers (2008:109) suggests that the Roman Catholic Church should emulate the Anglican Church a fearless attitude to engage with the various cultural and other controversial issues affecting society rather than 'closing the door to any such discussions' (:109). According to Pecklers, the two Churches have to learn from one another the manner in which ecclesial structures are organized and the way by which authority is exercised. In this context, the Roman Catholic Church has adopted a central authoritative structure which only allows theological debates. On the other hand, the Anglican Church's structures of authority are strongly based on synodality within the wider Communion. It follows that Anglicans have a special gift to offer to the Roman Catholic Church, one that raises critical questions to be addressed (2008:12). In Pecklers' view, the matter regarding the role of women in the church and human sexuality are among contemporary issues that the Anglican Church has openly given theological debate to in various disciplines such as in academic spaces, at provincial levels and diocesan synodal structures (:113). Yet Anglicans can also learn from the Roman Catholic Church to have a centralized authoritative structure providing guidance in times when faced with problems that threaten the unity of the church (Pecklers 2008:113).

Tanner (2008:264) observes the challenges facing the Anglican and Roman Catholic dialogue concerning receptive ecumenism. She explains that, among the many reasons that led the two churches to fail in receptive ecumenism, is their divergent view on the ordination of women. In the Anglican Communion, one sees a great number of women being ordained from the late 1980s in the United States, with advanced discussions to allow women to be ordained in priestly and episcopal ministries. Around the same time, the Church of England had ordained

women to the diaconate and was already in the midst of heated debates concerning ordaining women to the priesthood.

According to the Roman Catholic Church, this practice threatens the unity of the church; as Tanner remarks, 'for the Roman Catholic Church, this unilateral action on a matter that touches the unity of the Church appeared to call into question the Anglican Communion's ecumenical commitment to visible unity, to the progress thus far made in the ARCIC conversations and the existing degree of communion' (Tanner 2008:264). She observes that this development did not only destroy the mutual efforts to support receptive ecumenism, but also the goal of Eucharistic sharing, shared sacramental life and ministry was disrupted. Both Anglicans and Roman Catholics were disappointed by the turn of events, indicating that, Anglicans knew that the decision to ordain women does not concern them alone but that it affects the wider Christian community and therefore, there is need to engage in the process of reception within the Anglican Church and among the Christian churches when such practices are sought (2008:265). The actions of the Roman Catholic Church to end the discussions on the issue of women's ordination did not favour the Anglicans who had hoped for a continued discernment and ongoing open reception (Tanner 2008:265).

O'Gara observes that ecumenism is a gift exchange where a particular church brings a number of gifts into the dialogue, while remaining open to receiving from the partner in dialogue. For her, this gift exchange should be understood as a divine gift that enriches not only the receiving Church, but is also for the good of all in ecumenical dialogue (2008:26). O'Gara asserts that this exchange can either be mutually accepted or rejected by the other in the dialogue. For her, from among many, a critical example of a gift that could be rejected is the issue on women's ordination in the dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. This is seen in the ecumenical debates of the Anglican and Roman Catholics on the matter, where there exists a critical divergence among the two Churches as to which teaching and practice can be considered to be a gift (2008:32). Certainly, the observation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in their statement, 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry', which encouraged those Churches who ordain women and those who do not ordain them, is of great importance. In it the WCC suggested that, 'Openness to each other holds the possibility that the Spirit may well speak to one Church through the insight of another' (O'Gara 2008:32).

O'Gara says that the issue of women's ordination remains a divergence point among the two churches. For example, the CDF in 1976, argued that, 'the Church does not consider herself

authorized to admit women to priestly ordination' (2008:32) because Jesus and the apostolic community excluded women from the twelve apostles. This is a teaching which was re-emphasized by Pope John Paul II in 1994, who 'argued that from the will and practice of Christ 'that the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women' and that 'this judgement is to be held "definitely"' (:32). Similarly, the same Christological basis was used for arguments that have fostered women's ordination in some of the provinces within the Anglican Church. Here Archbishop Robert Runcie pointed out that, individual members of the Anglican church believe that since Jesus Christ became incarnate for the sake of humanity, inclusive of male and female, both men and women once ordained will fully represent Christ's priestly nature (:32). In this case the Archbishop maintained that this doctrinal understanding, should be seen by all as a requirement and not as something that is justified (O'Gara 2008:32).

5.2.3. Feminist Approaches to Liberating Women in Christian Communities

Women theologians advocating for liberating the structures that hinder the equality of women in ecclesial communities turn to Galatians (3:28), which states that 'there is neither Jew or gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for all are one in Christ Jesus' (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1983:211; Reuther 1998:21). According to Schüssler-Fiorenza, this simply means that through baptism, all people are full members of the 'Christian Movement' (:211) regardless of their procreative abilities and their social roles (:211). She explains further that Galatians 3:28, 'not only advocates the abolition of religious-cultural divisions and of the domination and exploitation wrought by institutional slavery but also of domination based on sexual divisions' (1983:213). In this context, the text shows that in the Christian community, there are no distinctions based on religion, race, class, nationality or gender (1983:213). Rakoczy (2004:202) concedes that what determines the relationship between male and female in the community is baptism. Conn (1992:3) observes that the text of Galatians 3:27-28 supports the notion of discipleship of equals. For her this biblical text clearly indicate that there is no place for intimidation and oppression for one another in faith communities (1992:3).

The association of United States Catholic Priests (AUSCP) in their statement on women in 2019, asserts that Galatians 3:28 calls for a critical reading of the signs of the times, which demand a change of attitude and approach to proclaiming the Gospel if church renewal is to be achieved. The AUSCP states further that there is need for a critically evaluate the place of women in the church and in the world, as the world is in entire need of their services

(2019:2). This corresponds with the position held by the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Young People from 3rd -28th October 2018 which called for a serious reflection of position of women both in church and in the wider community. According to the assembly the youth see the need of the presence of women in public sphere and held that this is a matter of justice and are in great need of a female figure which is often absent in the public sphere (2018 # 148). McElwee observes that the synod acknowledged the long silence of women in ecclesial matters, stating that ‘the absence of women’s voices and points of view impoverishes decision-making and the path of the Church, subtracting a precious contribution from discernment’ and that the ‘synod recommends making everyone aware of the urgency of an inescapable change’ (McElwee 2018:3). The synod agreed that there are challenges concerning the involvement of women in decision-making processes in the church, writing, ‘In many places it is a challenge to give them space in decision-making processes’ (:9). Additionally, the document saw the urgency of the matter indicating that ‘an area of particular importance is that of women’s presence in ecclesial bodies at all levels, including in roles of responsibility and of women’s participation in ecclesial-decision-making processes, while respecting the role of ordained ministry’ (:9). For the synod, the inclusion of women is ‘about a duty of justice, which finds much inspiration in the way in which Jesus related with men and women of his time, and in the importance of the role of some feminine figures in the bible, in salvation history, and in the life of the church’ (:9).

Trible observes that Ruether affirmed human experience as the basis of all theology, when she said that,

Traditionally, such experience has been identified with and defined by men; feminist theology includes the experiences of women and therefore exposes the male-centred bias of classical theology and articulates an understanding of faith that incorporates all of humanity. Whereas the traditional paradigm of theology supported domination and subordination in relationships between men and women, feminist thinking enables a mutuality that allows for variety, participation, equality and mutual respect in and among women and men. The goal is not to diminish males but to affirm both sexes as whole, along with all races and social groups (1983:2).

According to Tribble, Ruether suggested some prophetic biblical principles that repudiate ‘all oppressive ideologies in the name of God who liberates, stating that, the dominant Christian traditions, if it is corrected by feminism offers viable categories for interpreting human existence and building redemptive communities’ (Tribble 1983:3). Additionally, Conn mentions that Ruether’s liberation theology begins with experience, especially her focus on

‘women’s experience and female cultural paradigms’ (1992:23). For example, in this theology Ruether uses the critical principles that, anyone who rejects or disrespects the full potential of a woman has not experienced the redemptive power of Christ (1992:23), and anybody that recognizes and upholds the dignity of a woman is ‘of the holy’ (1992:23).

Some women theologians suggest a re-claiming of ‘being church’, looking for new ways by creating liturgical spaces where they read scripture and work for justice (Natalie 2002:53; Rakoczy 2004:244). Women theologians are convinced that ‘women are church whether they choose to remain within existing institutional frameworks or to find other spaces for their discourses of liberation from the restrictions of the patriarchal church’ (Natalie 2002:53). Natalie contends that the notion of ‘women church’ sprang from the conference of Roman Catholic women concerned with social justice and church renewal (:54). She says that the result of the gathering was a shift in the self-understanding of women as belonging to the church to being church themselves (2002:53).

Women advocating for women naming themselves church explain that the term women church, or *ekklesia*, as ‘an oxymoron that indicates that *ekklesia* will become historically a reality only when women are fully incorporated in it’ (Natalie 2002:55; Schüssler-Fiorenza 1993:196). Natalie asserts that women church does not intend to exclude men; however they intend to make known how women have been left out in the structures of decision making processes of the Christian churches. It is therefore a ‘self-identified movement with women and men concerned with women’s struggle’ (:55). Rakoczy (2004:244) observes that these ‘new forms of Christian communities are nourishing, empowering and egalitarian’. She recognizes the manner in which Ruether defines these communities, ‘women-church means neither leaving the church as a sectarian group, nor continuing to fit into it on its terms. It means establishing a basis for a feminist critical culture and celebrational community that has some autonomy from the established institutions’ (:245). For Rakoczy, wherever and whenever women meet together, they share experiences of discipleship, thus reclaiming their being church (:245).

Oduyoye points out that women find liberation in the context of theology. She says that ‘given the context of theology, we find mission being described as a mediation of salvation, often in terms of liberation, humanization and the pursuit of justice for all but especially for those totally deprived of it namely women’ (2001:87). Women call upon the church to pay attention to eradicate Christianity’s patriarchal effects on women. If the Christian community

has to mirror the caring altitude of Christ, it has to engage in a 'critical non-hierarchical involvement with the other' (:88). Oduyoye believes it is the church that is in need of redemption for the manner in which it treats women. According to her, this process of redemption begins with the church 'breaking the silence around the church's altitudes towards and teaching concerning women' (:88). For her, redeeming the church calls for collective efforts against divisive issues which include 'sexism, racism, tribalism and exploitation' (:88). She asserts that violence against women, the marginalization and demeaning of women by the church destroys its image as a caring community (:88).

The observation of Abbot concerning Doyle's understanding of God and feminism is interesting to women's liberation in ministry. She says that Doyle's stance on the issue of women's ordination is that it has to be understood as a theological issue grounded in the feminine nature of God. Doyle stated that;

It cannot be overemphasized that God is the source of womanhood and motherhood. God is neither male nor female; therefore the terms "Father" and "Son" indicates that the perfections of fatherhood and sonship are to be found pre-eminently in God. The terms "mother" and "daughter" may also be used of God to indicate that the perfections of motherhood and daughterhood are to be found in pre-eminently in God. All that Mary the mother God is by nature and by grace has its source in God who created her and chose her. This is reason enough to encourage the use of feminine terms of God alongside the masculine ones with which we are so familiar (Abbott 2003:27).

According to Abbott, this theological understanding reminds all that all sexes are equal before God and that what will guide us to value women is love towards them (Abbott 2003:27). Johnson (1992:47-48) concedes that 'female symbols of God such as caring and nurturing', often linked to the motherly nature of women are perfect and helpful and reflect the perfect image 'of God the Father' (:47). She cites Visser't Hooft who holds that 'while the fatherhood of God is and must remain the predominant Christian symbol, it is not a closed or exclusive symbol but is open to its own correction, enrichment, and completion from other symbols such as mother' (1992:48). She points to feminine traits such as 'gentleness and compassion, unconditional love, reverence, and care for the weak, sensitivity and desire not to dominate but to be an intimate companion and friend are predicated of the father God and make "him" more attractive' (:48). She mentions that Hooft suggests that if 'masculinized culture has to be transformed, there is need to relate to the feminine traits of God' (Johnson 1992:48).

Conn points to Schüssler-Fiorenza, who takes up the theory and practice of liberation theology, indicating that dedication to redeem those who suffer from oppressive structures provide the opportunity to share in their real life situations, to understand our environment and gives us a better understanding of the world around us (1992:23). According to Conn, liberation theology, which starts with women's experience, has been brought into ecumenical dialogue by men committed to feminism. She mentioned Leonard Swidler who has not only made a selfless contribution to feminist issues in ecumenical debates, but is also, along with Arlene Swidler, the co-founder of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. Others include the works of John Carmody, who has brought a feminist perspective to holistic spirituality and to theologies of peace and justice (Conn 1992:24).

5.2.4. Conclusion

This chapter explored the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches regarding women's ordination. It discussed how the authorities from the two churches have historically engaged in dialogue on this issue since 1975. The exchanges of communication between the Roman Catholic Popes and the Archbishops of Canterbury have pointed mostly to the clarifications of the position of each tradition concerning the matter. From their dialogue, it is apparent that the Roman Catholic Church, while remaining faithful to the dialogue towards full communion, maintains that the door to women's ordination remains closed. On the other hand, the Anglican Church continues ordaining women as priests and bishops, suggesting that the matter remains an open agenda for discussion. While remaining committed to the dialogue, both churches acknowledge that the issue of women's ordination has gravely disrupted the progress towards the goal to full unity. The chapter reviewed that at grassroots, ecumenical dialogue efforts are evident. This is seen from the ecumenical activities taking place in Unites States by the ARCUSA and the ECUSA.

The chapter has also explored how the dialogue has used the concept of receptive ecumenism as a critical method in the dialogue between the two churches. It noted how receptive ecumenism can guide the two churches in dialogue to the recognition of the gifts of each particular tradition by the other and the benefits of the divine gifts that the other has to offer. Furthermore, the chapter examined the views of feminist theologians on the need for Christian churches not only to recognize the role of women in the church, but also to open doors for women's participation as a discipleship of equals in the life of the church. Also demonstrated is how the advocates of women's liberation suggest alternative inclusive ecclesial spaces where women ecumenically gather to listen to each other and fight against discrimination and dominating structures in Christian churches which they name as male-centred. The following chapter examines the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in South Africa and the extent to which women's ordination matters have been addressed within the South African context among the mainline churches. The chapter also offers some theological conclusions concerning the study.

**CHAPTER SIX:
TOWARDS COOPERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA –
THEOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS**

6.1. Introduction

Referring to the ecumenical movement in South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Swaziland, some theological thinkers have concluded that African ecumenism ‘has entered its winter of despair, is in a state of institutional crisis, is disorganized and is struggling for survival’ (Pillay 2015:1). They observe that the ecumenical voice has either become silent, weak or compromised. According to Pillay, this could be attributed to the fact that ecumenical bodies that foster ecumenical activities such as the WCC and the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) have faced financial challenges. He says this applies to the South African context, where the South African Council of Churches (SACC) has not only experienced financial problems, but also structural issues. Additionally, Pillay observes that ecumenism in Africa is undergoing ‘theological, contextual, and institutional pressure’ (:1). This chapter examines the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in South Africa. It also explores the extent to which women’s ordination issues have been addressed across the mainline churches within the South African context. By mainline churches, the chapter limits itself to the following Churches: Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic. Finally, the chapter offers some possible theological conclusions on the study focus.

6.2. The Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue: South African Context

The ecumenical dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in South Africa can be traced back to 1968. Hinwood (1999:361) asserts that the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa, through the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference (SACBC), officially engaged in ecumenical dialogue in July 1968 at the invitation of the Anglican Church in Cape Town, during the plenary session. Hinwood says that the two churches formulated terms and references similar to those of ARCIC, with each church selecting five theologians to form the Anglican-Roman Catholic South African Commission (ARCSAC) (1999:361). According to Hinwood, the ARCSAC held its first meeting from 28-29th July 1968, stating that the commission structured itself in a similar manner to ARCIC in order to foster a sense of community for effective engagement in doctrinal debates. He observes that the commission

effectively held productive meetings from 1969 to 1977. The members had agreed on essential doctrinal themes such as church unity and membership, the Pope, bishops, the Eucharist and intercommunion, Scripture and Tradition, Authority in the Church, Ministry, Mary and the Communion of Saints in order to guide their discussions (1999:362). He observes that most of their energies were spent on issues concerning ministry. He points out five significant convergent issues in their dialogue. The first, is that we look forward to a reunion of Christendom having its necessary centre and focus in the primacy of the See of Rome with which all Christians would be in communion, and which, freed from elements that have obscured its true nature and significance, would express the kingship of Christ and the unity of the people of God. Secondly, he argues that although we might not yet have complete clarity in matters of detail, we are one in our conviction that the church is both indefectible and infallible, and that this charism of infallibility is given both to the faithful and the episcopate (which includes the Pope). Thirdly, he argues that when the church gathers for the Eucharist, it is Christ priest and victim who offers to the Father the total self-surrender which found its supreme expression in his death and unites us with his self-offering. Moreover, he states as the fourth theme that the church's authority derives not only from Christ's commissioning but also 'from the active presence within it of the Spirit...The Spirit's presence in the church enables the latter's sacraments to be "authoritative acts, offering God's grace here and now"' (:363). Finally, he contends that in spite of contradictions, there are areas in which the veneration of the ancestors, when judged by biblical standards, could in Christ be reconciled with the communion of saints (Hinwood 1999:363).

Hinwood observes that ARCSAC reached agreement on 'moral and pastoral' (:363) concerns; these include basic consensus on 'marriage' especially in preparation, such as church attendance and receiving Communion during the celebration of a mixed marriage; that is, between members from the two churches. Other convergent points were on Baptism and Confirmation, especially determining the age for Confirmation, intercommunion for special groups on special occasions, as well as ecumenism and its future at parish level. However, Hinwood observes that there was little discussion on abortion and women's ordination, which still remain divergent issues (1999:363). Furthermore, in order to promote a sense of community, ARCSAC recommended a consultative body among its members. Thus, five bishops from each church were appointed to form a Joint Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops Consultation. According to Hinwood, this body was still active in the 1990s (: 363).

Christopher Boyer is a Catholic priest currently serving as secretary of the SACBC, Department for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Dialogue. Boyer explains that there have been bilateral talks between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in South Africa up until 2018, but there have been no ecumenical talks concerning women's ordination between them following the ban on any debates on such matters by Pope John Paul II in 1994. However, Boyer observes that when ARCSAC met in 2008 in Khanya house in Pretoria, women's ordination was not part of the agenda because, according to the commission, the issues of women's ordination greatly disrupt their relationship. Since the two churches cannot reach consensus on the matter, they therefore saw it as important for them to devote their energies to matters that they share in common. Boyer observes that the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches are members of the SACC, respectively as the Anglican Church of South Africa and as the SACBC. According to him, the two churches collaborate with each other on the SACC Local Ecumenical Action Network (LEAN). The bishops from both churches witnessed a successful launch of LEAN in Mthatha in September 2019 for vulnerable people's access to public services. This worked with the help of youth movements and social media networks, mainly at deanery level. This initiative helped a great deal during the COVID-19 pandemic. He adds that the two churches are signatories to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, where much emphasis is placed on ministry theology. According to Boyer, the ecumenical resolutions tend to advocate for the inclusion of women in decision-making positions in the Catholic Church with greater emphasis on synodality, collegiality, participation of the lay people, missiology and pneumatology rather than making major shifts in ministry theology (Boyer, 2020).

Hinwood states that there were other efforts towards unity which were unsuccessful. For example, recommendations were made towards theological meetings in colleges and seminaries in the two churches; there would be exchange of lecturers,¹ but this practice was not implemented. Other suggestions that did not succeed were proposals on reciprocal representation on liturgical and translation committees as well as representation on one another's theological commissions.² On the spiritual aspect, collective retreats and appointing retreat directors were advocated, but could not be sustained. Furthermore, ARCSAC proposed a joint publication of the Lenten book as well as establishing grassroots structures at

¹ Prof. Susan Rakoczy was the ecumenical representative on the Council of the Anglican College of the Transfiguration from 1996 to 2017.

² Prof. Denise Ackermann, an Anglican, was a member of the SACBC's Theological Advisory Commission in the early 90s.

diocesan level in order to engage priests and the lay faithful for the success of the ecumenical efforts; the Lenten book efforts were realized, but could not be sustained, while the proposal of the inclusion of priests and the laity was dismissed at the Joint Bishops' Consultation meeting in 1980, citing the failure to manage 'the contact officer system' at grassroots levels (Hinwood 1999:364).

Hinwood asserts that although the ARCSAC faced some setbacks on the practical implementation of their proposed works, it had made significant contributions to the works of ARCIC I. This was followed by setting up ARCIC II after the visit of Pope John Paul II to England in 1992. This fostered the reconvening of the Joint South African-Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Commission comprising three bishops and three theologians from the two churches. However, the newly restructured theological commission could not contribute effectively towards ARCIC activities, as it lacked a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities concerning ARCIC II (Hinwood 1999:365).

The Roman Catholic Church has denied women ordination to the priesthood and has closed the door on debates concerning the matter. Prominent women in the Catholic Church have objected and taken the matter into their own hands. Some have left the church; others have remained in the church and initiated alternative ways of being church. For example, feminist theologians have developed concepts of women-church and women organisations have been established such as the WOC among many others with a view to promoting the inclusion of Catholic women at all levels of church structure (Hunt 2009:4). In South Africa, Women's Ordination South Africa (WOSA) was founded in 1996 in Umlazi, Durban, by Dina Cormack and Velisive Mkhwanazi. The organisation started as an 'overt campaign for ordination with public debates and placard signs outside the churches' (:1). According to Mkhwanazi, the initiative attracted many women, but eventually the numbers declined when church authorities opposed to the idea (Mkhwanazi 2001:1). In order to nurture their vocations, women in the Catholic Church who feel called to priesthood have left the church and sought ordination either in the Anglican Church or in the Methodist Church (Watson 2002:9). Women who have remained in the Catholic Church and sought ordination have formed Roman Catholic Women Priests (RCWP), 'an international initiative within the Roman Catholic Church which seeks an inclusive model of church' (:12). They train and ordain women and men to priesthood and as bishops (Hunt 2009:12; Ruether 2011:69).

The South African Roman Catholic Church has seen women being ordained to the priesthood. An example is Dianne Willman, the fourth South African woman to be ordained in the Catholic tradition. She was ordained by the first South African woman priest, Patricia Fresen. Fresen was ordained in 2003 in Barcelona and is currently serving as bishop. Her ordination was followed by Mary Ryan in 2014 in Cape Town and the third to be ordained was Ann Raiston in 2016, who lives in the Western Cape. These three women priests are affiliated to RCWP. In order to claim apostolic succession, seven women of RCWP were ordained by male Catholic bishops in 2002 in Germany along the shores of the Danube River. The Roman Catholic Church holds that apostolic succession is when priests are ‘in direct succession, Bishops to Priests, traced back in a direct line to Jesus’s Apostles’ (Bertelsmann 2019:3). It follows that once a person is ordained, the action is irreversible. In this context, ordained women claim that since RCWP’s first women were ordained by bishops with apostolic succession in the Roman Catholic Church, all their ordinations that follow are valid (Bertelsmann 2019:3). However, the church does not recognize the RCWP ordinations; hence, those who seek such ordinations and those who support them are excommunicated (Hunt 2009:12; Bertelsmann 2019:3).

Russell’s observation is of great significance, she suggests that the Movement of Women ordination in South Africa can raise awareness of ordained women and men concerning the sexism in their churches (Russell 1987:37-38).

African women’s theologies, critical in the life of a Christian woman, are noted by Phiri as important in bringing to light the Christian tendencies that continuously oppress women (2004:21). For her African women’s theologies ‘pay attention to liberating messages from scripture’ and the gospels are ‘seen and read from a woman’s perspective to enlighten their role in the struggle for human dignity and Christian womanhood –particularly the stories of women in the bible and their life-giving encounter with Jesus and his response to women in the gospels’ (:21). African women are encouraged to look up to Jesus who liberates humanity, especially women from all forms of oppressive structures such as patriarchy. Their theologies play a critical role in challenging Christian churches to be more inclusive in ecclesial ministries and decision-making structures and work together with women to expose the evils of patriarchy (Phiri 2004:22). However, some African women theologians accuse the churches of using the bible as a tool for the oppression of women. For example, Oduyoye (2002) contends that ‘although the Christian heritage of the biblical, prophetic pronouncement has served Africa well, oppressive strands of the same bible do reinforce the traditional

social-culture oppression of women' (:176). Thus, critical questions should be raised whether African churches should continue to base their theology on foreign terminologies, using outdated exegetical methods that promote an uncritical use of biblical texts against women. If women have to liberate themselves from patriarchy and sexism, they have to study theology, engage with biblical text and interpret the bible for themselves (Oduyoye 2002:191).

Pillay suggests that attempts in ecumenism in Africa, South Africa included, need to pay particular attention to women and children, as these are the most marginalized populations in society. He believes that the non-inclusion of women in church leadership structures, in spite of them being the majority and hardworking, is to be seriously challenged. Hence, ecumenical bodies are encouraged to take into consideration a balanced presence of male and female in their general councils, which is a great challenge, as most churches have men in leadership positions. Certainly, one agrees with Pillay that the inclusion of women in ecumenical structures is a matter of justice if ecumenical endeavours are to be relevant in Africa (Pillay 2015:12).

6.2. Theological Conclusions

The study notes significant theological conclusions. It brings out some reflections on the nature of priesthood as a representation of Christ, it also discusses the importance of complementarity of sexes in ministry as well as the views of some theological thinkers on the church's humble nature towards the sacraments and the consideration of women's dignity in Christian churches. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council called for renewal in the church. *Unitatis Redintegratio* states that 'Christ summoned the church to continual reformation as she sojourns here on earth' (UR #6). In the same document we see the Council suggesting ecclesial renewal, stating that this is a clear direction to achieving Christian unity (UR #6). During the same council, active participation of the laity in liturgical celebrations was encouraged (SC #11). The AUSCP indicates that at this historical moment a full participation of the faithful was promoted. Men and women were both allowed to serve as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, as lectors, altar servers, prayer leaders and sacristans. However, further renewal is needed (AUSCP: 2019:19). *Sacrosanctum Concilium* highlights that 'the council—desires that where necessary the rites be carefully and thoroughly revised in light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigour to meet the circumstances and needs of modern times' (SC#2). Further in the document we read that the liturgy has the power to encourage and strengthen the capabilities of the believers to actively preach the word of God (SC#2). This poses as a

reminder for the church to recognize the status of women in the church. This can be effected in the use of inclusive gendered language in liturgical books and by permitting women to preach the gospel during liturgical celebrations. This was encouraged in *Lumen Gentium* when it stated the rights and duties of the laity. Here the Council Fathers opened up ministries for men and women. The institutional church was no longer a perfect society, but defined itself as a people of God, the ordained and non-ordained journeying together as pilgrims towards their eschatology. The document justifies this participation in the serving mission of the church when it states, ‘through their baptism and confirmation all are considered to the apostolate by the Lord himself’ (LG3#3).

This statement suggests that by virtue of their baptism all the faithful are eligible to share in the life and well-being of the church at all levels. Certainly, one would agree that reading the signs of the times advocated by the Second Vatican Council (GS #4) in today’s world is critical. Society has appreciated the leadership that women have demonstrated in all aspects of life. The church fails to recognize not only the dignity of women by excluding them from leadership positions, but also the calls for equality of all people. Wijngaards (2001:182) concedes that one critical area that the church needs to seek afresh is approaches in having significant discussions regarding women’s ordination. The exclusion of women from the ministerial priesthood not only destroys the church, but also wounds the dignity of women ‘as daughters of God and members of Christ’ (:182); ‘by devaluing one half of God’s people, it misrepresents the church as the sacrament of ‘communion’ with God and union among all people’ (Wijngaards 2001:182).

Theologians such as Galot have given a theological explanation to Jesus’s decision to choose only men as priests. For example, in order to justify male priesthood Galot quotes John 17:18. In this text we read, ‘As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world’ (Galot 2007: 2). He explains that this is the reason Jesus chose only males as his disciples so that his own priestly mission can be linked to that of his disciples. It follows that Jesus being sent by God his Father becomes the reason for his sending of the disciples. Hence, one notices the similarities that occur between the two missions as being complemented by the disciples relating to Jesus as his representatives (Galot 2007: 3). By him giving the mandate to his disciples to pasture his flock, and by entrusting to them the task of celebrating the Eucharist in his name, Jesus willed that his disciples act in his name and bear a representative role. Here, it means that the restriction of priesthood only to males should be understood in reference to Christ and the mystery of the Incarnation: ‘Christ who was distinct in that

mystery, assumed a mission to which authority was attached to become the head of the body' (Galot 2007:3). Consequently, this calls on a priest to follow the example of Christ and perform a role of leadership. As a shepherd he is expected to lead the entire flock not only for his own merit, but in the name of Jesus Christ as the head of the church, his body. Because the male gender was chosen for the Incarnation, so the same gender is associated to the priestly ministry (Galot 2007:3). This is the thought reflected in *Inter Insigniores*, arguing from 'natural resemblance', the document reads:

The whole sacramentary economy is in fact based upon natural signs, on symbols imprinted on the human psychology: 'sacramental signs', says Saint Thomas, represent what they signify by 'natural resemblance'. The same natural resemblance is required for persons as for things: when Christ's role in the Eucharist is to be expressed sacramentally, there would not be this 'natural resemblance' which must exist between Christ and his minister if the role of Christ were not taken by a man: in such a case it would be difficult to see in the minister the image of Christ. For Christ himself was and remains man (#5).

Rakoczy argues that this emphasis on the maleness of Jesus jeopardizes women's salvation (2020:2).

In this debate one agrees with Paterson that if priesthood carries a representative role, male and female priests represent Christ in two ways. Firstly, in its historical form, priesthood represents the historical Jesus as claimed by the gospels and witnessed in the apostolic traditions. In this context the ordained ministry has a critical role in proclaiming the gospels in the changing circumstances of the world. Secondly, the 'ordained person represents to the church the eschatological Christ who beckons all humanity into a future union with God' (Paterson 1989:32). A similar representation occurs when a priest also represents the people of God to other church communities and to the wider society. O'Gara (1998:140) adds that actually this understanding of representation has guided the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches on ordained ministry when they indicated in ARCIC that, ministerial priesthood does not only represent the Christian communities but are also representatives of Christ to the church community (:140). It follows then that this representation is rendered irrelevant when half of humanity is excluded from its representative function (:32). Women by virtue of their baptism are brought into priestly ministry in the same manner as men (Paterson 1989:33).

Theologians such as Maloney are of the opinion that the Roman Catholic Church's refusal of ordination to women should be seen as the church's acknowledgement of its unworthiness

and its total dependence on Christ. In this context, an understanding is that sacraments are not instituted by the church, but by Christ; therefore, the church has no control over them. It follows that in its humble state, the church realizes that it is confronted with something greater than itself. Hence, the hesitance of the church in ordaining women should be accepted as a sign of the church's dependence on Christ (Maloney 1981:447). Ministry should not be equated to ordained priesthood because it is beyond valid sacraments. Rakoczy (2020) observes that what has necessitated the exclusion of women to full participation in significant roles in the church is the strong link that has been made between ordination and jurisdiction. She writes that women are prevented from holding leadership positions because the church has created a strong link between jurisdiction and ordination (:1). She calls upon Pope Francis to separate the existing link between ordination and jurisdiction that has fostered the exclusion of women from taking up important roles in the church (2020:1). In *Apostolica Actuositatem*, was clear on its inclusion of women in the apostolic life of the church. In this statement, the Second Vatican Council observed that in modern times, women have taken a leading role in every sphere of life in society, this gives them the power to actively engage and participate in many forms of pastoral activities in the church (AA #9). Maloney asserts that the church is already implementing this by selecting men and women as Eucharistic ministers (1981:447). In this, both religious women and lay women are performing complementary roles in the liturgical and social life of parishes, bringing their femininity and giftedness to the gospel which men cannot (Maloney 1981:448). Furthermore, Galot offers his opinion that, concerning women's involvement in the pastoral activities in the church, this should not be based on women being granted ordination, but the concern should be on how ecclesial communities could widely open up avenues for the participation of women. According to Oduyoye, this evolving of other 'forms of ministry' (:177) will make use of women's talents, realized in mothering, motherhood and the organisation of homes (Oduyoye 2002:177). The women belong to the priesthood of all believers and within ecclesial structures women should perform pastoral functions suitable to their personality. Here complementarity of sexes becomes important if it includes women in the service of the church. Women have a special role in the mystery of the incarnation, for it is through a woman that the Son incarnate came into the world. Thus, this maternal role should not only be seen in the importance of Mary the mother of Jesus in the life of the church, but also this role is manifested in the many activities women perform in the church. The complementary aspect finds its climax in Jesus commissioning Mary Magdalene as the first apostle to witness to the risen lord as witnessed in the four gospels (Galot 2007:4; Fiorenza 1995:122).

Certainly, one agrees that by the risen Lord entrusting his mission to Mary Magdalene, it should indicate to everyone that priestly ministry given to male disciples should not be exercised without a complementary role of women attached to it. Consequently, if this complementarity were to be effective, it would have to break down all the bias and perspectives that portray women as inferior and all barriers that prevent men and women from working as one (Galot 2007 :4-5). For feminist theologians the model of ‘discipleship of equals’ is an egalitarian model that promotes women’s liberation from all the evils of patriarchy. This concept discourages all forms of power and control and fosters an understanding of power as one of empowerment, as power of relationality, empathy, sensitivity, presence and compassion (Grey 2002:3; Fiorenza 1993:221). Certainly, one would agree that this is where reception in ecumenical dialogue within churches plays a significant role, in which traditions from the past reintroduced in the church together with new developments need the approval of all believers. This is what is called the *sensus fidelium* in the Catholic Church’s own understanding as a necessary requirement for the doctrine of infallibility. Concerning the ordination issue, reception can prove to be a challenge if half of humanity is excluded from the debates (Paterson 1989:31).

Theological thinkers have suggested that if the Catholic Church make a deliberate move and ordain women, one important and possible way forward to incorporate women into the ordained ministry is to consider the reintroduction of deaconesses where theological implications are less serious, as this may address the present difficulties of excluding women totally from sacramental life (Maloney 1981:448; Galot 2007:5). Dulles concedes that:

While the equal dignity of men and women is clearly established in official teaching, it remains to be shown how the true worth and talents of women can be adequately represented and utilized if women are not eligible for priestly and episcopal orders. The question whether women can be ordained to the diaconate requires further exploration (Dulles 1996: 14).

Seemingly, the Roman Catholic Church authorities are open to debates concerning the ordination of women to permanent deacons (Ronan 2007:13). Rakoczy (2020) observes that discussions with regard to women deacons have currently been held. According to her, Pope Francis has on two occasions commissioned groups to study the issue. For example, in 2016, he appointed six men and six women to examine the possibility of ordaining women as ‘permanent deacons’ (2020:1). Although the members failed to reach a conclusion as to whether women can be ordained as deacons or not, they made their submissions to Pope Francis in May 2019. According to Rakoczy, the response of Pope Francis to the

commission's report was of closing the door to women deacons, although the matter attracted much positive response from the Christian communities themselves. Pope Francis holds that the role of women will be compromised if they are promoted to ordained ministry. In this context, women in the Catholic Church mirrors the role of Mary who is obedient and receptive. Thus, the Pope stated that women greatly contribute to the wellbeing of the church according to their capabilities as they mirror and reflect the virtues of Mary, 'the mother', a guide 'into the inmost structure of the church' (2020:9). Indeed, this reflects the hidden ministry of women where men take a leading role, but women remain on the receiving end as assistants. Certainly one notices a dualistic approach to ministry in the Catholic Church where ordination and participating in making decisions in church structures are strongly linked; celibate male priests are the only ones who can perform leadership functions and make decisions, hence apostolic activities pertaining to women 'do not and cannot involve ecclesial leadership' (2020:9). Certainly, women in the Catholic Church who feel called to ordained ministry have been hindered from achieving their vocations. However, Rakoczy observes that in the second instance, heeding the calls and suggestions from the Amazon Synod held in October 2019 in Rome, the Pope re-appointed the commission on the 26th May 2020, comprising five men and five women who are led by a cardinal as president and an ordained priest as their secretary; unfortunately, the commission excludes representation from the African, Asian and the Latin American countries, as it only has members from Europe and the United States of America (Rakoczy 2020:1).

Women's ordination as an ecumenical issue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches raises further implications not only between them, but also among other Christian churches. This is so because if the Roman Catholic Church were to start ordaining women, new obstacles will emerge between them and the ancient churches of the East (Dulles 1996:11), The Orthodox churches would condemn the Catholic Church of conceding to liberal Protestant understandings of ministry (Dulles 1996:11). Similarly, allowing women to ordained ministry in the Anglican Church has fostered ecumenical relations with the Protestants churches (Paterson 1989:31). Dearie (2017) observes that current developments in the Greek Orthodox Church reveal that it has moved to ordain women as deacons. Following the decision made by Patriarch Theodoros II and the Greek Orthodox, the Orthodox Liturgical theologians expressed their support towards this development, when they wrote;

We respectfully support the decision of the Patriarchate of Alexandria to restore the female diaconate, thus giving flesh to an idea that has been

discussed and studied by pastors and theologians for decades, “nine theologians from theological schools and seminaries of the United States and Greece said in a statement...” (:3).

The reinstatement of the female diaconate does not constitute an innovation, as some would have us believe, “the theologians said, ‘but the revitalization of a once functional, vibrant, and effectual ministry...’” (:3).

In February 2016, Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and Africa ordained five women to the diaconate in the Republic of the Congo, with a view to help in mission stations of the churches (Dearies 2017:3).

The study has established that although the issue of women’s ordination remains a divisive matter between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, it has not caused any new divisions between them. The opinion that if women are denied sacramental priesthood, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Provinces that do not ordain women should not only recognize and praise women for their many contributions made to the life of the church must be endorsed; they ought to take radical measures to include women in decision-making processes at all levels of church structures if the churches wish to promote the dignity of women and their status as equal partners in proclaiming the gospels to a contemporary society which badly needs them.

6.3. Conclusion

This chapter is contextual. It began by exploring the ecumenical activities of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in South Africa. By investigating the ecumenical dialogue between the two churches, it was established that although the dialogue did not prioritize the issue of women's ordination, much of their energy was directed to ministry. Also seen is the significant contributions the local commission (ARCSAC) made to the success of the international commission (ARCIC). The chapter reviewed how the position of the Roman Catholic Church to bar women from ordination has led to women taking the issue into their own hands by being ordained through other structures such as the RCWP, consequently facing excommunication. The chapter concludes with some theological reflections, establishing that the Roman Catholic Church through its Second Vatican Council called for renewal in order to read the signs of the times in a changing society. However, it is evident to all that the full implementation of this call is yet to be seen. The chapter also made clear that there are various theological interpretations regarding the reservations of an all-male priesthood. It concludes by advocating that women be given wider opportunities such as ordination to the diaconate. In so doing, a sacramental element would be added to the work which women are already doing in the churches. This would also promote the dignity of women and their status as equal contributors in the life of the church. The next chapter concludes the study. It offers the summary of the findings, limitations and recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

The study attempted to answer the question: How does the current approach to ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches impact issues of gender? It was guided by three objectives: firstly, it sought to explore the current state and focus of the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. Secondly, it attempted to identify if there is any place afforded to questions of gender issues in the ecumenical dialogue between the two churches. Thirdly, it sought to track and examine contributions that might increase visibility of gender issues in ecumenical dialogue for fostering full communion between the two churches.

Chapter one gave a basic introduction to the study, providing the background and context of the study. This chapter reviewed to us how the meeting between the church leaders from both churches marked the beginning of the ecumenical dialogue between them. It reviewed the return position of the separated Christian churches to the Catholic Church before the Second Vatican Council and the shift in its self-understanding in relating to the separated churches and to the outside world after the Second Vatican Council. Its significance was to present the key research question and the sub questions of the study. The chapter highlighted the objectives of the study and also presented the structure of the study. Chapter Two presented the literature review. The chapter brought out scholarly views of theological thinkers who have held serious debated on the topic under study. Chapter three explained the methodology of the study. It discussed the theories that the study has applied. It showed how feminist ecclesiology and African women's theologies as theories have informed the study. In Chapter four the position of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches on the ordination of women was considered. Chapter four focussed on the gendered dimension of ordination. It explored how women's ordination has proved to be a barrier within the ecumenical dialogue between the two churches. Chapter six contextualized the study. It examined the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in South Africa. The chapter concluded with some theological reflections on the study. This chapter attempts to bring out the summary of findings, limitations and possible recommendations for further study.

7.2 Summary of Findings

The question of women's ordination has not only posed ecumenical challenges between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, but has also proved to be a dividing encounter between the two churches and within them. It is self-revealing that the ecumenical dialogue not only between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church, but also with other Christian churches, would not have been possible without the commitment of the PCPCU. The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church before the Second Vatican Council towards ecumenical dialogue was negative. However, the research established that there had been efforts in the Roman Catholic Church on ecumenism activities before the Second Vatican Council in spite of the restrictions imposed by the Catholic Church. One acknowledges the firm commitment of the Second Vatican Council to ecumenical dialogue, which has fostered ecumenical relations with other Christian churches. This had led to the formulation of the ARCIC in January 1970, which has provided a mutual process of growth in the ecumenical journey between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. The research established that ARCIC has extensively discussed gender and sexuality matters; although they still remain divergent matters in the dialogue between the two churches, they have not destroyed their ecumenical relations. Chapter two attests to this reality. In that chapter it was established that ARCIC has made significant contributions towards women's ordination.

The commission traced the origin and clearly explained the nature of the priestly ministry rather than focussing on who can or who cannot be ordained. According to the commission, although practiced in many different ways, those who hold ministerial functions implied to the clergy, such as deacon, priests and bishop were performed in the early church. Like New Testament writings, these ministries have evolved over time and have become a common practice within the wider church (Final Report, Ministry and Ordination #6). Explaining the nature of priesthood, the commission provides the imagery functions of the ministerial priesthood. The priest should portray the characteristics of servanthood, stewardship and be a teacher and guide to his flock (#8); according to the Commission, this ordained ministry has a special and significant role of 'oversight' (*episcopo*) (#9). Here one concludes that the responsibility of oversight is not only exercised by the bishops, but is also extended to the priests.

Focusing on the apostolicity and catholicity of ordination, the commission acknowledged that the vocation to priesthood comes directly from God, in the same manner by which the apostles in the early church were chosen and sent by Jesus, anyone who is ordained to the

priestly office is called and sent by Jesus Christ for the church and to humanity (#14). Turning to 2 Cor 3:5-6, which states that ‘our sufficiency is from God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit’, the commission explains that one qualifies to this ministry by divine intervention: their calling does not only come from Christ but their authority to perform priestly functions are also a gift from God through His Holy Spirit (Final Report, Ministry and Ordination #14). The commission recognized that since the publication of the statement on Ministry and Ordination, there has been an increase in the number of women ordained in the Anglican Church. Bishops who have ordained women in the Anglican provinces maintain that their practice is in accordance with the traditions of the church pertaining to the ordained ministry’ (Final Report, Ministry and Ordination: Elucidation #5). Citing the letter of Pope Paul VI to Archbishop Donald Coggan in 1996, the commission expressed that;

the ordination of women in the Anglican Church has created for the Roman Catholic Church a new obstacle to our communion, it believes that the principles upon which its doctrinal agreement rests are not affected by such ordinations; for it was concerned with the origin and nature of the ordained ministry and not with the question of who can and cannot be ordained (Elucidation #5).

In Authority in the Church III, the commission recognized the important role of all the baptized in the life of the church. Under the heading Solidarity the commission suggested a walking together on the way for every Christian in the life of the church. The Commission defines solidarity as a ‘common way’, one that shows how the faithful ‘indicates the manner by which believers and churches are held together in communion, it express their vocation as people of the way (Acts 9:2) to live, work and journey together in Christ who is the way (Jn 14:6). Thus, calling all the faithful men and women to “walk together in Christ”’ (Gift of Authority III #34).

The third chapter, we saw how feminist ecclesiology can be a tool for transformation in patriarchal ecclesial structures. One would agree that the concept of women-church provide alternative vision of being church. We also saw how the ekklesia of women, while having its roots in the discipleship of equals can prove to be the starting point of the concept of women-church in Christian churches. Similarly, the chapter reviewed how base ecclesial communities as parallel structures can provide spaces for women to discover their spiritual, theology and work for social justice within their church traditions. The importance of feminist ecclesiology lay mostly in it conviction that women are church and have always

been church. Additionally, this chapter presented African women's theologies as having its starting point with women experiences. The significance of African women's theologies as we saw is grounded in its contribution to Christian theology that which exposes the African context rooted in the reality of economic exploitation, political instability and militarism which has caused not only poverty but also religious and cultural implications in the lives of many people in Africa.

In the fourth chapter, we saw how the question of women's ordination is still seen as a dogmatic problem not only in the Roman Catholic Church, but also among conservative Anglicans. The research indicated that women's ordination is not only a divisive issue between the two churches, but also within them. We saw that although the Lambeth Conference resolutions are not binding in the Anglican Church, it has provided direction by opening many paths to women's ordination in the threefold ministries of deaconate, priesthood and *episcopate*; however, this has not come without problems. The lack of unity on this question in the Anglican Church is visible. It was clear from the research in this chapter that the process of reception has helped to reconcile the conservatives who have rejected the ordination of women and the liberals who have accepted the practice in the Anglican Church. Furthermore, the study noted that the Roman Catholic teaching on the exclusion of women from ordination has created serious doubts not only among theological thinkers, but also among church members. Individuals from outside the church have also disagreed on the matter. These oppositions from within and outside the church continue. Certainly, one sees the need for further discernment, tapping into the experience and expertise of church members' giftedness and various vocations, if the church is to be guided by the Holy Spirit on the issue.

In chapter five, it was clear from the correspondence between Rome and Canterbury that it was impossible for the two churches to reach a common agreement on the issue of women's ordination. The research reviewed that the exchange of communication between the Roman Catholic Popes and the Archbishops of Canterbury has pointed mostly to the clarification of the position of each church tradition concerning the matter. The research established that from their dialogue, it is apparent that the Roman Catholic Church, while remaining faithful to the dialogue towards full communion, maintains that the door to women's ordination remains closed, stating that there are serious theological reasons that have prevented them from allowing women into the ministerial priesthood and which the church has no power to change. On the other hand, the Anglican Church continues to ordain women as priests and

bishops, maintaining that there are no theological reasons preventing the ordination of women; it suggests further that the matter remain an open agenda for discussion. The research revealed that while remaining committed to the dialogue, both churches acknowledge that the issue of women's ordination has gravely disrupted progress towards the full visible unity that the two churches desire.

The research showed that women from both churches strongly responded to the issue on women's ordination. For example, in the Roman Catholic Church women have taken the matter into their own hands, from petitioning the church authorities to some bishops being willing to ordain women. Similarly, from the Anglican Church's perspective, women have committed their resources in supporting the presence of women at influential synods and conferences with the aim of fostering the agenda on women's ordination. However, from the research we saw that some among the Anglican women have joined forces with the men and rejected the cause for women's ordination. The research also showed how feminist theologians and African women theologians have noticed the bias of the male-dominant-led churches. They have challenged the exclusion of women not only from ordination, but also from decision-making processes. They both suggest a more inclusive ecclesial space where women can be considered as equals and reclaim full participation in the life of the church.

The research brought out the efforts of the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in the South African context. It was established that although the dialogue at local level did not prioritize the issue of women's ordination, the two churches gave a firm commitment to issues on ministry. We saw how the local ecumenical efforts of ARCSAC made significant contributions to the success of the international commission, ARCIC. This is evident in chapter six, where the research also showed how women's ordination has evolved over time in the Anglican Church in South Africa. In the same South African context, we saw how in the Roman Catholic Church the issue of women's ordination has caused some women to leave the institutional church. The study also showed prominent Catholic women seeking ordination in other Christian denominations in order to nature their vocations. Through a theological reflection the research shows that although the Second Vatican Council called for the reading of the signs of the times in the changing world, it is evident that the full implementation of this call is far from reality. The chapter also demonstrated that the research brought out various theological interpretations regarding the reservation of priesthood to males only. The study also showed how theologians such as Galot have justified the exclusion of women from priestly ministry. According to Galot

denying women ordination was intended by Christ himself who allowed men to priesthood so that his own priestly mission may be linked to the apostles. The study showed that the Eucharist, has been used as a symbol of oppression, when it was explained that Jesus willed that his disciples act in his name and bear a representative role at any Eucharistic celebrations. It also showed that there are many calls from women theologians advocating for the ordination of women to the diaconate in order to add a sacramental dimension to the work the women are already doing in the church. Other feminist thinkers suggest a separation of ordination from jurisdiction in order to allow women to participate in decision-making processes, as this will promote the dignity of women and their status as equal contributors in the church.

Certainly, one notices the overlap of chapters in meeting the objectives. We can clearly confirm that chapters two and four addressed the first two objectives while chapter four and five as well as three responded to the third objective. We can therefore conclude that the established findings of this research have adequately answered the research question and the objectives of the study. In finalizing the study we can clearly state that it concludes that the teaching of the Catholic Church on the exclusion of women to the priesthood in *Inter Insigniores*, which is reaffirmed in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, has been highly contested by men and women theologians within and outside the Roman Catholic Church. The study also concludes that although ordination of women has brought about ecumenical implications in the dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, it has not caused new divisions between them. The study concludes that the notion of receptive ecumenism is key in the dialogue between the two churches as it provides an opportunity for each tradition to learn from the giftedness of the other.

This study contributes to the many voices calling for the inclusion of women in decision-making processes at all levels of church structures, if churches are to promote the dignity of women and their status as equal partners in witnessing to the world. In order to achieve this, firstly the church should consider giving women wider opportunities such as ordination to the diaconate. This corresponds to the thinking of Archbishop Donald Borders of Baltimore as cited by Kauffman (2011). According to Kauffman, Archbishop Borders notes the negative effects of the conservative church on women's progress in 'social and political' areas of society when he exclaimed, 'If we speak of women apart from the mission and ministry of the whole church, we fail both women and the people of God' (:49). The Archbishop strongly stated that 'if the church is to continue to make a difference in the world, "women must enter

into decision and policy-making and find acceptable leadership roles within the church”. ‘This includes their presence on diocesan councils and boards, as well as “national councils, international synods, liturgical commissions, boards of education and policy making bodies”’ (:49). Secondly, the church should consider separating the existing link between ordination and jurisdiction that has fostered the exclusion of women from taking on significant roles in the churches that do not ordain them.

7.3. Limitations and Recommendations of the study

This thesis was a desktop research and therefore the study relied heavily on the available literature. The initial plan was to consider a twofold approach which would have included a qualitative study, especially on the contextual part. However, the study was restricted to a desktop because of the prevailing corona-virus pandemic whose conditions prevented a qualitative study. Engaging in a qualitative study on the contextual section would have enriched the research; it was limited to women’s ordination in the dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. It will be of great interest for a study on their ecumenical stand on ethical matters. The study revealed a firm commitment towards ecumenical dialogue from the local churches in the USA, European countries and South Africa; from this study, one encourages more African Bishops Conferences to engage in similar ecumenical dialogue emulating the set example of the South African Bishops from both churches.

Another conclusion from the study is that many women advocating for priesthood and being ordained as women priests are of European origin; it would be interesting to conduct a similar study targeting African women in order to obtain their views about the ordination of women in the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church. It would be of great importance to engage in further research with the women who are already ordained priests so that their experiences of serving in a male-dominated sphere are analysed. The study revealed that the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches has entered its third phase, ARCIC III, which began in 2011 with one of its objectives to continue discussions on ethical issues. It would be interesting to conduct a study in order to establish how further debates have evolved on ethical issues. Another important similar study would be to conduct research on the ecumenical dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian churches on gender issues.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical clearance certificate



Miss Petronella Bwalya Bweupe (219087970) School Of Rel Phil & Classics Pietermaritzburg

Dear Miss Petronella Bwalya Bweupe,

Protocol reference number: 00008751

Project title: A Theological Analysis of the Ecumenical Dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church on Gender and Sexuality: A Case Study of Women Ordination.

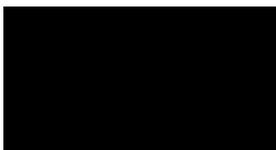
Exemption from Ethics Review

In response to your application received on, your school has indicated that the protocol has been granted **EXEMPTION FROM ETHICS REVIEW**.

Any alteration/s to the exempted research protocol, e.g., Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment/modification prior to its implementation. The original exemption number must be cited. For any changes that could result in potential risk, an ethics application including the proposed amendments must be submitted to the relevant UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The original exemption number must be cited. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years. I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours sincerely,



ProfPhippe Marie Berthe Raoul Denis Academic Leader Research
School Of Rel Phil & Classics

Appendix 2: Turnitin report

Appendix 3: Editing confirmation letter



Editing Confirmation

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30/11/2020

Report on dissertation by: Petronella Bwalya Bweupe

Dissertation title: A theological analysis of the ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches on gender and sexuality: The case of women's ordination

This serves to confirm that the above document (reference list excluded) was edited by members of the KZN Language Institute's professional English language editing team. The document was returned to the author with tracked changes and comments intended to correct errors and clarify meaning. It was the author's responsibility to accept or reject these changes and to attend to issues raised.

Please note that the final, corrected version of the document was not proofread by an editor from the KZN Language Institute.


Ms G. Coertze *MSocSc (Culture, Communication and Media Studies)*
Outsourced Editing Manager


Ms J. Kerchhoff *BEd (Hons), MA (Applied Language Studies), CELTA*
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