

Catholics to launch shelter for Anglicans on Jan. 1

by [Daniel Burke](#)

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(RNS) A new Roman Catholic structure for Anglican converts in the United States will be formally launched on Jan. 1, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington announced Tuesday (Nov. 15).

The structure, technically called an ordinariate, will function like a non-geographic diocese. Converting congregations will be allowed to retain certain Anglican liturgical and ecclesiastical traditions, such as married priests. Married priests cannot become bishops, however.

Two Anglican parishes -- in Fort Worth, Texas, and Bladensburg, Md. -- have already converted in anticipation of the ordinariate, which Wuerl is guiding.

It is unclear how many Anglicans (called Episcopalians in the U.S.) will join the new structure. Catholic expert Rocco Palmo, author of the blog *Whispers in the Loggia*, estimated the total to be 2,000 lay people and 100 clergy.

Thus far, 67 Anglican clergy have applied for ordination as Catholic priests, and 35 have received initial approval from the Vatican, Wuerl told the semiannual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore.

Following England, which created an Anglican ordinariate in January, the U.S. unit will be the second since Pope Benedict XVI extended an unprecedented welcome to Anglicans in 2009. Australia is also expected to create an ordinariate in 2012.

Many of the converts are upset by changes in Anglican churches, including the ordination of women, gays and lesbians.