

Dear Bishops and Archbishops,

We write to you from a broad coalition of those who share a call to ordained ministry in the Church of England. We include people within the discernment process, in training, and those in their diaconate year. At the time of writing we span ten training institutions and twenty-six dioceses. This group draws men and women from varied backgrounds including the HTB and New Wine networks, conservative evangelicals and traditional Anglicans, all of whom care deeply for and are heavily invested in the Church of England.

As those in whom you have invested, who you are preparing for decades of ministry, we need to convey our grief in seeing the current direction of travel concerning the Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF).

We are united in our belief that the PLF and accompanying response from the Bishops about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage (20th January 2023) indicate a departure from the historic teachings of the Christian faith. The faith we have inherited through the word of God and the articles, formularies and liturgies of the Church of England is precious to us. We, including those among us for whom same sex attraction is a live issue, rejoice in Jesus' clear and life-giving teaching on matters of sex and marriage. Our name 'Orthodox Ordinands' reflects our shared desire to live out this historic teaching and support one another in following Christ's call.

Both the PLF and the indicated guidance leave us feeling vulnerable and concerned. We anticipate fracturing across the Church of England if they are implemented. We fear harm to the church's gospel witness if they proceed.

Even now we see early signs of damage in the reduced numbers going forward for ordained ministry. Within this group, as well as beyond it, many being ordained this past summer wrestled with whether to proceed - some could not. There are candidates in discernment, grappling with how to continue. The fact that many signing this letter wanted to do so privately illustrates the vulnerability experienced by orthodox ordinands, candidates and curates within the church. We expect this uncertainty to increase if the prayers are introduced and have serious concerns about the impact for orthodox laity and clergy alike.

We long for the Church of England to stand firm on the word of God and in the faith inherited. Please lead us in this. We hope that you hear the cost of PLF for our generation of ordinands and future ordinands too. If the PLF are introduced we must convey the need for full protections to ensure that orthodox ministers can continue to faithfully serve those entrusted to the church's care. However, we ask that you show great care to do nothing that will undermine the doctrine of the church. We pray that you will alter this course of action. We ask that the Prayers of Love and Faith are not brought into use.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Mayo and Matt Porter, on behalf of Orthodox Ordinands.

Seventy-eight (78) individuals currently in training have privately signed in agreement with this letter. This allowed us to be united, without risk to those who fear negative consequences to their continued time at college, curacies and beyond. The list is verifiable. We sign on their behalf.

“Orthodox Ordinands”

Who are we?

“Orthodox Ordinands” is an informal coalition of those discerning or training for ministry in the CofE who are troubled by the current trajectory set out by the House of Bishops. We have grown to include discernment candidates, ordinands and deacon-curates from across the country. We include men and women from a variety of church backgrounds and traditions. We meet monthly on zoom and include men and women from a variety of church backgrounds and traditions. We would love you to join us.

Why the letter?

Our group primarily functions as a meeting place for us to pray for one another. Yet as the conversation around the prayers progressed we felt compelled to speak. The letter was sent to the House of Bishops on the night of Sunday 8th October (College of Bishops and Archbishops Council the following week.) The decision to sign it together privately enabled us to speak with one voice. The letter conveys the collective cry of our hearts. Our hope is that it speaks for others in training, we'd like to invite you to sign it.

How can I sign the letter?

The letter is now public and open to more signatures. If you are a *discernment candidate*, *ordinand* or *deaconed-curate* in the CofE we would love to invite you to add your name to the original 78. You can do so by following this link: <https://forms.gle/bAZFinVifbqjKjNz5>.

If you are not represented in three categories above, but would like to reach out with your stories, please do! For further questions, press enquiries, queries about this letter, our group or anything else please contact us at orthodoxordinands@gmail.com

Yours in Christ,
Orthodox Ordinands.