

Church of England head meets Pope to protest mass conversion

The head of the Church of England has personally confronted the Pope over attempts by the Catholic Church to convert disillusioned Anglicans.

Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, voiced his protest at a meeting at the Vatican Saturday with Pope Benedict XVI following the Pope's offer last month to arrange a mass conversion of Church of England followers.

The meeting, which lasted barely 20 minutes, was described by the Vatican as 'cordial', focussing on 'recent events affecting relations between the Catholic church and the Anglican communion'.

Orthodox members of the Church of England, which is the main Christian denomination in Britain and commands a worldwide following of some 80 million, are disillusioned over the Church's recent attempts to modernise.

Traditional Anglicans object to the ordination of women and gay men as priests and bishops, which is still banned in the more orthodox Catholic Church.

A spokeswoman for Williams said after their meeting: 'Obviously the archbishop expressed concern (at the Pope's decree announcing the special arrangements) and the way it happened. The Pope listened in a friendly spirit.'

Vincent Nichols, the Catholic archbishop of Westminster, said Friday that opposition to women priests was not grounds for conversion to Catholicism.

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