



## News and Current Events :: Bishop defends decision to ordain transsexual woman as a priest

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Bishop defends decision to ordain transsexual woman as a priest

Assistant curate Sarah Jones, 44, from Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire, spent the first 29 years of her life living as a man.

Evangelical group Evangelical Alliance said there was no "Christian acknowledgement" of gender realignment.

But the Right Reverend Anthony Priddis said Ms Jones - being ordained on Saturday - was "made and loved by God".

What's important is that she's a person made by God, loved by God and given gifts by God who feels that she's called to be a priest

Ms Jones was a "superb candidate" who had the gender realignment surgery "many years ago - long before she explored the possibility of being ordained", Bishop Priddis said.

The issue of gender dysphoria was "understood a lot more clearly in this 21st Century as we understand lots of things more clearly", he said.

"Gender realignment surgery helps address that issue and it's about bringing mind and body into wholeness.

"I see this as something restorative and healing.

"What's important is that she's a person made by God, loved by God and given gifts by God who feels that she's called to be a priest and that's a call that's been checked out by the church rigorously."

But Don Horrocks, of the Evangelical Alliance, said the Bible made it "absolutely clear that God created human beings as a male and female".

"Therefore there is absolutely no Christian acknowledgement of the 21st Century human idea that it's possible somehow for a person to take charge of their own destiny and to decide what their own sexuality is," he added.

"Someone who does that... is therefore actually perpetuating an illusion or masquerading and any Christian is clearly not going to be supportive of someone who purports to be what they're not."