



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate

November 6, 2007

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Grace to you and peace. I am writing you at this time following the events of the Presentment and Inhibition of the Rt. Rev. Charles Bennison, with the hope of clarifying some points that have been raised both within and outside the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

To address questions of discipline for any member of the clergy, detailed procedures set forth in our canons designate the steps to be taken in disciplinary situations. Trials are based on "Presentments" or charges issued by the review panels. In this specific case, public conversations in Spring of 2006, followed by a public forum in Fall of 2006, led then-Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold to pass information about Bishop Bennison to the Title IV Review Committee. This committee, which is formed by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and serves as a Grand Jury for the Church, after reviewing all the material before them, issued a Presentment and delivered it to my office.

Speaking with Bishop Bennison before any of this was made public, I then was obligated to Inhibit him due to the nature of the Presentment. In doing so, I first consulted with the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Pennsylvania to request their support of an Inhibition. Such an Inhibition, in the words of the canons, means: "To cease all Episcopal, ministerial, and canonical acts, until after the Judgment of the Court of Trial of a Bishop with respect to the foregoing presentment becomes final." Representatives of my office met with the Standing Committee the week before the Diocesan Convention to consider the facts of the case, determine if they would offer their consent to the Inhibition, and review the duties and responsibilities of the Ecclesiastical Authority. The Trial Court is now in the process of organization for the upcoming trial, and a meeting with the Diocese is being scheduled with representatives from my office within the next few weeks.

In all of this, our Church governance system, not unlike that of the American system, exists to prevent the misuse of authority or, when it is found to occur, to address it in ways that will honor God, and treat with respect both the person against whom a Presentment is presented and those persons who present it. My prayers, and the prayers of many, are with you, the people of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, in this difficult time. I remain

Your servant in Christ,

Katharine Jefferts Schori