

Mailing

#347

Title of the mailing *Standing Committee Statement--August 16, 2010

Body text of the mailing *

An Open Letter to the People of the Diocese of Pennsylvania
From the Standing Committee of the Diocese
August 16, 2010
Let us pray for the Church:

Gracious God, we pray for your holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it, where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer, page 816

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We write to share our thoughts in response to Bishop Bennison's publicly stated intention to return and resume his responsibilities as Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. We are grateful for the counsel that many of you have offered. We listened with care to the words spoken by many of you at our Cathedral this past Sunday and are grateful for your prayers. We write to you with humility and conviction.

We grieve the pain endured by the victim of abuse, and by her family; our prayers are with her and with all who suffer.

We are committed to nurturing and supporting the Mission of the Church and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the last two+ years, the leadership and congregations of this Diocese have adopted procedures and practices that stress transparency, openness, and shared responsibilities in the administration of the Diocese and in our lives together as a Christian community.

In particular, we lift up the good work that has begun by the members of this Diocese and are committed to their continuation. We call upon Bishop Bennison to honor these and other new relationships and the work that has begun over these past two+ years.

- The strong pastoral support to the people of the Diocese by Bishops Bartlett, Lee and Michel through visitations, the ordination process and the care and nurturing of individuals
- The Consultation teams that are working with parishes in distress led by Bishop Allen Bartlett
- The Mission Strategy Planning Commission established by Convention 2009
- The newly developed diaconate program
- The strong youth program and the development of City Camp at St. James the Less
- The major review of the diocesan canons by the Constitution and Canons Committee
- The financial controls and transparency
- The regularly held meetings of the Council of Deans and the Cathedral Chapter
- The shared leadership by so many more members of this Diocese

In the last two+ years, the elected and appointed leaders of this Diocese have been nurturing open working relationships within the diocesan bodies of which they are a part – e.g., on Diocesan Council, the Committee for Finance & Property, etc. – and among and between those bodies. We have, in effect, been weaving a broad web of relationships; building trust and sharing responsibilities so that we may work as one body in Christ. We shall continue and nurture this fragile web, and we invite all in this Diocese to participate – through your congregation, your deanery, and in the councils of the Church.

We recognize our differing perspectives and experiences as a source of blessing and opportunity, not of weakness. We are committed to continuing our good work and relationships together, to clarifying our vision and mission, supporting the weak and vulnerable among us, and seeking new ways to proclaim the love of God and the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We are committed to ensuring the spiritual, emotional and physical safety of all within this Diocese and all whom we seek to serve in the name of Christ. We are committed to serving the weak and most vulnerable in our midst, those who are oppressed, and the children and youth of our Diocese.

We do not believe that Bishop Bennison has the trust of the clergy and lay leaders necessary for him to be an effective pastor and leader of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, nor that he can regain or rebuild the trust that he has lost or broken.

We believe that it would be in the best interest of the Diocese that Bishop Bennison not resume his exercise of authority here.

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Pennsylvania:

Mr. Christopher Hart; Ms. Jo Ann Jones, The Reverend Ledlie Laughlin (Member of the Executive Committee); The Reverend Glenn Matis (President of the Standing Committee and member of the Executive Committee), Mr. Norman McCausland; Ms. Arlene McGurk (Secretary of the Standing Committee and member of the Executive Committee); The Reverend Isaac Miller; The Reverend D. Joy Segal; and Ms. D-L. Wormley
The Reverend Samuel Adu-Andoh is in Ghana and was unable to sign the statement.

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