



✠ Regarding the Bishop Search ✠

To the people of the Diocese of San Diego:

Grace and peace in Jesus Christ. I give thanks for the hard and careful work that has been taking place in this diocese as you seek your next diocesan bishop. The search process continues for several more months, and we look forward to the ordination and installation of the fifth Bishop of San Diego in June next year.

This is a time in the wider church when more than twenty dioceses are seeking bishops, and that has presented challenges. While I believe that people called to the ministry of a bishop are called into a particular diocesan context, it has nevertheless been a challenge across The Episcopal Church when 20+ dioceses are each seeking 20+ candidates for the episcopate.

The Bishop Nominating Committee has worked faithfully and diligently to provide a group of nominees to the Standing Committee. I was able to meet briefly with the group from whom those nominees were selected, at their discernment retreat, though I was not involved in the selection process. I met several priests, who were earnestly discerning whether or not they were called to this diocese.

A week or so later, the Bishop Nominating Committee forwarded a short list to the Standing Committee, whose duty it has been to judge whether anything in a nominee's history or background might be disqualifying for the office of bishop. The Standing Committee also worked diligently and prayerfully to weigh the realities, and found they could only discern one person to be fully qualified.

The Standing Committee consulted with the Bishop for Pastoral Development (in the Presiding Bishop's Office) and with me about the best way forward. The Committee felt strongly that the Rev. Canon Susan Brown Snook is fully qualified to advance to discernment in the Diocese, and did not want the lengthy and careful work done so far to be lost. The hope is that the petition process (now open, until 16 November) will provide sufficient opportunity for others who might feel called to this work in San Diego to apply and be considered.

Let me say that there is precedent in The Episcopal Church for aspects of this process. When I was in the election process in the Diocese of Nevada in 2000, that Standing Committee received several petition candidates, and said openly that they would not consent if a particular one were elected. The individual concerned had



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not been part of the Search Committee's discernment, but had exhibited behaviors historically that the Standing Committee considered disqualifying.

There has also been a recent election in which a single candidate was offered for consideration. Some years ago, the Diocese of South Carolina elected a person who did not receive consents from the wider church because of concerns about the bishop-elect's intentions to remain in The Episcopal Church. The Diocese continued its process, and again elected that person, who eventually did receive consent from the wider church.

This is a lengthy process, with multiple steps that include careful discernment by different groups in and beyond the diocese. It may be frustrating, surprising, or annoying when the steps produce unexpected results. That is often God calling us to growth, new insights, repentance, or greater care in our actions. I am confident that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead us into God's new future, if we are faithful. I encourage you to pray for each person involved in this process, to assume and expect that God will show us the way and help us discover the gifts of every individual who will be considered for election. Each and every person involved in this process has abundant God-given gifts. Several may have the gifts needed to serve as bishop in this season of the Diocese of San Diego's life. Your job is to discern who that might be.

Pray, keep an open mind and heart, get to know those who will Walk-About in January, and while you're at it, get to know your fellow Episcopalians in this diocese. God is doing very good things here, thanks to the ministries you and your sisters and brothers have discerned. God's future, God's dream of peace and a healed world, comes among us when we are faithfully engaged in loving God and our neighbors as ourselves.

I give thanks for each and every one of you. May God continue to richly bless your ministry and your discernment.

I remain

Your servant in Christ,
The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Assisting Bishop