

December 8, 2009

TO: The Diocese of West Texas

FROM: Bishops Lillibridge and Reed

As you may be aware, on Saturday, December 5, the Diocese of Los Angeles elected the Rev. Mary D. Glasspool, a partnered lesbian, as one of two bishops suffragan elected in that diocese over the weekend. This election, like all elections to the episcopate, must receive a majority of consents from bishops exercising jurisdiction (that is, diocesan bishops) as well as diocesan Standing Committees of the Episcopal Church within 120 days of the election.

In response to this election, the Archbishop of Canterbury released the following statement on December 6: **“The election of Mary Glasspool by the Diocese of Los Angeles as suffragan bishop elect raises very serious questions not just for the Episcopal Church and its place in the Anglican Communion, but for the Communion as a whole. The process of selection however is only part complete. The election has to be confirmed, or could be rejected, by diocesan bishops and diocesan standing committees. That decision will have very important implications. The bishops of the Communion have collectively acknowledged that a period of gracious restraint in respect of actions which are contrary to the mind of the Communion is necessary if our bonds of mutual affection are to hold.”**

Previously, the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in Columbus, Ohio, in June 2006, passed resolution B033 that called “upon the Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction to exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on the communion.” There was much conversation at this year’s 76th General Convention in Anaheim about whether the actions of the 2009 Convention had repealed B033.

We are mindful of the statement of this summer’s General Convention that acknowledged that “members of The Episcopal Church, as of the Anglican Communion, based on careful study of the Holy Scriptures, and in light of tradition and reason, are not of one mind, and Christians of good conscience disagree about some of these matters” (resolution D025). We reiterate our belief that The Episcopal Church should exercise the restraint called for by the Anglican Communion and, likewise, will not consent to this election.

This election in Los Angeles comes at a time when we are expecting, within the next few weeks, the release of the final draft of the proposed Anglican Covenant, which seeks to guide our common life as a communion of churches. Our diocese, through actions at Diocesan Council and statements from our leadership, has consistently affirmed our support of the requests of the wider Communion in these matters, as well as the ongoing Anglican Covenant process.