



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

The Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker, D.D., *Bishop of Fort Worth*

THE BISHOP'S ORDER UNDER CANON 32 OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH PERTAINING TO "CONTROVERSY BETWEEN RECTOR AND VESTRY" AT CHRIST THE KING EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS

DECEMBER 30, 2008

Canon 32

Section 32.1 When a Rector has been regularly settled in a Parish he shall not be dismissed without the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese.

Section 32.2 In case of a controversy between a Rector and Vestry which cannot be settled by the parties themselves, the parties or either of them, may appeal to the Bishop. The duty of the Bishop shall be to seek to bring the parties to an amicable conclusion; and in such case, the agreement between them, signed by them and attested to by the Bishop, shall have the same force as an order made under Section 32.5 of this Canon.

Section 32.4 If the matter shall not be amicably settled within a reasonable time, not to exceed six (6) months, the bishop shall convene the members of the Standing Committee and shall give notice to the parties to appear before him and them and present their facts and arguments, at such time and place as he may appoint; and he may adjourn and continue the hearing in the matter at his discretion.

Section 32.5 After all hearings as may be called for in Sections 32.2 through 32.4 above are concluded, the Bishop, after consultation with the Standing Committee, shall make such an order in regard to the matter as he may think to be just and for the best interest of the Church. It shall be the duty of the Diocese, the Rector and the Parish, and every member thereof, to submit to and abide by such order as the final and conclusive determination of all matters of difference between them.

INTRODUCTION

At its regular November meeting, a majority of the vestry of Christ the King Episcopal Church in Fort Worth voted to withhold payment of both the diocesan assessment and the amount due on a loan from the diocese for capital improvements. The Rector, the Rev. Jon Jenkins, strongly opposed this action, and certain members of the vestry declared that he was no longer Rector of the parish. Subsequently, a self-selected group of some vestry members met on their own on December 16, in direct violation of diocesan canons governing meetings of a vestry, and took it upon themselves to attempt to remove the Senior Warden, Hans Luthi, and replace him with someone of their own choosing. This same group, by means of an e-mail vote, attempted to change the authorized signatures on the church's bank accounts.

On December 15, 2008, Fr. Jenkins invoked Canon 32, claiming that these actions had created confrontations and divisions both within the vestry and within the congregation as a whole, and appealed to the Bishop for pastoral assistance in addressing the situation.

On December 29, 2008, the Rector and Vestry were to appear before the Bishop and the Standing Committee of the Diocese to present their facts and arguments concerning their differences and problems. The first objective of this meeting was to reach an amicable conclusion to the controversy. Present and participating in the meeting with the Bishop and Standing Committee were Fr. Jon Jenkins, Rector, Hans Luthi, Senior Warden, Steve Murray, Treasurer, and vestry members Julie Stone and Jan Manire. None of the other vestry members attended the meeting, nor did they convey to the Bishop any reason for failing to do so. Also present were attorneys Marshall Searcy and Rickey Brantley, legal counsel to the Bishop.

Following lengthy discussion of the information presented to them, the Standing Committee concurred with the Bishop's decision to issue the following order in this matter.

THE BISHOP'S ORDER

It appears that there are irreconcilable differences between the Rector and certain members of the vestry about the future direction of the parish. It is clear that actions by several vestry members have violated specific provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, and they have thus disqualified themselves from any continuing service on the vestry. The following persons are hereby removed from the vestry, effective immediately: Andy Babbili, Donna Clopton, Tree Raybold, Janice Schattman, and Thelma Zeigler.

I also direct that the Vestry be reconstituted so as to have a total of six members. This number is certainly adequate for a congregation of this size. Hans Luthi and Jan Manire remain members of the vestry, and their terms expire in January of 2010. At the Annual Parish Meeting on January 18, 2009, two persons are to be elected to two year terms and two other persons are to be elected to three year terms.

Conclusion

It is my hope and prayer that the provisions of this canonical order will be the beginning of a process of healing and reconciliation at Christ the King. Everyone in the parish must work together and move forward with a new spirit of unity in Jesus Christ. I stand ready to assist in whatever ways I can in the future.

Given under my seal and signature on this 30th day of December, 2008 A. D. and in the sixteenth year of my episcopate.



+ Jack L. Iker
The Rt. Rev. Jack Leo Iker
Bishop of Fort Worth