

## The Very Rev. Terry Allen White

### Reflections

#### *First Reflection:*

*We ask you to provide your narrative providing some details of the Work History and Ministry Specialties sections of your Profile. Given the limitations of the CDO's Personal Profile's format, the Committee requests that you provide a narrative detailing the sections headed [1] Work History and [2] Ranked Ministry Specialties and Supporting Skill/Experience, and including references to related Continuing Education.*

Since July 1, 1985, I have been engaged in full time parish ministry as a curate, associate rector, vicar, rector, and cathedral dean. I have served congregations located in rural, small town, suburban, and inner city/urban settings. In the last ten years I have served as rector of a suburban parish in a predominantly Jewish community, and currently as dean of an urban cathedral.

Throughout my priesthood I have endeavored to enable the people I have served to live out the Baptismal Covenant by emphasizing the importance of liturgy and music, formation for all ages, pastoral care, outreach and social ministries, and building an inclusive community. As my responsibilities have come to include oversight of a large staff and budget, I have worked to develop the skills needed for administration that effectively supports mission and ministry, and staff colleagues in their work.

I see life-long Christian formation as key to building strong communities, and I have been deeply involved in the creation and implementation of formation plans for all ages. I have introduced Montessori-based programs (Saving Wisdom and Godly Play) into three congregations, developed and participated in junior high and high school programs, and in my current congregation I have worked with a colleague in the area of formation for 20-30 year-olds who are un-churched or new to The Episcopal Church. I enjoy learning as well as teaching and seek to be a student myself by participating in continuing education opportunities annually.

My leadership style most often takes the form of consensus building, encouraging conversation between those of differing viewpoints in order to arrive at the best way to achieve clearly stated goals. However, I also realize that there are times my vocation requires me to walk out front, articulate a vision, and encourage the community to embrace that vision. Walking out front makes one an easy target for criticism, and I have experienced all that comes with taking a position that is healthy and right for a parish which nonetheless elicits strong opposition. Diverse communities of Episcopalians will hold diverse opinions that cannot always be reconciled. I believe in reaching out to those whose opinions have not carried the day to encourage their continued participation in the community's mission even as the community carries out the work they have agreed to do.

I place a high priority on community outreach, from meeting human needs to advocacy. In a former parish we sponsored a low income day care center for Spanish-speaking families. In my present parish we focus on anti-hunger ministries through Episcopal Community Services. We are home to programs providing 400-600 hot meals each day Monday through Friday and a chef-training and catering program. I have led participation in two Habit for Humanity interfaith builds – The House Abraham Builds – with fellow Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations. These programs have also been evangelism tools, bringing clients and un-churched volunteers into the cathedral.

I have learned the importance of good administration in helping the community be more effective in its mission and ministry. I oversaw the creation of the cathedral's first governance policy which has led to greater participation in and ownership of our various ministries. We have also just completed creation of a three-year strategic/mission plan.

A priest is to share in the work of the diocese and wider Church. I have served my dioceses in various ways including as a member of the Standing Committee (vice-president), Commission on Ministry (chair), Episcopal Community Services Board, Liturgical Commission (chair), Companion Diocese Committee, as General Convention deputy, Chaplain to Deacons' School, Ecumenical Officer, and Formation Committee.

### *Second Reflection:*

*The Committee requests that you provide a reflection on the opportunities you see for the Diocese of Kentucky in relation to your personal strengths and interests. We would like to know what opportunities for this Diocese stand out in relation to what you are good at and what you would enjoy doing in your ministry during the next decade.*

Your profile and website describe a diocesan community committed to living out the Baptismal Covenant, and which, through this process of discernment, is being prepared to enter “a new season of Gospel mission in Jesus Christ.” Your profile describes some of the important tools in place – a committed and collegial clergy, a laity eager for ministry and receptive to change, strong finances, and a low level of conflict – as equipping you and your next bishop to live faithfully and prophetically as a Christian community. That description grabs my attention and starts my juices flowing, particularly the phrase “live faithfully and prophetically,” because at this stage in my ordained ministry, those words sum up the essence of the Baptismal Covenant for me.

A diocese that is focused on mission and ministry, open to change and willing to step into new work, can do so because lay and ordained leaders, encouraged by the bishop, have devoted much energy, prayer, time, and driving miles to building relationships of trust with clergy and lay leaders in congregations. Nurturing community for the sake of mission is work I believe is

essential, from being in dialogue with those who disagree with me to working with those eager to be about the work of the Gospel.

Honoring diversity in all its forms as your diocese does is a fruit of living into the Baptismal Covenant. Embracing diversity makes the Church stronger and more effective as we employ the gifts of all our members in our mission. And just as important is the public witness, the prophetic witness, to those beyond our doors that the Episcopal Church sees all people as children of God. I currently live in a region such as yours where the largest bodies of Christians define themselves in part by whom they exclude. As Anglicans we have long held a unique position in the Christian family which challenges extremes of various kinds and creates a generous response to all God's people. This is why I affirm the decisions of the past several General Conventions which have moved us toward the full inclusion of faithful gay and lesbian Episcopalians in the life of the Church, and as a deputy to the last two Conventions have voted for full inclusion.

I see in your profile a genuine desire to balance the needs of the institutional Church with our call to be a servant Church. It is clear by your profile that outreach to local communities and beyond is a mission priority, along with being good stewards of all that previous generations have provided. I believe it is important that dioceses and congregations examine current structures to see if they are the most effective models for enabling mission. Additionally, regularly engaging the diocesan community in mission discernment and planning does much to build enthusiasm for mission. I have engaged two parishes in discernment and long-range planning processes to help focus resources and energy on mission and ministry. These processes resulted in increased excitement and commitment within the community, led to increased resources in terms of time and money, and helped inform the annual budget process.

What I believe is most essential to a faith community – be it congregation or diocese – is a healthy spiritual life flowing from Baptism, nurtured by the Eucharist, and fed through prayer and formation and service to others. You seek a bishop whose life is marked by spirituality and prayerful study. Being faithful to a rule of life enables me to tend to my relationship with God, my family, and my own spiritual and physical health.

Today there are numerous challenges and opportunities facing ordained and lay leaders alike. Yet I am more excited than ever about the mission of the Episcopal Church, and our call to live faithfully and prophetically. Clearly the people of the Diocese of Kentucky are also excited about what God is calling this Church to be and do.

#### *Ordinal Reflections:*

*In selecting a bishop, as in all things, the Church is guided by The Book of Common Prayer. In its liturgy for the Ordination of a Bishop, one finds questions reflecting specific beliefs and commitments required of a bishop-elect (BCP pp. 513, 517-518). Please provide a reflection on each of four themes found in these pages.*

*Theme I - Hearing and Accepting your Call as Bishop*

*Ordinal Questions: Are you persuaded that God has called you as bishop? Will you accept this call and fulfill this trust in obedience to Christ Jesus?*

*Please include: a description of when and how you became aware of your call to the office of bishop. If you feel especially called to this diocese, please write about that. Please also describe an experience in the past in which you sensed that you were being obedient to Christ Jesus' call. Who is Christ Jesus?*

Discernment for the episcopate invites the search committee, and eventually the delegates to the electing convention, along with the candidates at each step of the process, to discern both the call to be a bishop, and the call to exercise such ministry in a particular diocese. The questions begin with, "Is this person perhaps called to be a bishop?" and eventually, if not quickly, becomes, "Is this person perhaps called to be bishop of this diocese?" or in personal terms, "Can I see this person as my bishop?" As a candidate engaged in my own discernment, my questions are similar: "Am I called to be a bishop?" and, "Might I be called to be Bishop of Kentucky?" I find our vision and hopes for the Church are similar in many respects. I see in your profile a people committed to worshipping God and growing in Christ, eager to care for one another and serve your neighbors. I am also drawn to your desire to live faithfully and prophetically, your commitment to being a diverse community which honors the gifts of every Episcopalian, and is open to being challenged and changed by God.

I believe in discernment, and I cringe when I hear, "She/He is running for bishop." While it is no doubt true that at times a priest seeks the miter like a candidate running for political office, no priest should look at an episcopal election as being won or lost. In a true discernment process, the answer is always: "yes." The question discernment seeks to answer is: "Yes to what?"

I recently heard a bishop say, "The difference between being a priest and a bishop is about as great as the difference between being a layperson and a priest." The episcopate is a demanding vocation with a steep learning curve. No matter what gifts one brings to the episcopate, one must also grow into the vocation. I believe such growth is nurtured by peers and mentors, the various resources provided by the College for Bishops, and by the diocesan community one is called to serve. The commitment of members of the diocese to support one's bishop is as important as the bishop's commitment to support the people of his or her diocese in their ministries.

Over the years I have often felt a sense of being obedient to Christ while standing in the midst of difficult and trying times, especially when fear and anxiety have led to conflict, whether due to complex issues such as war or economic stress, or due to a parochial concern. In those times I seek to diffuse anxiety, name fear, and find ways to enable dialogue and the sharing of passionately held views in order to find a way for all people of good will to move forward. In some such

moments Christ has been encountered in new ways. I have seen people holding opposite views on the Iraqi war lead a 12 hour prayer vigil for peace, and those with irreconcilable views on ordaining openly gay clergy agree to disagree in true charity while committing to a common mission. I have also seen people walk out of the community because a piece of liturgical furniture has been moved, and have blessed them on their journey while telling them “the door will always be open to you.” Even when reconciliation has not been possible, I have felt that I have been obedient to Christ, in helping the community come to a decision and move forward in mission and ministry.

### *Theme II – Faith in and Faithfulness to Holy Scripture*

*Ordinal Questions: Do you believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation? Will you be faithful in prayer, and in the study of Holy Scripture, that you may have the mind of Christ? Will you boldly proclaim and interpret the Gospel of Christ, enlightening the minds and stirring up the conscience of your people? Will you be merciful to all, show compassion to the poor and strangers, and defend those who have no helper?*

*Please include: a description of the spiritual practices or disciplines that sustain you. How does Holy Scripture inform your faith? How do you expect to be fed spiritually as bishop? Please write about a time in which you showed compassion to the poor and strangers or defended those who have no helper.*

I was fortunate to have a parish priest who introduced me to a rule of life early in my formation for the priesthood. This rule consists of praying the Daily Office; celebrating or receiving the Holy Eucharist as frequently as possible; meeting regularly with a Spiritual Director, confessor, and colleague group; giving a minimum of 10% of our family income to the Church’s work; and caring for the health of my marriage, family, and self. This self care includes a regular day off, exercise, an annual physical, at least one retreat a year, chasing a golf ball on occasion, and laughing as often as possible.

I have twice made the declaration that “I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation,” and this is how I approach the Scriptures. Michael Johnston’s description in *Engaging the Word* of the three senses or lenses one may use to read Holy Scripture – the literal, historical, and prophetic – accurately describes how I read the Bible. Through the Daily Office, sermon preparation, and leading classes, the Scriptures continue to form me. It is vital that I test my conclusions with the larger community, lest the Scriptures begin to sound an awful lot like me.

If I were a bishop, I would continue to follow my rule of life. I would look to the College for New Bishops, as well as Episcopal colleagues in the Province for support. I would also seek support from non-episcopal and non-Episcopal sources, especially ecumenical and interfaith colleagues,

though I would expect building friendships outside of Church-related connections would be challenging.

In two dioceses I have helped obtain medical benefits for domestic partners of diocesan employees. One experience was in a diocese where the issue was causing division. As chair of the Commission on Ministry, I co-sponsored a resolution making it possible for any congregation to provide such benefits. Opponents feared approval would lead to sanctioning same-gender relationships. Proponents spoke of equality and justice. At pre-convention deanery meetings, as well as in my seconding speech at Convention, I stated that if the Church believed gay and lesbian Episcopalians, lay and ordained, could be called to serve our congregations, then they were entitled to the same benefits as single and married colleagues. Following my speech, Convention went into recess. On the steps of the Cathedral, catching some fresh air, a delegate approached me and asked if I was Father White who had just spoken. I replied, "Yes." The next thing I knew I had been spit upon. As I cleaned my face, I asked, "And you are?" (Humor never hurts at such times.) I was proud the resolution passed.

### Theme III – Supporting Lay and Ordained Ministry

*Ordinal Questions:* As a chief priest and pastor, will you encourage and support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries, nourish them from the riches of God's grace, pray for them without ceasing, and celebrate with them the sacraments of our redemption? Will you sustain your fellow presbyters and take counsel with them; will you guide and strengthen the deacons and all others who minister in the Church?

*Please include:* a description of the ways you have gone about developing relationships with, and perhaps pastoring, the clergy with whom you serve or have served. How do you anticipate exercising your role in calling new priests? How have you supported and nurtured lay ministry?

When I first talked to my rector in 1979 about a possible vocation to the priesthood, there was not a discernment process in my home diocese other than to meet with the bishop. In that interview the bishop said he believed the Church had too many priests and that no one should go to seminary right out of college. Nevertheless, as a college senior the Commission on Ministry recommended me for postulancy. Beginning with my first meeting, and lasting until I was ordained priest, the COM was more adversarial than supportive. The process consisted not only of jumping through hoops, but hoops on fire.

When I entered seminary in 1982, I was one of two juniors who had come directly out of college. At that time many bishops, like mine, encouraged graduating college students to get jobs "in the real world" before entering the ordination process. The result was that most students went on to graduate school or began to earn real money in the real world, and lost their enthusiasm for serving the Church as a priest. Certainly many went on to be active lay leaders in parishes, but the Church went through a perplexing period where it did not encourage young vocations.

Given my COM experience, soon after ordination I offered myself to the discernment and formation processes in dioceses where I served. I spent a number of years on priesthood formation committees as member and chair, worked discernment weekends, served as member and chair of the Commission on Ministry, and as a chaplain to the diocesan Deacons' School. As rector of a parish near a seminary, I was a field education supervisor for 9 years working with 11 seminarians. I have nurtured vocations within my parishes, presenting one parish's first deacon, and so far four priests, for ordination. Currently my parish has two postulants enrolled in study programs. I proactively speak with those of all ages who show signs of a vocation as deacon or priest, explaining that the call to Holy Orders flows out of the baptismal commitment to be a servant of Christ. I note your profile's mention that diocesan youth and camp programs have nurtured many ordained vocations and I absolutely support that work!

I rarely use the word "staff" because I view the laity, deacons and priests with whom I work as colleagues. I enjoy the give-and-take of planning and working together. When hiring someone newly ordained, I commit to regular times of mentoring, as much for my benefit as that of my colleague. The enthusiasm and energy of a recently ordained deacon or priest is infectious.

The primacy of the Baptismal Covenant, ingrained in me in seminary, has become a part of the Church's DNA. I encourage the ministry of the baptized in preaching and teaching, by inviting others to share their gifts and connecting them to the community, by developing new leaders, and in others ways, hopefully without getting in the way. I am not a micro-manager, and understand my role to be providing the tools and resources which equip and assist the ministries of others. I have been blessed to serve among gifted disciples of Christ, who have often needed little more than encouragement, a blessing, and a nudge.

#### Theme IV – Role in and Responsibility to the Larger Church

*Ordinal Questions:* Do you solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline and worship of The Episcopal Church? Will you guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church? Will you share with your fellow bishops in the government of the whole Church?

*Please include:* how you interpret the above, noting your sense of responsibility to The Episcopal Church regarding issues of human sexuality in matters of ordination, marriage rites, and Prayer Book revision. What other issues do you foresee as challenging to the Church and how do you expect to respond to them? Discuss your sense of the relationship you believe The Episcopal Church should have with the Anglican Communion.

I believe that authentic Anglicanism fulfills the saying often credited to Augustine: *In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty (or freedom); in all things, charity.* Much of the tension between The Episcopal Church and some primates, if not Provinces, of the Anglican Communion, has much to do with whether matters of sexuality are essentials or non-essentials. Also at the heart of this

debate is the interpretation of Holy Scripture, or more accurately, the lens through which the Scriptures are interpreted and taught.

I support the actions of the last three General Conventions that have moved us closer to full inclusion of all faithful Episcopalians in the life of this Church. I do not believe being in a faithful same-gender relationship automatically disqualifies one from leadership in this Church including Holy Orders. I voted for Resolution C056 which calls for the collection of theological and liturgical resources for the blessing of same gender relationships, allows diocesan bishops to provide a generous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of this Church, and calls all to honor the theological diversity of this Church in regard to matters of human sexuality.

Anglicanism has the unique vocation of honoring theological diversity. The Via Media describes not only the middle way between reformed and catholic faith and order, but a middle way between the extremes of fundamentalism and relativism. I do not support absolute uniformity on all matters, nor do I support those who reject the importance of communion and unity in essential matters of faith and tradition. I love Anglicanism's generous catholicity, and I consider our Communion's ability to engage in mission as a great legacy.

The ongoing efforts of The Episcopal Church to build relationships throughout the Anglican Communion have borne great fruit in easing tensions, building understanding, and opening doors to dialogue. This Church continues to learn that by focusing on mission, we can let disagreements have their place without impeding fulfillment of our Lord's mandate to love and serve.

Other issues facing this Church include growing our mission to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to seek and serve others, given available resources in terms of people and finances. Financial stress impacts us as individuals, congregations, and dioceses, and in turn impacts the work of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. Lay and ordained leaders are finding that managing resources is requiring an increasing amount of time and energy. The time is right for congregations of all sizes and dioceses to examine and adjust current patterns and structures, in order to better support existing mission and commit to new opportunities.