



The Very Rev. Rob Price

The following questions provide you the opportunity to reflect on various aspects of your experience, your character, and your concept of Christian ministry, as well as the specific needs and joys of our diocese. Please provide responses to the following essay questions, limiting your responses to about 250 words each.

Essay questions:

1. How have you understood your own call to ministry through the years? How do you understand God's call to the next bishop of Dallas?

I met the risen Jesus as a young graduate student earning a PhD in American history at Yale. I was reading the Bible for academic reasons but the sheer power of the Word of God grabbed hold of me and bent the direction of my life towards the proclamation of the Gospel. After my parish internship and leading a mission trip to South Sudan I had my "second conversion": I went from being in love with God to falling in love with God's *people* – a passion for parish ministry that has been sustained over 22 years of service as a parish priest.

I am convinced that the local church is the hope of the world: the community of love where through Word and Sacrament lives are transformed to look more like Jesus. After receiving the counsel of many wise friends in this Diocese, I have prayerfully decided to offer myself to the ministry of being your Bishop. I know that God can do great things amongst us – I've seen so many of them personally as a dean, canon, and colleague here! – and I would be absolutely focused on giving our clergy and lay leaders the care, encouragement, and leadership they need to do their best work for Jesus.

As an old Scout with a background of 20 years of work on self and family in the context of Bowen Theory, I believe that I have the experience, temperament, and character to steward a healthy diocesan culture of greater trust, collaborative governance and ministry, and courage to meet the challenges ahead, with God's help.

2. What excites you most about the life of our diocese and the prospect of shepherding us? Identify a challenge you see for us, also.

The Diocese of Dallas is blessed with a deep commitment — shared broadly by people across the spectrums of size, theology, ethnicity, and region – to do great work for Jesus. Our people care passionately about making disciples and reaching people in their community with the Good News, including a diverse engagement with social justice. There is a strong commitment amongst the many

clergy and lay leaders I know to do the hard work of growing parishes and equipping people for vital ministry within and beyond the walls of the church. I cannot imagine a more durable and dynamic common ground from which to lead than that, and I enthusiastically greet the opportunity to move the diocese from strength to strength.

However, in any family system there are obstacles to flourishing. I think our primary obstacle is relational and is expressed by the sense of a “lack of trust” in the diocese. I think this is a systemic symptom of weak relational *connections* with one another and with the center of diocesan life. There is a sense of being isolated, of one’s hard Gospel work not being known and valued, of being an outlier/outsider. I think this pervasive experience is the key leadership challenge in the diocese and its primary obstacle to flourishing. It will require a bishop who is trusted, thoughtful, wary of quick fix strategies, and able to be in meaningful connection with a wide variety of clergy and lay leaders over the long term.

3. Describe your leadership style and how you have communicated your vision for an organization in the past.

I think that I have a gift for seeing the positive in and for others; for finding opportunity in challenging situations; for setting inspiring goals; for focusing on assets. Perhaps *cheerfulness* is my leadership style – or more classically, *fortitude*: an act of the will and intellect that reckons with the real challenges one faces but meets them with a greater confidence in God’s grace. Through 22 years of parish ministry I have observed that a group does its best, most creative thinking when it is “light on its feet,” when laughter is shared, and the tone of discussion is defined by hope. I think people are willing to trust a leader who trusts them and has confidence in their gifts in ministry. I don’t need to be the one in the room with all the ideas. Collaboration is necessary in a place like EDOD, and my openness to and trust in others attracts team members who enjoy working a problem together and celebrating the group’s success.

After the devastating fire at my parish in April 2022, my text for the sermon the following Sunday was from Acts 27:33: “just before daybreak.” Carried from the pulpit into personal conversations, the point was that if we trust in one another and God’s love for us, resurrection life could dawn in a surprising way. We could “abandon the ship” as Paul did and prepare for something New. Incredibly creative group problem-solving and flexibility ensued: short-term workarounds for children’s ministry were found, a new Montessori preschool has been started in the renovated facility, and the parish has grown significantly among young families. The congregation trusted the vision, and it was wonderful to watch God bring about a new flourishing. I think the whole congregation owns our success and is enthusiastic about the growth that is still to come at St. Matthew’s.