

From: [Diocesan House](#)
Sent: Monday, August 01, 2011 4:46 PM
To: canon@rtnolan.com
Subject: Bishops' Pentecost 2011 Letter

The Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

August 1, 2011

EPISCOPAL EPISTLE Pentecost 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Ordained Ministry:

We, your bishops, are writing once again with one of our occasional "Episcopal Epistles." The main focus of this Epistle is continuing education and how we are nurtured for our roles and responsibilities as ordained leaders.

The ordained ministry is a gift that we all share, whether as priests, deacons, or bishops. It is an incredible privilege and honor to serve God's people in the various capacities and contexts in which we live and work. We thank God for your faithfulness, hard work, and leadership to the Body of Christ here in the Diocese of Connecticut as ordained deacons and priests. As much as our ordination is a charism that we have been given, it is also a responsibility that we share as professionals. As such we would like to bring to your attention a few matters related to our ongoing professional continuing education.

I. Clergy Professional Development and Safe Church Recertification

To begin with, we want to note a significant opportunity and responsibility for clergy continuing education coming on November 3, 2011 at St. John's Seminary in Bloomfield and November 22, 2011 at Christ Church in Greenwich.

The diocese requires all clergy, canonically resident and licensed, to participate in a triennial Safe Church Recertification program. This fall the Safe Church Recertification has been broadened and revised as Clergy Professional Development and Safe Church Recertification. The topic of both of the Clergy Professional Development and Safe Church Recertification days in November will be: "Identities and Power." More specifically we will consider how the different identities we each inhabit in the image of God both privilege us as well as result in our being targets of oppression. Understanding our power relates directly to how we exercise both our leadership gifts and run the risk of perpetuating abuse. We believe the lessons offered by the day will help us all to grow in our awareness of our power and thus make us more effective leaders in God's mission of restoration and reconciliation.

The November Clergy Professional Development and Safe Church Recertification days will be the same format and program on each day and Dr. Valarie Batts and The Rev. Dr. William Kondrath will facilitate both. Valerie and Bill are well-respected and gifted consultants from VISIONS inc., a Boston-based consulting firm specializing in matters of diversity and inclusion. See: <http://www.visions-inc.org/> Those of you who were at

the Holy Tuesday Reaffirmation of Vows at the Cathedral will have already been introduced to some of the VISIONS methodologies through the "Guidelines for Mutuality" exercise offered by the bishops. In addition, those of you who want to "read ahead" in preparation for our time together in November might like to look at Bill Kondrath's book: *God's Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Differences*. Hendron, VA: The Alban Institute, 2008.

We look forward to seeing each and every one of you at the required Clergy Professional Development and Safe Church Recertification days on either November 3 or 22. Since the same program will be presented each day, participation in only one of the days is required for continued service in the Diocese of Connecticut. You will receive registration information in the near future.

II. Continuing Education

Similar to most "professions," continuing education is a professional expectation in The Episcopal Church. Specifically Title III, Canon 7, sec 5 (for deacons) and Title III, Canon 9, sec 1 (for priests) stipulate that "the Bishop and Commission (on Ministry) shall require and provide for the continuing education of Deacons/Priests and keep a record of such. As you know the Offices of the Bishops, through the good work of Ms. Linda Walley at Diocesan House, keep a record of the continuing education of all the clergy in this diocese. We encourage you to be in communication with Linda to ensure that your records are up to date.

In addition to these canonical requirements, priests also promise in The Examination of the ordination service to "be diligent in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, and in seeking the knowledge of such things as may make you a stronger and more able minister of Christ." For canonical, professional, and spiritual reasons, we bishops thus take the requirement of continuing education very seriously.

There are many ways by which ordained leaders may pursue continuing education. Some of the opportunities are self-initiated by the cleric. We are blessed to have fine institutions of theological education in Connecticut and in neighboring states as key resources, such as Hartford Seminary, Yale/Berkeley Divinity School, Episcopal Divinity School and the General Theological Seminary. These seminaries offer both short courses and degree programs, such as the Doctor of Ministry. There are also many excellent courses and conferences available across the church and around the world from the Alban Institute to St. George's College in Jerusalem and the Anglican Centre in Rome. We encourage you to look locally and far and wide for both ecumenical and interfaith opportunities of study when you plan your continuing education and sabbaticals. We are available to consult with you about your continuing education plans and modest financial assistance for continuing education is available. Applications may be found at:

<http://www.ctepiscopal.org/images/customer-files//ContEdGuidelineRevised2009.pdf>.

In addition to individually discerned and developed options there are many regular and ongoing opportunities offered by the diocese and bishops for continuing education such as Clergy Days and Clergy Conference. Much good energy and no small expense by many across the diocese go into planning and executing these events. The most recent Clergy Conference on interfaith realities with The Rev. Dr. Sathianathan Clarke as presenter was a particularly rich offering. This fall, on October 4th, your three bishops look forward to spending a relaxed and informal Clergy Day with all of you to discuss many of the changes and challenges before the Diocese of Connecticut as we look forward to our upcoming Diocesan Convention. Details of this Clergy Day will be forthcoming.

As bishops we realize that not every deacon and priest can afford the time and expense of attending each Clergy Day and annual Clergy Conference. Still, we find the level of participation to be well under hopes and expectations given the number of clergy in the Diocese of Connecticut combined with the canonical expectation regarding continuing education. In the future we bishops will be much more proactive in surveying and following up on clergy who regularly do not participate in diocesan sponsored continuing education events for ordained leaders.

Finally, in the midst of these longer days of summer and as we enter deeper into the season after the celebration of Pentecost, we hope and pray that each and everyone of you find time for rest and re-creation in vacation with loved ones and family. God bless you.

Faithfully,
Ian, Jim and Laura
The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas
The Rt. Rev. James E. Curry
The Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens

From: [Richard Nolan](#)
Sent: Tuesday, August 02, 2011 10:14 AM
To: jburnep@ctdiocese.org
Subject: Bishops' Pentecost Letter

Re the Bishops' letter to diocesan clergy, please note that for reasons of health (a bummer!) I am fully retired from all of my ordained responsibilities, and I do not lead any church-related activities. By my choice, I am no longer licensed to officiate in the Diocese of Southeast Florida.

As a courtesy, I remain listed as "Retired Priest-in-Residence" at St. Andrew's Church, Lake Worth, FL. Additionally, I continue as a "Retired Honorary Canon" at Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford.

Otherwise, life continues quite well. Bob (in very good health) and I will celebrate our 56th anniversary as a couple next month (and the 3rd anniversary of our legal CT marriage next June). So much to be thankful for!

**Faithfully,
Dick Nolan**

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