

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ'S)

What is a suffragan bishop and why do we need one?

A bishop suffragan "shall act as an assistant to and under the direction of the Bishop Diocesan." (Canon III.11.10(b)(3)(i)) Many dioceses, ours included, are too large and complex to be given adequate coverage by just one bishop. Our diocese has had at least one suffragan bishop for many years. In recent years, we have had two suffragans to assist the diocesan bishop by accepting responsibility for serving on some of the boards and committees in the diocese and by sharing the sacramental duties of a bishop. Bishop Harrison, who is based in Austin, has been our suffragan bishop since 2006, and the recently retired Bishop High, who was based in Tyler, was elected in 2003. It is Bishop High's former post that will be filled by this election.

How does the election process start?

Bishop Doyle has appointed a Task Force for the Election of a Suffragan Bishop which is charged with designing the process for the election. Their first step was to create a survey in order to listen to the people of the diocese. The Task Force members (listed elsewhere on this website) are from various congregations around the diocese and were ably assisted in this work by several members of the diocesan staff.

Is the Task Force for the Election of a Suffragan Bishop a Nominating Committee?

No. The tradition of the Diocese of Texas is not to form a committee to search out and choose the nominees. The Task Force is empowered by Diocesan Council to design and oversee the process for the election and to ensure that it is carried out in a fair and canonically correct manner.

Then who does the nominating?

Diocesan canons require that only a delegate may nominate. That means any delegate to the 163rd Diocesan Council may be a nominator. It is anticipated that the requirement will be for three nominators for each nominee, as it has been in recent elections. At least one of the three must be a clergyperson, at least one must be a layperson, and at least two congregations must be represented. It is anticipated that all those who are nominated will be candidates for election unless the nominee withdraws him/herself.

Why 3 nominators?

The Task Force wanted to ensure that there was at least minimal support from both clergy and lay orders for each nominee, and that there was some discussion about the potential nominee. Three people, from at least two congregations, seemed like the minimum needed to accomplish that.

Who may be nominated?

The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church allow for anyone who is at least 30 years old and “has been duly ordered Deacon and Priest” to be elected bishop.

What is the process the Task Force is designing?

The process will be described in a Resolution to be presented to Diocesan Council but will be very similar to recent elections. The draft will be posted at this website and it will be circulated at pre-Council meetings in early 2012. It may also be published with other proposed Resolutions in *The Diolog*.

What are the important dates?

The first important dates are February 10 and 11, 2012, the dates of Diocesan Council. The Resolution outlining the election process will be proposed and voted on at that time. Assuming approval of the Resolution, the election for suffragan bishop is expected to be held on Saturday, June 2, 2012. Nominations will be received from some time in February until some time in mid-to-late March. There will be a “walkabout” to meet nominees at Camp Allen on May 12. The date and place for the consecration will be determined after the election.

Will there be additional nominations from the floor?

No. In fairness to the nominees and the people of the diocese, all nominations must be in by the closing dates in mid-to-late March. This will give the people the chance to get to know the nominees through the nomination process and the walkabout, and will also allow the required background checks to be completed.

Is any attempt being made to solicit names from outside the diocese?

We are open to nominations of eligible clergy from all across the Church but the Task Force will not actively solicit names from inside or outside the diocese. It is our hope that the good people of this diocese will become a “committee of the whole” and take responsibility for spreading the word of the upcoming election to their friends in faraway places and to direct names of potential nominees to the delegates. And we rely on *The Dialogue*, this website, and the letters that will be sent requesting consent to hold an election to inform those outside our diocese of our upcoming election and our desire for good candidates.

Is there any role for those in the diocese who are not delegates?

Absolutely! The most important thing anyone can do is to pray for our diocese and for the election. Certainly those in a discernment process need prayers, as do all those involved in the mechanics of the election process. And as mentioned above, if you know eligible clergy who would be suitable candidates for Suffragan Bishop in the Diocese of Texas you are encouraged to make their names known to your friends who are delegates. You may also suggest topics

for questions for the nominees, and you may certainly read up on the nominees, meet and question them at the walkabout, and discuss them with your delegates.

What is actually involved in being a suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Texas?

More than most of us understand! Look further on this website for the Bishop Doyle's letter to the diocese and the preliminary job description for this bishop.

What if I have more questions?

Please email them to Alice Kerr at AKerr@epicenter.org