

January 15, 2009

Jack Iker
Bishop of the Southern Cone

Dear Sir:

Both the leadership and, presumably, all of the fellowship of All Saints' Episcopal Church received a letter from you wherein you "invite" the Rector, Vestry, and membership of All Saints' to meet with you and your standing committee on January 22, 2009. As authority for this meeting, you invoke Canon 32 and assert that a "controversy" has arisen between All Saints' and the Fort Worth Diocese.

From a review of Canon 32, it would appear that Section 32.3 is the only provision that deals with a "controversy between a Parish and the Diocese." The first sentence of that section reads: "In the case of a controversy between a Parish and the Diocese, the Rector and a majority of the members of the Vestry may petition the Bishop, whose duty it shall be to seek to bring the parties to an amicable conclusion."

Sir, the Rector and the Vestry have not asked you to come settle any controversy and you are not the Bishop. Therefore, we will not be attending this proposed meeting and we do not subject ourselves to any authority you may believe you have.

You have abandoned the Episcopal Church. We have chosen not to. As a result of this decision you made, you gave up any authority you had over the parishes in the Episcopal Church.

So, our question to you is by what authority do you believe yourself authorized to settle any "controversy" between you and this Parish?

In your letter you also cite the 80% vote to leave the Episcopal Church of the United States at last year's diocesan convention. We are unmoved by this. While this might have been an expression of 80% of the delegates present in their dissatisfaction with the Episcopal Church of the United States and its current leadership, this was not any kind of a legal, effectual vote. There is no provision in any church law that allows a diocese to just vote itself out of the Episcopal Church of the United States and you know that. It was a vote to do something that church law does not allow. It could have been a 100% vote and it would not have made it any more legal.

By what authority do you believe this vote had any legal effect? Will you show us any place in the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church of the United States that would allow such a vote?

Moreover, during September and October of last year we at All Saints' invited all our parishioners to discuss their feelings on the issue of whether or not to break with the Episcopal Church of the United States. During this process, we listened to hundreds of parishioners and an overwhelming number expressed a desire to stay with the Episcopal Church.

Sir, will you respect the will of this Parish?

In the end, one fact remains - you left the Episcopal Church of the United States. Our parish was incorporated within and remains attached to the Episcopal Church of the United States, as does your former diocese. In expressing your disagreements with the Episcopal Church of the United States, some of which we and many of our parishioners share, you could have tried to operate within the system in an attempt to influence the church. You chose not to do that. You abandoned your ministry. You quit the Episcopal Church. You cannot deny that.

We simply cannot take orders from you and we will not.

You must know that you are hurting many, many people in this diocese through your actions. The overwhelming majority of the members of our Parish only wish for a quiet place to worship. They only wish to know that their church will not be under attack. They only wish to worship in peace without being bombarded with letters threatening to take the kind of actions that your latest letter threatens.

For those whose children are currently in All Saints' Episcopal School, they only want their children to be educated in peace and for themselves to be secure in the belief that the school will not become a pawn in your doctrinal standoff with the Episcopal Church of the United States.

These are the members of our fellowship, Sir, and you are hurting them. **We will protect our church, our school, and our parishioners. We just ask that you leave us alone.**

Our request is simple. You have issues with the Episcopal Church of the United States. Do not try to settle those issues by threatening this church.

Very truly yours,

The Vestry of All Saints' Episcopal Church

Kent Henning, Sr Warden
Grace Forderhase
Ramsay Slugg
Amy Robinson

Gilman Tracy, Jr Warden
Suzy Griffin
Tommy Miller
Linda Christie

Stephanie Burk
Laura Fleming
Mollee Westfall

no response as of time of mailing:

Gay Marquardt

Fran McDonald

Elaine Edwards

cc: The Members of All Saints' Episcopal Church