

Application for Bishop for the Diocese of TN : Entry # 4858

Full Name

The Rev. Canon Brian W. Cannaday

Current Ecclesial Role / Title:

Canon to the Ordinary

Diocese / Jurisdiction:

Dallas

Current Parish, Cathedral, or Ministry Setting:

Diocese of Dallas

Please provide a link to a recorded service or homily you have delivered:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=aDXrJG-cQCc&ra=m>

Please attach a copy of your CV:

- See link on profile page

Date ordained to Diaconate

12/29/2013

Diocese

West Texas

Date ordained to Priesthood

07/02/2014

Diocese

West Texas

Theological education (degrees, institutions)

University of the South School of Theology, Master of Divinity

Additional education or certifications relevant to episcopal ministry

Youth Ministry Certificate Programs - Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest

Certified Safeguarding Trainer/Facilitator

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Please summarize your vocational journey, highlighting roles that have most shaped your leadership and pastoral identity.

I am a PK (preacher's kid), so I do not remember a time when The Church has not been central to the daily rhythm of my life. That said, my personal relationship with Jesus was established "as my own" as a sophomore in high school through the Happening Movement in the Diocese of West Texas. This was the weekend when Jesus-relationship became real, intimate, and life-changing in a cogent way. Since that moment, my "yes" to Jesus continues to shape my life. Early after high school, I was invited to intern over a summer for a youth program. By the end of the summer, the Lord led me to set college aside for a season and serve as a full-time youth minister, launching a 16-year career. Towards the end of that 16 years, the opportunity to return to college presented itself, and I went back to school full-time to finish my degree. It was during this time the Holy Spirit tugged at me to ask the question "what about seminary." I had briefly explored discernment earlier in life but could never fully pursue it because of a lack of a degree. This was no longer the case. The Holy Spirit kept the doors open and gave me and my family the strength to walk through them, resulting in completing my undergrad and graduating seminary in 5 years. My time as a youth minister continues to inform my priesthood, as the Christ-centered foundation from which I serve and minister is anchored by relational and collaborative leadership. Serving as a rector and a canon to the ordinary, sowing seeds of relationship is essential in creating authentic community. Trust and understanding are established, allowing mission and vision to be discerned. My Holy Spirit-gifted youth minister DNA leads me to engage this way naturally in all God calls me to do.

Describe your sense of call to the episcopate. How do you understand the bishop's vocation as chief pastor of the Diocese of Tennessee?

I don't know if I am called to the episcopate. While I have been invited to be a part of different types of processes during my priestly calling, the Holy Spirit unfailingly makes clear God's desire regarding where I am called to serve. What I AM called to do is say "yes" when the Holy Spirit knocks on the door, either of my own heart or through the hearts of others. I learned long ago to never say "no" to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Trust in the Spirit's movement is all that is required, regardless of how and where The Spirit blows. In contemplating this process, my understanding of the institution of the episcopacy is the paramount responsibility to be the defender of the "faith, unity, and discipline of the Church," and everything that comes with that obligation. Critical to this work is the responsibility of being pastor to the clergy... celebrating successes, acknowledging failures, raising up and equipping and empowering leadership, holding accountable, being a partner in discernment, and being present and accessible. For the last several years, the Holy Spirit has put me in the path of those discerning holy orders, formally and informally. I believe this is a critical component in the ministry of a bishop. Diaconal and priestly formation has been a source of contemplation in discerning the episcopacy. In reading and marking the diocesan profile, the next bishop of the Diocese of Tennessee is also called to enter already established community and build relationships diocesan-wide, discerning with clergy and laity what the Holy Spirit is doing in this next season of ministry. It is clear a collaborative shepherd is desired, not one who brings personal agenda into community. Not lost on me is the administrative work required of any episcopacy. This is a reality of the office of the bishop. However, I see this work as secondary to the foundational work of building relationships. Relationships

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confirm Imago Dei, the starting point of all ministry. It's from this fertile ground that mission, vision, and administration springs forth. The role of a bishop is to foster this culture.

How do you nurture your own spiritual life and how would it shape your public ministry as bishop? How do you practice wellness, spiritually, emotionally, and physically?

Jesus answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Indeed! Self-care is an oft overlooked necessity among the clergy of The Church. Yet, we know from Jesus' words and actions that it is critical for the Kingdom of God and Christ's Body the Church. Burnout is a very real thing. "Love your neighbor as yourself" means to love yourself SO THAT you can love your neighbor. It starts with self-care, but not as an end goal. Rather, it is SO THAT the work of The Church can be engaged at full strength. Self-care is a high priority and expectation I have of the clergy and lay leadership with whom I interact. I unapologetically take my sabbath. The Holy Spirit recharges and refreshes me on a weekly basis, through prayer and rest, so I am renewed to serve. I take personal spiritual retreats 1-2 times a year where I encounter and spend time with Jesus, usually in nature. Weekly date night with my spouse is sacrosanct. As empty nesters, we find it critical that we like each other just as much as we love each other. This discipline feeds my soul. In my not-too-distant past I was a runner. It is something that helped me to care for my temple. It is something that I have begun to rediscover. Cooking is also something that enlivens my spirit. The art of crafting a meal stirs my creative side. A regular rhythm of prayer is the foundation of my calling. I strive to be faithful in being formed by the Holy Spirit in that prayer life and in the study of the Holy Scriptures. All of these things continue to contribute to my priesthood and the ministry to which I've been called.

What does faithfulness, vitality, and witness to the gospel look like for congregations of different sizes, settings, and resources?

"The Mission of The Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other In Christ." All congregations, missions, diocesan and parachurch ministries, and schools have the same mission. It is HOW each group lives out the mission (vision) where the depth and breadth of God's Kingdom is realized. That is to say, faithfulness, vitality, and witness to the gospel is as varied as there are number of ministries. Far too often, congregations can settle into a rhythm of communal life. This is not inherently a bad thing. However, when that settled-ness stymies the movement of The Holy Spirit, it leads to stagnation and dissatisfaction. It is critical for congregations and ministries, regardless of perceived size and influence, to constantly be in discernment, experiment, not be afraid to fail, and collaborate with their communities. Each context is different. Each vision can be unique. What doesn't change is The Mission. The role of a bishop and diocese is to be present with congregations as a resource in that discernment. Sometimes it's workshops, sometimes it's human power, sometimes it's money. Regardless, the role of the diocese is to equip and empower each congregation to serve The Mission and do their unique vision. Through each discernment season, faithfulness, vitality, and witness looks like each congregation doing very well what they have discerned, with the support of the diocese and in collaboration with other congregations (when appropriate). I believe that's the other component... we don't do mission or vision in isolation. Faithfulness, vitality, and witness also mean engagement with the wider diocese and local communities. Vitality is a key word in this question. Vitality is often assigned to ASA and giving... certainly important. However, the foundation of vitality, faithfulness, and witness isn't numbers. It's open hearts and minds willing to hear and see the movement of The Holy Spirit. A congregation with few people and limited resources can be (and often is) just as vital to the Kingdom work as a resource-sized congregation. What a diocese must be ready to offer is the framework with which each congregation can (re)discover the meaning of vitality.

Describe how you exercise authority and leadership in complex systems. How do you make decisions and communicate them broadly and with transparency?

I am a collaborative leader. As such, my first instinct in any situation, especially coming into already established community, is to ask questions that invite me to do a significant amount of listening and very little talking. While the authority and leadership of a

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bishop is canonical and immediate, that does not mean it is earned. Authority in community must be earned through building relationships in that already established community. I do this, in part, by going to where leadership is (not making them come to me), hearing their stories of Jesus-work and communities. In any ministry, there comes a time when a decision must be made, and the leader must make it. Throughout my time as a leader sitting in that "seat of authority", those decisions, even when needing to be immediate, are made with the counsel of others. Early on in my ministry career, I developed the skill to discern when I am not the smartest person in the room. Therefore, it's important in significant decision-making moments to surround myself with gifted and diverse leadership that does not necessarily share my perspective. I also do not fear making unpopular decisions, so long as that decision is made in the system described (to hold myself accountable). In any context, because leadership and authority sit on a foundation of relationships and community, it is my goal that before a complex/significant decision is made that affects the life of the diocese/congregations/ministry, diverse voices have contributed and the decision is made in a way that, even in disagreement, the diocese can move forward as one body with the same Mission. This can only be done when the process is guided by prayer. Communicating significant decisions rests first with the diocese. Through as many platforms as available, the bishop should offer a pastoral letter (disclosing the decision-making process and the voices that were involved, when appropriate). Using all available communication avenues has been my practice to make sure communicants are informed.

How would you support clergy across theological differences, vocational stress, and personal challenges?

Having already spoken about clergy wellness, I'll focus on the other aspects of this question. Even in collegial agreement, theological perspectives are as unique as the individual. Theological differences are what make the Episcopal Church, in part, who she is. It is also what makes her, significantly, a challenging community in which to live and serve. Too often, theological differences in our fellowship become idols... banners of good and bad, right and wrong, belonging and marginalized. I carry no banner, champion no political ideology, and do not demonize or dismiss any perspective. That is not to say I don't have personal ways of thinking about theological matters. I do have my own opinions and perspectives. However, I am fully aware of my own brokenness and lived experiences, and that these things shape my perspective, just as they do anyone. What is most important to me as a leader in the church is to listen and understand one's lived experience and find common ground. That common ground is Jesus. If Jesus is the foundation, we can serve together, even with different theological perspectives. What IS important is for clergy to be reminded "who are the ministers of The Church... lay people, bishops, priests, and deacons." That is how our catechism states it, and the order matters. It is the job of no cleric to come into already established community and impose her or his own will, perspective, or ideology. The call is to serve. That includes a bishop. That doesn't mean don't lead, especially if there are questionable practices within a congregation. It does mean that personal perspective of clergy is not primary or even central. This is why the discernment of any cleric who is part of a search process is paramount, and the discernment of a search committee is critical. Leadership that is "right and good" for one congregation might not be in another. This brings up the topic of vocational stress and personal challenges. Any bishop must make him or herself available and accessible to the clergy of the diocese. The bishop is pastor to the clergy. Availability in this sense should be personal and professional. Personal in the sense that the bishop answers the phone/responds when contacted. Professional in the sense of making available to clergy coaches/counselors/spiritual directors and the resources with which to engage when necessary. It also means creating a culture of clergy wellness at a corporate level, holding clergy accountable to taking sabbaticals and engaging in continuing education.

Describe your approach to conflict, reconciliation, and when necessary, discipline. How would you help the diocese remain rooted in the Gospel?

There is never a shortage of conflict in The Church. My response, when these matters bubble to the surface, is to speak peace into each conversation. As a retired bishop once said to me, "the Church has never been without sin, because its leaders are sinners." Truer words have never been spoken. My leadership style in any conflict is to be a non-anxious presence, foster honest conversations, even when they are difficult, and make room for all voices to be heard. This is critical. Often, conflict arises when an individual or groups do not feel heard. In a culture where all perspectives are valued, even in disagreement, conflict's impact is lessened. A bishop has the responsibility to foster this way of navigating conflict. A bishop's role is also to help bring about resolutions to conflict, even in disagreement, so conflict does not distract from the mission of the church. This is the tricky part, and it takes time, using a pastoral hand of understanding, grace, and mercy. Reconciliation is an act of the Holy Spirit between

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open hearts willing to be reconciled. Reconciliation does not happen in an “I win, you lose” environment. Any community wishing to navigate conflict successfully must be Jesus to one another, bearing each other’s burdens, being quick to listen and slow to speak, and sharing truth in love. This is the Gospel foundation for passing through conflict. In every ministry context, whether as a lay person or priest, I have used these practices successfully to mediate conflict, whether between myself and others or between individuals/groups of people. Discipline is a necessary act of a bishop and should not be entered into lightly. Understanding and fairness are the keys to engaging in discipline. This also requires significant listening and counsel, following proper canonical procedures, and being hesitant to act quickly if the situation does not call for it. Discipline also requires boldness on the part of the bishop, especially when the community is at risk.

Discuss your experience and theology of diocesan administration, fundraising, financial stewardship, and staff leadership.

I currently serve as a canon to the ordinary, so my experience and theology have recently expanded immensely. First and foremost (I’m sure at this point sounding like a broken record), it’s all about relationships, building understanding between individuals and groups of people so everyone can look upon one another as made in the image of God. Communication and responsiveness is critical in the administration of a diocesan staff. It fosters a culture of collaboration and support. Staff leadership must understand the responsibility of service to the wider church, regardless of their position. The diocese exists to serve the church... period. A bishop must assemble an experienced and gifted staff, empowering them to serve faithfully, managing but not micro-managing, providing oversight without unnecessarily interfering. Fundraising and stewardship are important aspects of an episcopacy. A diocesan administration must pay attention to detail and adhere to accountability and transparency. That is good stewardship and it requires meticulous leadership. An executive council/committee is the chief steward of the good gifts given. Those gifts must be engaged with wisdom and a servant’s heart to serve the diocese. A bishop must be willing to speak to long-term fiscal soundness by having private conversations with individuals and public conversations with groups about capital and legacy giving, casting discerned vision with boldness. This is good administration.