



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VERMONT

To: The Clergy of the Diocese of Vermont
From: The Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Ely, Bishop of Vermont
Ref: Title IV

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As was discussed earlier this year at the May Clergy Day, the 2009 General Convention of the Episcopal Church completely revised Canon Title IV, which sets forth disciplinary procedures for clergy. The revision sets expectations and standards for clergy behavior and makes “amendment of life and reconciliation” part of every disciplinary proceeding. To comply with the new canons, our Diocesan Convention last fall created a new Diocesan Canon 26. Both the new Title IV and Diocesan Canon 26: Ecclesiastical Discipline became effective as of July 1, 2011.

Title IV now makes explicit procedures that were once part of an informal, pre-disciplinary process, and requires the early involvement of persons outside the Bishop’s Office. We in Vermont are sharing this disciplinary process with the Dioceses of New Hampshire and Maine.

It is important that every member of the Diocese of Vermont know about the changes and have access to the person to be contacted if a situation arises that calls for review and possible action. Please make this letter widely available – share it with your Vestry Minutes, post it on your bulletin board, and distribute it in every way that ensures widespread awareness of the new process.

Each diocese is required to name an Intake Officer, who will be the primary person to contact in order to report any disciplinary incident or situation involving a member of the clergy. With Standing Committee concurrence, I have appointed Canon Lynn Bates as Vermont’s Intake Officer. Lynn has been in this role for many years already and has experience in receiving concerns and complaints with sensitivity and grace. Lynn may be reached by email at lbates@dioceseofvermont.org or by telephone at 802-863-3431, ext. 105.

Title IV also requires the establishment of a Disciplinary Board, which replaces both the Diocesan Review Committee and the Ecclesiastical Trial Court. This Board is comprised of 11 members drawn from the three northern New England dioceses. Until elections that will be held at our 2011 Diocesan Convention, I have appointed the Rev. John Morris, the Rev. Carole Wageman, Ann Cooper, and Bert Cicchetti as our members of the Disciplinary Board.

A brief overview of the new Title IV expectations and procedures may be found on our website. The initial step in filing any complaint is to contact Lynn. I am confident that this new process provides both greater transparency and greater protection for the rights of all involved. If you have questions and/or concerns about the new Title IV canons. Please be in touch with me or Lynn.

Faithfully,

+Thomas
Bishop of Vermont