

*Bulletin Insert for Sunday, May13*

## **The Third Bishop of the Diocese of El Camino Real**

### ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In March of 2004, The Rt. Rev. Bishop Richard Shimpfky, the second bishop of our diocese, resigned. At that time, the Standing Committee, by canon law, became the Ecclesiastical Authority. It was agreed at the January 2005 Diocesan Convention that we would enter a waiting period before moving ahead to elect another bishop. There was a desire to study the structure of our diocese and recommend some changes to help us to function more effectively. The waiting period was declared over at the January 2006 session of Diocesan Convention. The Bishop Search and Transition Committees were convened in August 2006 to begin their work.

#### **What is the ministry of a bishop?**

The ministry of the bishop is to represent Christ and the Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the word of God; to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.

#### **Why are bishops important?**

Bishops are part of the governing authority and leadership of the Episcopal Church. They give strategic oversight to the church, serving as shepherds to the clergy and laity of our diocese. They do this by visitations to parishes throughout the year, consultation with the clergy, published letters to the parishes, and participating in various gatherings and councils in the diocese and in the larger church.

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### **Who can be a bishop?**

Anyone who meets the canonical requirements of the Episcopal Church in the USA can be elected. Those requirements are:

- Individual must be at least 30 years of age. The compulsory retirement age for bishops is 72.
- Suffragan bishops are eligible nominees; those currently serving as bishop or bishop coadjutor of a diocese must have served in that diocese for at least five years to be eligible.

In addition, the Church holds to a tradition of sequential order, i.e., ordination to the diaconate, ordination to the priesthood, and then ordination as a bishop, which means that only priests and bishops were eligible candidates for our search.

*The Book of Common Prayer* asks that the bishop be:

- Faithful in prayer
- Faithful in the study and application of Scripture
- Bold in proclaiming the gospel
- One who enlightens minds and stirs up the conscience of people
- Capable of nourishing Christians from “the riches of God’s grace”
- Prepared to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the church
- Merciful to all, compassionate to the poor and strangers, and a defender of those who have no helper.

We will elect the third bishop for the Diocese of El Camino Real on June 16, 2007. We strongly encourage you to read about the nominees. Their resumes, personal statements and responses to the application questions are up on our website and can be found at [www.edecr.org/bishopsearch](http://www.edecr.org/bishopsearch). Also, plan to attend one of the Presentation Tour events (more information coming May 27), ask questions, and talk among yourselves.

**More information about the process used for the search, a list of desired qualities and skills for our nominees, and the Presentation Tour where people can meet the nominees will be coming in bulletin inserts over the next three weeks. Meanwhile, visit the website for current information on our nominees: [www.edecr.org/bishopsearch](http://www.edecr.org/bishopsearch)**

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