

Essay Questions: Please reflect and respond to the following questions, limiting each of your responses to a maximum of 400 words.

1. In the examination of bishops, you will be asked to “be one with the apostles proclaiming Christ’s resurrection and interpreting the Gospel, and to testify to Christ’s sovereignty as Lord of lords and King of Kings.” What do you understand those words to mean, and (assuming their usual meaning) are there any you hesitate to endorse?

Christ’s sovereignty as Lord of lords and King of kings is rooted in the reality of his life, death, and resurrection. This is the source of our hope. While our human understanding of these concepts is surely limited, we hold them up as fundamental to our faith and walk. We are called not to follow self-interest or earthly powers, but to follow Jesus Christ in all things. I do not hesitate to endorse that Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings. Still, we must also proclaim descriptions of lordship and sovereignty that reflect the full breadth of God’s Spirit and Love.

Compassion calls us to be sensitive to those in our midst who struggle not with the sovereignty of Christ but with the language by which we describe it. These words may conjure a militaristic image of power that is hard for some to embrace. These brothers and sisters may have experienced oppression or the remnants of oppressive systems. Fortunately Jesus gives us other images of saving power.

As a chaplain at a major Level One Trauma Center, I had the privilege of working with a very large Black family that experienced an excruciating tragedy: a toddler was ejected from their vehicle and declared dead on the scene and his mother, who suffered brittle bone disease, likely would be paralyzed for life. Emotions, fear, and suspicion ran high as family members filled the corridors of the Emergency Department. They had valid personal and historic reasons for being mistrustful of the medical establishment and worried their loved one was not getting all that she needed. Medical professionals were hard at work but not particularly communicative. I was uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge between 2 groups, each of which were at least a little frightened and mistrustful of the other. Back and forth, I conveyed information and compassion. From me and the hospital, this family needed to experience Jesus the Great Physician, Jesus the Lamb, and the Comforter, more than a God of lordship or kingship (though this Jesus spoke to them as well, as we gathered with their pastor to pray).

How glorious that Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, expresses his power through a multitude of images so that we can receive him, regardless of our context!

2. Like other dioceses, the exit of congregations and communicants in the first decade of this century left lasting scars on our community from which we continue to heal. How have you fostered unity among individuals of differing values and diverse

opinions?

The glory of God shines most brightly in a community of people who, in the words of our 12-step recovery friends, ordinarily would not mix. We have much to learn from one another. When we focus on the Gospel and remain true to our baptismal vow to respect the dignity of every human being, we have a way forward.

Even the resurrected Christ carried scars when he appeared among his followers. Jesus invited Thomas to touch his hands and the wound in his side. We need not fear or hide our scars but rather embrace them as an opportunity for genuine connection and for coming to know ourselves and one another in Christ. We need to make room for a multiplicity of perspectives and trust that diversity of experience will be life-giving and transformative.

Unity in diversity is fostered through a common vision for our future, moving forward in love. A vision that is engaging and inspiring will allow us to focus not on our wounds – which can be a poisonous distraction – but on the new life and transformation into which Jesus calls us.

In ministry, I have welcomed individuals from a range of socioeconomic, cultural and religious backgrounds, and diverse gender identities into Bible study together. The ground rules included: 1) everyone has a voice, 2) we share what the scripture evokes in ourselves without imposing beliefs or interpretations on others, and 3) no single voice will dominate the conversation. The interaction was based on mutual respect and filial love. On a larger scale, in corporate life, I led a team that included folks from different geographic and vocational contexts in a culture in which mutuality and consensus building were highly valued. Again, every voice was encouraged to be heard and the entire team had a role in informing vision and policy. This could get messy and be time-consuming, but at the end of the day the process was respected and consensus was reached.

The Diocese of Florida can and will move forward with God's help. We might pray "Deliver us from our fears," for fear is at the root of division and hatefulness. In an atmosphere of trust and safety, we create a space to explore what is under our fears or the fears of the "other." We discover something honest that can activate empathy, foster connection and provide a foundation for moving forward in love.

3. One of the challenges that our denomination faces is an aging clergy force. What qualities are you looking for in the next generation of clergy leader?

First and foremost, emerging clergy leaders must affirm and embrace that there are no second-class citizens. All are equal in the eyes of God. We must continue to practice a deep, prayerful discernment process, honoring the canons of the Church, as we journey with those who may be sensing a call to serve through ordained

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ministry. Clergy should be committed to ongoing study as well as spiritual deepening in their life of prayer. We accomplish all this in community. There ought to be no lone rangers; rather there must be formal and informal mechanisms for ongoing formation and development. Our clergy must feel supported in their ministries and in their personal growth and development. Serving as pastor to the clergy in the Diocese of Florida would be one of the greatest privileges of my ordained life.

The next generation will need to be skilled at dreaming beyond traditional boundaries of parish ministry and life, to connect with and be informed by the community around them. We need clergy who are open to collaboration across the diocese, sharing their gifts and learning from their colleagues. I would foster a team of clergy, based on trust, mutual respect and a commitment to prayerfully discovering the best way forward. As Church, our aim is to make Christ known through love and service, which must be grounded in Eucharist and prayer.

Part of the role of bishop is to support clergy in ongoing learning to meet new needs. Some will be excellent communicators, utilizing a variety of media. Some will strive to build partnerships and collaborations within the community beyond their parish walls. We need clergy who are willing to take risks and try new approaches, so long as those approaches are born of discernment, listening to the Spirit internally and in the voices of others.

It would be an honor and a sacred trust to support clergy in new ventures in evangelism and service. As their pastor, I would walk alongside my colleagues, helping to discern and develop each person's gifts and passion and to celebrate their congregations' efforts.

4. Almost two years have been spent in struggles with the COVID pandemic and the many social, political, and economic challenges it brought forward. Where do you see hope springing forward in the Episcopal church? What are some of your hopes for the Diocese of Florida?

The pandemic has brought significant disruption, loss and weariness to all people. Many have lost loved ones. Businesses and employment have been affected, exacerbating food insecurity and other symptoms of poverty. Divisions have worsened and tensions flared in our communities and in many extended families.

The strange blessing of the pandemic is that in many ways it has served as an equalizer. We all have been knocked off balance by fear and uncertainty, especially early on when we had no idea how the virus was transmitted. We all had to be willing to do things differently, to try a new way. In the broader Episcopal Church, we prayed together in a way only recently possible. We were able to visit church services all around the country – even around the world -- helping us remember

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that we are part of a vast and diverse body that embraces a multitude of cultures and expressions of worship. This exposure has brought to many a tangible sense and experience of the beauty of the Body of Christ.

Another gift from the pandemic as we regrouped and journeyed our way into new forms of being community has been to ask the question -- with frequency -- "What is essential?" There are many things we were doing that could be put aside. In my work, we adapted our food ministry, emphasizing safety for all and sharing the bread of Christ under the shade of trees (weather permitting). Traditional instruments were laid aside for a time, as we adapted to beautiful steel tongue drums, playable by anyone, to create soothing tones and invite the Spirit into our midst. In street ministry, before we understood how COVID was transmitted, we pared down our service to a reading of the Gospel, community prayers, and communion for those who wished. Later, a fuller outdoor service was resumed. I am moved by how individuals are drawn to a simple message, the sharing of Christ's body, and a caring word. These are the essentials.

We embrace and create unity in the midst of difference. This pandemic has provided an opportunity not so much to find compromise as to find common ground. Spontaneously many from within and outside of our church community, became active in supporting food and health ministries. People long for meaningful and relevant things to do, to make a difference by sharing love and kindness. This is learning we carry forward.

5. Being familiar with the profile published in connection with this search, what do you see as our diocese's biggest challenges/opportunities moving forward? And, based on your previous experiences, how have you addressed similar challenges or developed new opportunities?

There is tremendous opportunity in the diocese, and so much the resurrecting Spirit can do with our cooperation. Bringing Gospel fundamentals to our real-world context will facilitate healing and moving forward. Building trust through transparency and the articulation of a strong unifying vision will bring renewed enthusiasm. The Diocese can be a light for our hurting world.

We would take a fresh look at those strong ministries named in the portfolio, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform them, while raising up new possibilities. Imagine:

- Prison ministry reinvigorated, steeping new missionaries in the collective wisdom and experience in the diocese.
- Facilitating ministries addressing poverty and inequity, in both the urban core and rural communities.

- Immersing children, youth, and young adults in active work in our communities, grounded in Anglican traditions of prayer and Eucharist.
- Creating and renewing ministries of support and mutual learning for those in our midst who are often disenfranchised or relegated to the fringes, including refugees, the homeless, the elderly, the disabled and the LGBTQ community, especially youth who are most vulnerable.
- Bringing creativity and a long-term view to stewardship of our properties, purposing them in ways that welcome and support adjacent communities.

In my corporate life I was recruited to lead a major campaign, bringing accountability to a large, multi-site department that had developed slowly over time with little oversight. We moved from a hierarchical structure in which individuals operated in silos, to a team approach that fostered creative collaboration across the organization. Though bumpy at first, the fruits of our efforts became a source of celebration.

As a priest, I was assigned to a church that had languished over many years without clear vision or broad support. The property suffered from neglect. Prayerfully, we discerned a clear vision for beginning anew. Slowly, new volunteers came to serve, and leadership emerged within this group. I brought detailed operational and financial transparency to the table, which engendered trust with a new board and within the diocese. Vision was refined, honoring both the legacy of this place and current community context. Funding followed from an array of individuals and foundations within and outside of the Episcopal church.

Deep transformation requires the leading of the Holy Spirit alongside a willingness to have messy, sometimes difficult conversations, based on honesty and openness, grounded in mutual respect and love. Let's hold each in high regard as we dream together!