

Three priests in same-sex relationships nominated as Episcopal Church bishops: A challenge to unity in the Anglican Communion

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Two Episcopal dioceses have nominated gay and lesbian priests in same-sex relationships to become bishops, testing a weeks-old policy and the Episcopal Church's place within the global Anglican Communion.

The Diocese of Minnesota nominated three candidates for bishop on August 1, including Bonnie Perry, a Chicago priest who has been in a same-sex relationship with another Episcopal priest for more than 20 years. If Perry is elected October 31 at the Minnesota diocesan convention, she will become the second openly gay, partnered bishop in the Episcopal Church.

The Diocese of Los Angeles on August 2 nominated six people to be suffragan—or assisting—bishops, including two openly gay priests: Mary Douglas Glasspool of Baltimore and John Kirkley of San Francisco. Two bishops will be elected in December from among the half-dozen nominees.

"I affirm each and every one of these candidates, and I am pleased with the wide diversity they offer this diocese," Los Angeles bishop J. Jon Bruno said in a statement.

The nominations come just weeks after the Episcopal Church lifted a de facto ban on the election of openly gay bishops, despite warnings that the move would threaten unity in the Anglican Communion, the world's third-largest body of Christians.

The election of V. Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire in 2003 caused widespread dissent in the Anglican Communion. Numerous Anglicans and four U.S. dioceses have since broken ties with the Episcopal Church.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion, warned July 27 that the Episcopal Church is out of step with other Anglicans and may have to take a secondary role in the communion. -*Religion News Service*