

Griswold wore flak jacket at consecration: "Beware of an 'unblemished' church built upon judgment rather than love"

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When Frank Griswold, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, suited up for the consecration service in November for the bishop of New Hampshire, he added something extra to his flowing gold vestments—a bullet-proof vest.

The vest was a security precaution, Griswold told Religion News Service. The church leader said he had insisted on presiding at the ordination because “if there had been violence, and some other bishop had been the recipient of that violence, I would have felt personally responsible.”

Though he has repeatedly expressed his personal confidence in his decision to back openly gay Bishop V. Gene Robinson, Griswold noted that U.S. Episcopalians and Anglicans abroad have historically faced “the reality of multiple, passionately held opinions” while trying to hold the “diverse center” of the church.

Yet in a sermon January 11 at Washington Cathedral, Griswold also warned about unchecked emotions: “Beware of zeal in the name of righteousness devoid of mercy and compassion. Beware of visions of an ‘unblemished’ church built upon judgment rather than love.”