

The Episcopal Diocese of Lexington
The Rt. Rev. Stacy F. Sauls, Bishop

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

First, thank you for a very successful convention. I appreciate your active participation, and I look forward to ways in which we might continue our conversations at the upcoming clergy day I have scheduled for March 29.

In my address I shared with you that I had been notified that some of my colleagues had nominated me to be a candidate for Presiding Bishop and that I was prayerfully considering that nomination in consultation with my family, my spiritual director, and others. I have also spent a great deal of time, some on retreat at Holy Cross, praying my way through this difficult decision.

I have come to the conclusion that I should allow my name to go forward for consideration by my colleagues, in whose judgment and faithfulness I have complete confidence. Enough of my colleagues have been supportive of this step that I think I must pay attention to what God may be asking me to do. They have convinced me that there are some things that would be brought to the table by my candidacy. For them, it seems to be being a person who believes the actions taken in 2003 were the right things to do and at the same time respects those who disagree and has worked very hard to listen and find a way forward, particularly in the House of Bishops. For me, it is that I have been formed by you, your voices and experiences as the people of God in Central, Eastern, and Northern Kentucky; the experiences of rural poverty in Appalachia complicated by environmental neglect; and the way you have taught me to pursue the mission of God with a reliance on creativity and fresh thinking rather than material resources. I trust that the election process itself will call me to grow in faith, and that is reason enough to be willing to be part of what will no doubt be a great adventure. Serving as Presiding Bishop, of course, would be an even greater adventure, and whether or not I am called to do that I now happily leave to my brothers and sisters in the House of Bishops to discern.

I will be quite frank with you that one of the most troubling parts of coming to this decision for me has been my fear that I might inadvertently send a message to the people of our diocese that I had ceased to care for them or our ministry together. I was particularly worried about that in light of the reality that my predecessor, Bishop Wimberly, had also been a candidate for Presiding Bishop and had left the diocese soon after not being elected.

All I can do is assure you that my love for the people of this diocese and my excitement and enthusiasm for the ministry we share are unchanged, just as my excitement and enthusiasm for the people of St. Bartholomew's were unchanged when I accepted your call to become your bishop. The only thing that I know to do is to pursue the mission and ministry we share with the same energy that I have always brought to it from now until the last minute we have to share it together,

whether that comes as a result of this summer's election or at some more distant time in the future.

I also thought it might help to share with you the answer I gave to the question of why I was willing to be part of this process when I was first contacted about it last spring. That answer is enclosed.

I ask for your prayers now perhaps more than I ever have. I assure you of mine for all of you. Whatever may come, serving as your bishop will continue to own my heart. For all the ways you continue to draw me closer to the love of Christ, I am deeply grateful.

Faithfully yours,

Stacy F. Sauls

Bishop of Lexington