

An Interview with the Bishop-elect

with Texas Episcopalian editor Carol E. Barnwell and Bishop Coadjutor-elect Andy Doyle

CEB: You were very emotional when your election was announced. What was going through your mind as the successive ballots were read and when the bishop announced you had been elected on May 24?

AD: I really could not believe it. At the third ballot I still did not believe it was possible. There are moments today when I still find it hard to believe. For days and nights following the election, JoAnne and I would find ourselves sitting quietly, then just laughing out of incredible joy and disbelief ... “Can you believe what they did? No ...” then laughter. On May 24 the diocese did a transformative thing and called out through the election for visionary leadership that will transform me into a bishop of the church and transform the diocese.

I have to tell you since that day, at any one moment, I feel the mighty weight of the office and the long line of leaders whose shoulders I now stand upon, and the sheer joy as I look at the faces in the diocese. You are smiling. There is great joy in this moment. And, while we might tend to believe the election is about me, it is about us and where we want to go, and who we want to be. I find that this hopeful spirit ... kind of makes us all smile.



CEB: What one event or “awakening” made you decide to stand for election?

AD: I really believed I was called to continue as canon to the ordinary for the next bishop, not to *be* the next Bishop of Texas. Friends, with whom I would trust everything, came to me and said I should consider putting my name in. I tried to back out, but they pushed and said that I was being unfaithful. We prayed a lot together and when the time came I knew it wasn't about me, or being elected. It was about being faithful. God was doing something, something I might not agree with, but that I needed to be faithful to the voices along my path. So, I put my name in. I didn't feel as though I was “running” for bishop. I felt that I was being called to be myself and lead as I would lead as bishop. Finding this voice was difficult as I have enjoyed being Bishop Wimberly's canon.



CEB: Did you have any epiphanies during the walkabouts? After the election?

AD: I have not been formed by Jesus Christ in this manner since I wrestled with the calling to ordination as a priest. Today, I am being molded and transformed into your bishop. The epiphanies are daily and weekly. Some are comfortable, some are not. I have a host of friends and mentors helping me. I have a whole diocese praying for me. Bishop Wimberly has been a tremendous friend and mentor through this process. He is always there to catch me and to help guide me as I learn. My prayer life and biblical studies are alive and full.



CEB: What will your focus be as coadjutor?

AD: I am gaining clarity on our vision for the work that is ahead. Right now I find that I am doing a lot of listening and praying with people. I am meeting with the clergy of the diocese by convocation and listening to them about what they hear and see. I am also telling them my story and about my journey with Jesus. Following my ordination I will begin to meet regionally with the people of the diocese (people and clergy) to do some more listening. Bishop Wimberly has been very gracious in allowing me to make this time as coadjutor with the people of the diocese a priority. I know many of you but we are getting to know each other in a new way. This listening seems essential in casting the vision for the work ahead.



CEB: In several interviews, you have talked about being a more youthful church. What does that mean for those who might not be so young? Where will their place be?

AD: My vision is that we will now be a youthful church ... this is more about figuring how to use the gifts we have been given to communicate to new generations. We have got to communicate in a way that proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that has already tuned us out. I have also challenged the youth and young adults to claim the leadership that by baptism is theirs, given by Jesus himself. Youth and young adults have to step forward and take us on, challenge us, and push us out of our doors into the streets of our city and on line.

I have a catholic vision, a universal vision, of our mission. I envision a church were we are African American, Latino, Anglo, Asian, baby boomers, builders, xers, poor, rich, republican, democrat, soldier, professor, student,

orthodox, liberal, progressive, conservative ... This is after all who we are now. We are already a church filled with every condition of humankind. As bishop it seems essential for me to recognize this and call out the vision of ministry to the world around us.

We have got to have a truly global understanding of our mission. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 22:9 says: “Go therefore into the main streets and invite everyone.” As a church we have to stop figuring out who isn't invited. Jesus is clear we have to invite everyone, we must work in the fields as missionaries to all people.

We have a unique and important understanding of the Christian Faith. We should be unabashedly proclaiming that we are here as Christians who happen to be Anglicans, who happen to be Episcopalians, and that our mission is nothing less than transforming the world.



CEB: You have said you will be a non-anxious presence. Can you talk about what that means?

AD: On my pectoral cross, just below the Good Shepherd, is a lion and lamb laying down together. For me, an image of Jesus' flock: the Church. This particular symbol of the Kingdom of God seems an important reminder of the Kingdom of God we are to be proclaiming. I simply believe that our Lord Jesus is head of this Church. It is a non-anxious presence that steers to the hope of Jesus Christ in our midst that will enable us to walk through the times before us. Shouldn't we have at least enough hope as Jesus has in his Church? A lack of anxiety, does not mean a lack of leadership though. I intend to lead well, knowing who I am as your bishop. I am also clear of my role within the historic episcopate and within the Anglican Communion.



CEB: In our diocese, there are “31 Flavors” of expressions of worship and “personalities” within our congregations: traditional, contemporary, conservative, liberal, multicultural and every shade in between ... how will you hold us all together.

AD: Recently I had dinner with [the Rev.] Dean Calcote and I asked him what issues faced the church when he began his ministry. He said: “Colors in the liturgy, high/low church, and if we were going to call priests Father or Mr.”

We have always been a diverse church with different ideas about who we are supposed to be. My predecessors have managed to lead through all of this, sometimes as prophets, sometimes as executives, sometimes as pastors, sometimes as missionaries.

I am following eight very unique and great individuals. Each has given us something we could not obtain alone. Bishop Gregg was a missionary and pastor who built up the church ... literally. Bishop Kinsolving was a leader of hope in a time of great pain and sorrow leading us through the First World War. Bishop Quin was a visionary who believed in growing the church by reaching out into the community and guided us through the Great Depression, World War II and the Korean War. Bishop Hines was a prophet of the first order calling us to shake the foundations by doing something proactive about poverty and racism. Bishop Richardson was a great pastor who laid solid foundations for our future financial well being by freeing us from debt and gave us the ordination of women, and led us through the second half of the Vietnam era.

Bishop Benitez was a great steward of our resources growing our wealth into assets for future ministries. And, in his long episcopate, brought youth and church planting back into focus for us as necessary ingredients for a healthy church.

Bishop Payne called us to return to the bedrock of our faith: the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. What a great time it was to be a young priest under the leadership of such a visionary! Bishop Payne had an enormous influence on my ministry and still does.

He is truly one of the kindest and most generous men I know. I count on his wisdom tremendously.

I am also grateful for the leadership and ministry my friends Bishop High and Bishop Harrison. They have been true partners these past six years. I love to work with them. I need them and am looking forward to continuing to work closely with them. I listen when they speak and take their words very seriously and to heart. They are both different, but essential to who we are as a diocese today.

And, Bishop Wimberly. Bishop Wimberly

cast a vision of unity in the midst of division. He did what few were willing to do following actions taken at the General Convention in 2003, and that was dare to say we would be Anglican *and* Episcopalian. Indeed he kept us together when it would have been all too easy to walk away from one another. He has been a steadfast leader in a time of great change. I know him as a faithful and caring man who has built a life and ministry upon a strong foundation that is Jesus. He has been a friend, mentor, and a great man to work for and with these past six years. I am enjoying our new relationship more than you can imagine.

They have built hospitals and turned them into health systems. They have planted churches. They have desegregated schools and camps. They were the first to ordain women and one is our first woman bishop. They are people whose faith has changed the landscape of the Diocese of Texas and me.

I couldn't ask for a greater lineage to inherit and build upon. I couldn't ask for greater partners in ministry.

What I know though is this...none of my predecessors and companions did this work alone. They were simply vessels for the grace that was and is Jesus Christ. So, as I look towards November 22, I am humbled, I stand in awe, I am inspired, and that is when I pray the words of John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness and at the river Jordan, "Lord, may I decrease, that you may increase."



CEB: What do you look most forward to as bishop of the Diocese of Texas? What are you most uncertain about?

AD: I love the people of the diocese of Texas. I have spent six years traveling most Sundays and preaching and teaching throughout the diocese. It has been one of the favorite aspects of my job. I am truly looking forward to being with you, to live with you in this church for a long time, and to be a companion with Jesus as together we all walk into our future.



CEB: What do you want people to know about you?

AD: I love to paint. I enjoy the outdoors. I carry my fishing gear in my car ... just in case. Time with JoAnne, Caisa, and Zoë only makes the day better.

Ask the Bishop-Elect about his Favorite Things

What did you want to be when you grew up? Initially I wanted to be: Mel Brindley and manage Camp Allen

My favorite music: I like everything from old Country and Blues (Blind Lemon Jefferson and Ernest Tubbs) to Alternative (Black Rebel Motorcycle Club) and Latino (Yo La Tengo and Sisters Morales)

My favorite novel: *Jayber Crow* by Wendell Berry

My favorite fictional hero: Santiago, from Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*

My favorite movie: It is still "The Man Who Would Be King"

My favorite TV show: Don't really have one

When not working, I enjoy: coffee, reading, being with Jo, fishing, dancing

My favorite meal: Mexican Food

I am most irritated by: short questions and one word answers

For me, an influential thinker of the past was: Friedrich Schleiermacher and Jonathan Edwards

A current major influence: N. T. Wright and Brian McLaren

I get the greatest pleasure from: fly fishing a new river

I am most uncomfortable when: rarely

My biggest phobia/fear is: heights, ask JoAnne about the 2005 Christmas lights

The trait I most like about myself is: creativity

The trait I most like in others: conversation

My best feature is: my hat

I wish I could: break dance

My proudest moment: getting my college diploma

My fondest memory was: watching JoAnne come up the aisle at our wedding

My greatest regret: not feeling able to earn a PHD

If I could be anyone in history, I would be: Athenasius (I am a Church Greek)

My most treasured possession: the love of my wife

My last purchase was: purple shirts

The purpose of life: to Glorify God.