

To Bishop Sparks and members of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northern Indiana

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write this open letter to you as the Sixth Bishop of The Diocese of Northern Indiana. I formally request that you reconsider your decisions as the bishop of the diocese and as the Standing Committee concerning your action not to endorse The Reverend Charlie Holt to serve as Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of Florida. The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Florida now has published their rebuttal of the findings of the panel of review, and, in another document, over 450 lay members of that diocese have written a request of the church to approve their bishop. Further, new information about the process has arisen.

The emerging information concerns two matters. First, The Committee of review published a scathing report which accused the sitting Bishop and others of malpractice and destructive behavior. Then the committee, released their report before the Standing Committee of the Diocese could respond. Other information has come to light concerning several members of the panel of review which raises concern as to the objectivity of the panel. A second matter of concern is the inappropriate material published by the panel. The panel is simply charged with the task of deciding if the process of election complied with Canon Law. There is no provision for a panel to choose sides, attack a sitting bishop or malign anyone. The panel has sided with a very small group of individuals, while ignoring the will of two successive electing conventions which arrived at the same result. A strong majority of the diocese has spoken convincingly. Does this diocese now have to endure a THIRD convention to arrive at the same conclusion? Further, do these cumulative decisions really imply that there is no longer room in the leadership of our church for conservative and moderate people?

While there might have been some procedural irregularities in the election, the Diocese of Florida showed good intent by following the process and conducting a second convention. No one circumvented any process, nor did anyone suggest an irregular consecration. Further, Father Holt decided to withdraw from contesting an election he had clearly won. He did so to make the process of the next election easier for all. This shows him to be a person of integrity and charity. These actions underscore my personal knowledge through the years of Fr. Holt and his wife, Brooke. They are deeply grounded and committed Christians who are uniquely equipped to lead the Diocese of Florida.

So, as a matter of institutional juridical justice, pastoral consideration and emerging information, I request you to reconsider your decision, and I look forward to hearing your response.

Faithfully,

+Francis C. Gray

VI Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Indiana