

Message to St. Martin's Church, February 3, 2012

Dear People of St. Martin's Church,

You will remember that, in our tradition, clergy are ordained for the whole church and not just to serve one specific congregation or diocese. As such, it is every clergyperson's obligation, at certain moments in life, to be willing to engage in a process of discernment outside of the congregation one is currently serving. Such is the case with me now. At a time when I am very happy and satisfied to be serving St. Martin's Church, I am also one of six nominees for Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Virginia to our north. There is a lengthy process ahead that includes the election on April 21, so there is no forgone conclusion that I will be called to leave St. Martin's. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that I will continue as your rector. We can only plan for the reality we are in – not the reality that is not ours. I'm aware that our Church's discernment process of finding candidates and electing a Bishop Suffragan is an unfamiliar one to many people, and I strongly encourage you to read the excellent information provided at <http://www.thediocese.net/BishopSuffraganSearchProcess/>. In addition, I am happy to answer any questions you may have. In the meantime, I hope you receive this news, albeit bittersweet, as a compliment. The Diocese of Virginia has observed our work together and found it to be inspiring, and I agree with them: the vitality, mission and spiritual depth of our congregation are exciting, and they witness to the Holy Spirit's work among us. Please keep me and our whole Church in your prayers in the coming days and months.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.