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## *I am a Candidate for Bishop of Washington*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

Dear Friends,

For the past few months, faithful members of the Diocese of Washington have been in conversation with me about being a candidate for their next bishop. This has been a new and unusual process for me. Many of you know that, in the past, I have resisted most such conversations about running for bishop anywhere. Like other clergy I know, I am among a group who truly enjoys parish ministry. I have been asked to run for bishop countless times, and I have refused those opportunities.



However, this time around, I accepted the invitation to be in discernment about a possible vocation to be Bishop of Washington. Washington, D.C., of course, is the nation's capital; and the Diocese of Washington (which also includes four counties in Maryland) represents a unique and challenging setting for ministry. The next bishop of that diocese will not only oversee a wide diversity of parishes, and a wide diversity of clergy; but the next bishop will be expected to speak in a very political setting on behalf of the wider church. They have said that they seek a bishop "who is willing and able to have a broad ministry, as a compassionate pastor to parishes and clergy in a diverse diocese, as a leader of complex institutions and as a spokesperson for the Church in the Capital and internationally."

My past two months of holy discernment have actually shown me that I do have some thoughts, opinions, and even visions for what a bishop should be. Having been a parish priest for over twenty-five years, I find that I do envision what an effective and inspiring bishop could be. Perhaps God is calling me to consider that vocation as the next piece of my life. Perhaps God is calling me to expand my community to include Washington and the wider world.

In turn, the Search Committee of the Diocese of Washington has also been attracted to what my life and ministry might offer that diocese, and, from there, the wider world. Thus, on Thursday, March 31, they will announce that I am one of their final five candidates for Ninth Bishop of Washington. They will publish my biography and my written answers to their original search questions. For two and half months, people will ask me all sorts of further questions. Then, on June 18, 2011, the Diocese of Washington will gather to elect one of their five candidates. I am truly honored to be among that group.

However, this decision to let my name go forward for nomination has been a difficult one. I truly love the Cathedral of St. Philip, I dearly love Atlanta, and I deeply love this entire area of north Georgia, where I grew up. This place has been my community, and I am a man who needs community. God has always called me to oversee and to inspire holy community; and God has always called me to preach and to teach from community. If I am elected, I hope I will not so much be leaving my present community as much as I will be enlarging God's community. And, of course, if I am not elected, I hope I can vigorously continue a beautiful and fulfilling ministry here in Atlanta.

Wherever God calls me next, even if it is a call to remain happy and challenged here at the Cathedral of St. Philip, I know that God will call me to beloved community. I will appreciate your prayers during this time of holy discernment. Please

pray for the Cathedral of St. Philip, as we continue to worship and serve God in Atlanta and in the world. Please join me in praying for the Diocese of Washington as they discern who their next bishop will be. And, finally, as God calls you, do pray for me! I have been blessed with a wonderful ministry here at St. Philip's, and it is quite a difficult thing even to imagine not being here with you.

Grace and peace to you, in Jesus Christ our Lord,

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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