

AN ANSWER TO Bobby Hall+

This post was written by Bobby Hall, a chiropractor who "read" for orders in Arkansas. Like +Strawn, another mail order cleric, he really has little concept of canon law. I now am glad I made it to "most" of my early morning classes at Nashotah House where I learned to understand and respect canon law.

**\*With reference to the reportedly accurate piece on St. Stephens in Athens TX. The truth is not found here.**

**The facts in the case are as follows. The Priest at Athens by his Actions had reduced this parish from a viable parish to the point it was no longer a self sustaining Parish struggling to meet its every day needs. It had not been able to pay the annual assessments to the national church or the salary of the priest for over two years. This placed the parish, by church canons, in the position that it should revert back to mission status. Numerous parishioners had been in contact with Bishop Strawn voicing their concern with the actions of the current priest.**

FACT Yes we had lost some members who were substantial donors. We buried our Sr. Warden and another gentleman who was our largest donor. These funerals were this past year. Prior to that we lost by death when I first arrived the Mayor of Athens, the mother of +Strawn and a magnificent woman whose children and grand children all stopped coming after her death. Another family moved to Oregon, a member of the vestry was moved to Kansas by her employer and two families quit the church the Sunday following +Strawn's election when I made it clear we were not leaving the ACA. These families were acutely aware of +Strawn's disposition and his constant meddling during Fr. Harper's tenure and my tenure.

I did not cause the deaths of these people nor forced any one to leave the city. I did bring in or cause to return 26 individuals added to the rolls since my arrival. Despite these considerable losses of influential members and about \$30,000 dollars per annum we are measurably as viable today as we were when I arrived.

Our annual budget is about \$55,000. We have 3 worship services on Sunday, daily public Evening Prayer, Mass on Holy Days, by weekly Morning Prayer in 5 nursing homes, weekly adult respite day care, community breakfast forums monthly, and College St Market quarterly. We have a newsletter that goes to 250 people 9 times a year and has received many complements as well as financial contributions from several who are not members of our parish. We have adult Sunday bible study and although we currently are lacking small children we have two trained catechists for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. We have a first class web site.

Excuse me if I consider our parish viable. We pay our mortgage (that +Strawn and his contemporaries left us) and our utilities, advertising, supplies, etc. on time without exception. And the Rector is quite satisfied with his compensation. We did not pay our National assessment the year before because our then excellent and pastoral Bishop waived it for us given our loss of the two largest donors. We would have paid this year's in December as many parishes so do. Of course this year they got the assessment by extortion.

Obviously I did not plan on our leaving the ACA when I wrote that check. I may not be the sharpest tool in the shed but I am not that dull.

As far as contact with the + Bobby mentions, that email and telephone chatter took place all during my tenure as well as Fr. Harper's even when Strawn was just a priest. Neither Harper's nor my ministry was supported by Strawn's followers at St. Stephen's and he did little to correct that. That is why within a few weeks following Strawn's election All Saints San Antonio, the largest parish in the diocese with Fr. Harper as Rector left the ACA. Isn't it interesting that the 2 priests who have had close relations with this man have had to separate?

**At the annual synod this situation was discussed in open meeting and tabled for future action. Following synod on recommendation of the standing committee and Bishop Strawn the decision was made to return St Stephens to a mission status and Fr. Pardue was inhibited for a six month period with admonishment not to enter the church property until he could get his act together.**

Not even close Bobby. The resolution by the standing committee was tabled for a full year at the synod because they realized that we were canonically entitled to Parish status and there is no diocesan or ACA canon requiring payment of national or diocesan assessments. "Return to" We were never a mission. We have always been a Parish much more viable than most of the congregations in the ACA, let alone the diocese. Fr. Pardue was not inhibited at this point but suspended for an indefinite period of time in direct violation of the Constitution of the ACA. And both the mission status usurpation effort and suspension occurred after the vestry met and called for a meeting to consider disassociation.

**This placed the parish at that time effectively under the Bishop as pastor with visiting priests meeting the needs of the congregation. During this time Fr. Pardue started his own personal search for another denomination who would accept him although he was under inhibition.**

How dare this priest in Arkansas assume what I did or did not do? There was no search although I have been contacted by other jurisdictions with support and loving kindness. Suspended from ministry I did not conduct public services and worshipped elsewhere a directed by the suspension. I did continue to call on a sick parishioner who was nearing death in a Tyler hospital. The visiting priest was too lazy to travel to that hospital.

**Fr. Pardue in direct defiance to the Bishop called a meeting of the parish and held the meeting without certification of those voting as registered communicants of the parish. The vote to leave was by a factor of one vote with Fr. Pardue, who could not legally vote in the action voting, and a registered communicant of another Anglican jurisdiction in Louisiana, who also could not legally vote. At no time was the parish threatened with lawsuits but was made aware that the actions taken were in direct conflict to canon law.**

As Ronald Reagan would probably say, "Now there you go again Mr. Priest." Our bylaws do not permit me or any single person to call a meeting. The vestry did so unanimously. And they did so before the + fired them all. The

reason the vote appeared close is because we allowed those supporting the diocese to vote provisionally even if they were not qualified to do so. And our present bylaws (currently being revised) do not permit many of our active members to vote unless they have been confirmed by an ACA + or received. In other words the actual vote would have been 4/5 rather 2/3. And I would be happy to share the transcript of the meeting where +Strawn's and Chancellor Tara Keehr's

representative Fr. Lewis Berry of Houston said and I quote "There will be lawsuits and endless depositions." Like Bobby I suspect he has never read the constitution of the ACA where it specifically prohibits lawsuits over temporal matters.

Show me the Canon or Constitution article and section that prohibits my vote that is guaranteed by our charter from the state of Texas. As to our Jr. Warden who also belongs to the ACC if such a canon or constitution provision were in effect then the Rt. Rev. David Moyer ACA Bishop of the Armed Forces and Rector of TEC parish in Rosemont Pa. would be disqualified from serving and that would be a serious loss. Perhaps Bobby is eyeing the See for himself.

**At this point St Stephens is faced with a property note it cannot meet and struggling to meet the utility and other operating expenses. They are desperately hoping to find a denomination that would accept them and also give them financial assistance in their day to day operation.**

Dear Bobby you do not know what you are talking about. Had the 4 legally qualified plus 3 non qualified voters had there way the forgoing would be quite true as all of them put together contributed less than 3% of the annual giving to our parish and only one of them, the Bishops three times married sister in law ever attended regularly. This rump crew would have been left with building had they prevailed. The vast majority of the parish would have become a newly constituted church.

We are not desperately seeking a denomination. After careful and prayerful discernment we will probably seek admission as a parish fully self sustaining in a jurisdiction that is in communion with ACNA and the See of Canterbury as the Affirmation of St Louis envisioned.

Had I known that the ACA never intended to carry out that primary provision of the affirmation, that is seek reunification with Canterbury I would never have been ordained in the ACA. Had I known that a bishop would be allowed to ignore the Constitutions and canons of the church and the diocese I would never have been ordained in the ACA.

**If we are going to accept news articles to this site it would be nice if a little effort were taken to verify their content before publishing them.\***

Bobby, Bobby, Bobby: if you are going to question the integrity of the news site you ought to try to get your information straight.