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Here are highlights from a letter presented by Minnesota laity to Bishop Jelinek at the 2003 General Convention of the Episcopal Church of America. (1) Since then, Bp. Jelinek has served as interim priest-in-charge at several parishes, most recently St. Paul's K Street in Washington, D.C. (2)

--Save Ascension

A CALL TO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

Laity Rip Bishop James Jelinek on State of Diocese

To our bishop, and to The Diocese of Minnesota:

We, the undersigned, as individual members of this diocese, and followers of the risen Christ, come before our Diocese and our bishop, the Rt. Rev. James L. Jelinek, at this, the 145th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Minnesota. We come before our bishop today with penitent hearts, in a spirit of submission, and out of a desire for right relationship with our God, our Church, and each other. We come before our bishop today to voice our concerns regarding the current state of our diocese...

* Bishop Jelinek, at his consecration, promised to make both ministries with youth and the planting of new churches priorities for the diocese. Both priorities are currently in a state of apparent neglect.

We are concerned about the atrophied state of youth ministries in our diocese, and about the number of churches that have been closed in recent years, while no new churches have been started in our diocese in 16 years.

* We are concerned about the abandonment of the Plan for Mission. We are further concerned that the funds collected for the Plan for Mission have recently been moved...without a plan or designation for future use.

* After the diocesan convention rejected [Bp. Jelinek's] proposed vision statement, the bishop and Diocesan Council approved a new vision statement for the diocese without submitting it to the Convention.

* During a time of financial strain, both our bishop and the Canon to the Ordinary

received substantial pay raises, well above the normal range.

* We are concerned by the number of staff members that have left the Episcopal Center in recent years, without clear disclosure of the circumstances surrounding their unexpected departures.

* Moreover, we are concerned about the lack of accountability demonstrated by Episcopal Center leadership concerning these departures. We are further concerned that several of these staff members were offered severance packages contingent upon agreement to strict non-disclosure provisions. We believe provisions of this nature to be damaging to the health of our diocese.

* We are concerned by the lack of cultural and ethnic diversity represented by the staff of the Episcopal Center. This is especially egregious, given the number of new hires in recent years.

* We are concerned that there are no standards against which to measure the Episcopal Center and its staff. In [their] absence it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine either the purpose of the Episcopal Center or the value it creates for those who support the diocese through their Fair Share contributions.

While we do not believe that it is just to withhold payments to the diocese, at the same time, we do not believe that it is just that we are unable to hold accountable those who administer our diocesan resources.

We sign this letter in order to begin the restoration of right relationships with our God, our Church, and each other. We ask for forgiveness. We pray that the Holy Spirit remain present throughout this convention. May God's will be done before our own. Amen.

(1) For the full text of the Minnesota laity letter, use this URL:

http://listserv.virtueonline.org/pipermail/virtueonline_listserv.virtueonline.org/2002-October/004234.html

(2) To learn more about Bp. Jelinek's tenure at St. Paul's K Street (August 2013 through June of this year), visit their parish website:

<http://www.stpauls-kst.com/parish-life/epistle>

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