

**The Very Reverend Dr Jeffrey John, *The Dean***  
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THE CATHEDRAL AND  
ABBEY CHURCH OF  
**SAINT ALBAN**

18<sup>th</sup> March 2017

to the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon

Dear Bishop John

### **Election/Appointment of a Bishop of Llandaff**

Thank you for your letter. I do not intend to treat it as private and confidential, nor is this reply private and confidential.

I have repeatedly found that in these matters bishops and other ecclesiastical authorities routinely abuse confidentiality as a cloak for injustice and deception. I admire those who have breached the confidentiality of the Electoral College because they saw that the oath of confidentiality was being abused in precisely that way. In face of the kind of threats that you make in your letter, they are the ones who have acted with courage and principle.

I am aware that you began proceedings at the Electoral College with a statement that neither homosexuality nor a civil partnership were a bar to any candidate's eligibility. What followed however proves the statement hypocritical and untrue.

In the course of discussion a number of homophobic remarks were made and were left unchecked and unreprimanded by the chair. Much more importantly, the only arguments adduced against my appointment – in particular by two of the bishops - were directly related to my homosexuality and/or civil partnership – namely that my appointment would bring unwelcome and unsettling publicity to the diocese, and that it might create difficulties for the future Archbishop in relation to the Anglican Communion.

In a telephone call on the evening of March 3<sup>rd</sup> one of the bishops present confirmed to me that these were the only objections adduced, and explained that the bishops were 'just too exhausted' to deal with the problems they believed my appointment would cause. I put it to you that this is not a moral or legal basis on which to exclude me.

The injustice of the arguments about publicity and the Anglican Communion was pointed out to you several times in the college by the Llandaff electors and by others. This is precisely the way that anti-gay discrimination always works. You were also reminded that I am in a celibate relationship. My situation is exactly similar to that of the Bishop of Grantham, which was recently defended by the Secretary-General of the ACC, Archbishop Idowu-Fearon, as being entirely compatible with the regulations of any Anglican province.

From very early on in the proceedings of the college the Llandaff electors were unanimous in my support, and they have remained so since then. Bizarrely, you and the other bishops have taken no account of this unanimity, nor the long and painstaking research the Llandaff electors did before coming up with my name. To ride roughshod of the very clearly expressed, unanimous view of a diocese in this way is extraordinary, unprecedented and foolish.

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After the stalemate in the college you announced that soundings would be taken across all the Welsh dioceses and beyond. In response very many people – we suspect hundreds from the diocese of Llandaff and beyond – wrote to support my candidature, because they assumed that I was still a candidate. The Llandaff electors remained firm, and their support was reinforced across the diocese.

Nevertheless, at your meeting last week you decided, arbitrarily, to ignore the submissions that you had asked for, and to declare that those who were discussed at the Electoral College were now, in fact, no longer to be considered. This is a clear and ludicrous breach of process, and a further insult to the people of the diocese, and very many others who took the trouble to contribute their view.

I trust there will now be an open and honest examination of this process in the light of day, and that you will not attempt to appoint a bishop for Llandaff until it is complete.

Yours sincerely

Jeffrey John

Copies to: the Bishops of Bangor; St Asaph; Monmouth; St Davids

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