



PRESS RELEASE

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 25, 2010

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Members of Mount Calvary Episcopal Church Elect to Leave the Episcopal Church

BALTIMORE, MD – On Sunday, October 24, members of Mount Calvary Episcopal Church, Baltimore, voted to separate from the Episcopal community and become an Anglican-use parish within the Roman Catholic Church. Mount Calvary parishioners voted on two resolutions – the first to leave the Episcopal Church and the second to seek entry into the Roman Catholic Church as an Anglican-use parish.

Of the 45 eligible voters, 28 were present at the meeting and cast written ballots for both resolutions. The ballot for Resolution 1 resulted in 24 yea votes, 2 nay votes and 2 abstentions. The ballot for Resolution 2 resulted in 24 yea votes, 3 nay votes and 1 abstention. The two tellers were not members of the congregation. The Rev. Canon Scott Slater, canon to the ordinary of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, observed and validated the tallying of both votes. The president of the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland was also present as an observer during the church's election.

The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, bishop diocesan of Maryland, said following the voting, "I am saddened that members of this small congregation have found a need to leave the Episcopal Church, of which Mount Calvary has been a part since 1842. For those who are leaving I wish God's blessing upon them."

The church's nine-member vestry, or parish council, voted unanimously September 14 on the same two resolutions. Members were invited to the October 24 vote via letter from the rector, the Rev. Jason Catania. Bishop Sutton made a formal visit to the church on October 10, celebrating the Eucharist, then hosting a meeting with members that he called "an honest, open discussion."

In a letter to the editor in the *Baltimore Sun* published Oct. 22, 2009, Bishop Sutton and the Rt. Rev. John L. Rabb, bishop suffragan of Maryland, reacted to the Vatican announcement "of new church structures to receive groups of former Anglicans" into the Roman Catholic Church. Their statement, made nearly a year ago to the day of the Mount Calvary vote still resonates today:

"Although we are historically and presently one spiritual family living in two "houses," we also realize that our Lord Jesus Christ founded one Church -- not an Episcopal Church, and a Roman Church, and a Methodist Church, etc., but one Church -- "one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church." We all look forward to the day when that essential Christian unity can be even more visibly expressed.



PRESS RELEASE

“The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, in following its call to follow Jesus, welcomes persons into its spiritual community and into positions of leadership who may not be welcomed in other communities. We are a diocese that receives warmly traditionalists and progressives, conservatives and liberals, women and men, married and single clergy, and persons oriented to the same gender. We are deeply committed to the ministry and mission of our Lord, and will continue to extend the hand of hospitality to those who want to walk with us on the journey of Christian spirituality, mercy and justice.”

The Rev. Jason Catania, rector of Mount Calvary Church, said, “It is the hope of the clergy, vestry, and people of Mount Calvary that this transition can be accomplished with efficiency and with all due sensitivity to all involved. We are grateful for those members of the leadership of the Diocese of Maryland who were present to observe the meeting, and we look forward to working with the Diocese as we begin this journey seeking to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

Regarding the physical property of Mount Calvary Church and its assets, Canon 7, Section 4 of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church states: “All real and personal property held by or for the benefit of any Parish, Mission or Congregation is held in trust for this Church and the Diocese thereof in which such Parish, Mission or Congregation is located.”

The bishops and the Standing Committee will work with the remaining parishioners of Mount Calvary to discern the future ministry of the parish and its urban community.

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland is a Christian community of 22,000 households in 116 congregations covering 10 counties and Baltimore City. Please visit www.episcopalmaryland.org for more information. The Episcopal Church is a community of 2.4 million members in 100 nationwide dioceses, 10 overseas dioceses and six extra-provincial territories; www.episcopalchurch.org. The Anglican Communion is a global community of 77 million Anglicans in 38 member churches/provinces, including The Episcopal Church; www.anglicancommunion.org.

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