

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-D073
Title: Procedure for Reconciliation: Amend Canon 1.17.6
Proposer: McKellaston, Ms. Louisa
Topic: Canons, Discipline

Directly Related: (Attached)

1997-A006 Amend Canon I.17.6 [Refusal of Holy Communion]
1982-A048 Amend Canon I.16 [Of Regulations Respecting the Laity]

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).

D073 - Procedure for Reconciliation: Amend Canon 1.17.6

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: McKellaston, Ms. Louisa

Endorsed by: Downing, The Rev. Patty, Bond, Mrs. Kate

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: Yes

Requests New Interim Body: No

Directs an Interim Body: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 02 - Constitution & Canons

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents:

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention encourage dioceses to train bishops and clergy in the appropriate application of the Disciplinary Rubrics found on page 409 of the Book of Common Prayer and of Canon I.17.6; and be it further;

Resolved, That canon I.17.6 be amended as follows:

<Amended text as it would appear if adopted and concurred. Scroll below the line of asterisks (***) to see the version showing all deleted and added text.>**

Sec. 6. A person to whom the Sacraments of the Church shall have been refused, or who has been repelled from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, or who has been informed of an intention to refuse or repel him or her from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, shall have the right to meet with the priest who has issued the refusal and request a process for reconciliation, and may appeal to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. A Priest who refuses or repels a person from the Holy Communion, or who communicates to a person an intent to repel that person from the Holy Communion shall inform that person, in writing, within fourteen days thereof of (i) the reasons therefor, (ii) the process for

reconciliation and restoration and (iii) the person's right to appeal to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall be required to admit to the Sacraments a person so refused or repelled without the written direction of the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. The Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority may in certain circumstances see fit to require the person to be admitted or restored because of the insufficiency of the cause assigned by the member of the Clergy. If it shall appear to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority that there is sufficient cause to justify refusal of the Holy Communion, however, appropriate steps shall be taken to institute such inquiry as may be directed by the Canons of the Diocese; and should no such Canon exist, the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority shall proceed according to such principles of law and equity as will ensure an impartial investigation and judgment, which judgment shall be made in writing within sixty days of the appeal and which shall also specify the steps required for readmission to Holy Communion.

<Proposed amended resolution text showing exact changes being made:>

Sec. 6. A person to whom the Sacraments of the Church shall have been refused, or who has been repelled from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, or who has been informed of an intention to refuse or repel him or her from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, *shall have the right to meet with the priest who has issued the refusal and request a process for reconciliation, and* may appeal to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. A Priest who refuses or repels a person from the Holy Communion, or who communicates to a person an intent to repel that person from the Holy Communion shall inform that person, in writing, within fourteen days thereof of (i) the reasons therefor, ~~and~~ (ii) *the process for reconciliation and restoration and* (iii) ~~his or her~~ *the person's* right to appeal to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall be required to admit to the Sacraments a person so refused or repelled without the written direction of the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. The Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority may in certain circumstances see fit to require the person to be admitted or restored because of the insufficiency of the cause assigned by the member of the Clergy. If it shall appear to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority that there is sufficient cause to justify refusal of the Holy Communion, however, appropriate steps shall be taken to institute such inquiry as may be directed by the Canons of the Diocese; and should no such Canon exist, the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority shall proceed according to such principles of law and equity as will ensure an impartial investigation and judgment, which judgment shall be made in writing within sixty days of the appeal and which shall also specify the steps required for readmission to Holy Communion.

Explanation

In these uneasy times when conflict is rampant in our society and discourse often more strident than civil, it is imperative that the Episcopal Church uphold the ideals of Becoming a Beloved Community and stand fast by the Baptismal Covenant such that conflicts within any church body be subject to prayer, discernment, and a path toward reconciliation. Across the church there have been incidents when parishioners were denied participation in parish life

and the sacraments, as well as entrance to church premises, and were not given access to a process of reconciliation. Amending canon I.17.6 strengthens the mandate to “specify the steps required for readmission to Holy Communion.”



Resolution Number: 1997-A006
Title: Amend Canon I.17.6 [Refusal of Holy Communion]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That Canon I.17.6. is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 6. A person to whom the Sacraments of the Church shall have been refused, or who has been repelled from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, ~~or who desires a judgment as to his or her status in the Church,~~ *or who has been informed of an intention to refuse or repel him or her from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, may lodge a complaint or application with appeal to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. A Priest who refuses or repels a person from the Holy Communion, or who communicates to a person an intent to repel that person from the Holy Communion shall inform that person, in writing, within fourteen days thereof of (i) the reasons therefor and (ii) his or her right to appeal to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall be required to admit to the Sacraments a person so refused or repelled without the written direction of the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. The Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority may in certain circumstances see fit to require the person to be admitted or restored because of the insufficiency of the cause assigned by the member of the Clergy. If it shall appear to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority that there is sufficient cause to justify refusal of the Holy Communion, however, appropriate steps shall be taken to institute such inquiry as may be directed by the Canons of the Diocese; and should no such Canon exist, the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority shall proceed according to such principles of law and equity as will ensure an impartial investigation and judgment ; ,which judgment shall be made in writing within sixty days of the appeal and which shall also specify the steps required for readmission to Holy Communion.*

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 106.



Resolution Number: 1982-A048
Title: Amend Canon I.16 [Of Regulations Respecting the Laity]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That Title I, Canon 16 be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 1(a). All persons who have received the sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost *Spirit, whether in this Church or in another Christian Church, and whose baptisms have been* are duly recorded in this Church, are members thereof.

(b). Members sixteen years of age and over are to be considered adult members.

(c). It is expected that all adult members of the Church, after appropriate instructions, will have made a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and will have been confirmed or received by a Bishop of this Church or by a Bishop of a Church in communion with this Church.

Sec. 2(a). All ~~baptized persons members of this Church who shall for one year next preceding have fulfilled the requirements of the Canon "of the Due Celebration of Sundays," received Holy Communion in this Church at least three times during the preceding year unless for good cause prevented, are to be considered communicants of this Church members of this Church in good standing.~~

(b). For the purposes of statistical consistency throughout the Church, communicants sixteen years of age and older are to be considered adult communicants.

Sec. 3. All ~~such members in good standing who have been confirmed by a Bishop of this Church or a Bishop of a Church in communion with this Church, or, who have been received into this Church by a Bishop of this Church, and who shall, unless for good cause prevented, have received Holy Communion at least thrice during the next preceding year, are communicants in good standing.~~

All communicants of this Church who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be considered communicants in good standing.

Sec. 4 (a). A ~~communicant or baptized member of this Church in good standing, removing from one Parish or the congregation in which his or her membership is recorded, to another, shall be entitled to receive and shall procure from the Rector or Minister of the Parish or Congregation of his or her last enrollment or, if there be no Rector or Minister, from one of the Wardens, a certificate of membership addressed to the Rector or Minister of the Parish or Congregation to which removal is desired, stating indicating that he or she is duly registered or enrolled recorded as a communicant or baptized member (or adult member) in the Parish or Congregation from which he or she desires to be transferred, and recorded as a "baptized member" or "confirmed member" of this Church and whether or not such a member:~~

- 1. is a communicant;*
- 2. is recorded as being in good standing;*
- 3. has been confirmed or received by a Bishop of this Church or a Bishop in communion with this Church.*

~~the Rector or Minister or Warden of the Parish or Congregation to which such communicant or baptized member may remove shall enroll him or her as a communicant or baptized member when such certificate is presented, or, on failure to produce such certificate through no fault of such communicant or baptized member, sufficient in the judgment of said Rector or Minister. Notice of such enrollment in such Parish or Congregation to which such communicant or baptized member shall have removed shall be sent by the Rector or Minister thereof to the Rector of the Parish from which the communicant or baptized member is removed.~~

Upon acknowledgment that a member who has received such certificate has been enrolled in another congregation of this or another Church, the Minister or Warden issuing the certificate shall remove the name of the person from the parish register.

(b). The Minister or Warden of the congregation to which such certificate is surrendered shall record in the parish register the information contained on the presented certificate of membership, and then notify the Minister or Warden of the congregation which issued the certificate that the person has been duly recorded as a member of the new congregation.

Whereupon the person's removal shall be noted in the parish register of the congregation which issued the certificate.

(c). If a member of this Church, not having such a certificate, desires to become a member of the congregation in the place to which he or she has removed, that person shall be directed by the Minister of the said congregation to procure a certificate from the former congregation, although on failure to produce such a certificate through no fault of the person applying, appropriate entry may be made in the parish register upon the evidence of membership status sufficient in the judgment of the Minister or Warden.

(d). Any communicant of any Church in communion with this Church shall be entitled to the benefit of this section so far as the same can be made applicable.

~~Sec. 4. Every communicant or baptized member of this Church shall be entitled to equal rights and status in any Parish or Mission thereof. He shall not be excluded from the worship or Sacraments of the Church, nor from parochial membership;~~

Sec. 5. No one shall be denied rights or status in this Church because of race, color, or ethnic origin.

~~Sec. 6~~ *When a A person to whom the sacraments of the Church shall have been refused, or who has been repelled from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, or who desires a judgment as to his or her status in the Church, shall may lodge a complaint or application with the Bishop, or Ecclesiastical Authority. No Minister of this Church shall be required to admit to the sacraments a person so refused or repelled without the written direction of the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority, it shall be the duty of the Bishop or Ecclesiastical authority unless he or it The Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority may in certain circumstances see sees fit to require the person to be admitted or restored because of the insufficiency of the cause assigned by the Minister. If it shall appear to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority that there*

is sufficient cause to justify the refusal of Holy Communion, however, appropriate steps shall be taken to institute such an inquiry as may be directed by the Canons of the Diocese, and should no such Canon exist, the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority shall proceed according to such principles of law and equity as will insure an impartial investigation and judgment. decision; but no Minister of this Church shall be required to admit to the sacraments a person so refused or repelled without the written direction of the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority.

Sec. 7. No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church.; and be it further

Resolved, That the foregoing amendment shall take effect on the first day of January, 1986.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, New Orleans, 1982* (New York: General Convention, 1983), p. C-44.