

IN THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA
IN THE TITLE IV MATTER OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF
ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE BY
THE REVERENED DR. B. CAYCE RAMEY, RESPONDENT

To: The Rt. Rev'd Mark Bourlakas, Bishop Diocesan
The Rev'd Dr. B. Cayce Ramey, Respondent
Jack W. Burtch, Jr., Esquire, Counsel to Respondent
The Rev'd Edward O. Miller, Jr., Respondent's Advisor
Bradfute W. Davenport, Jr., Esquire, Church Attorney

ORDER

Background

On October 28, 2024, the Disciplinary Board's Reference Panel referred this case to this Hearing Panel (hereinafter PANEL), and on October 29, 2024, the Church Attorney filed a STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH ATTORNEY. This PANEL, in accord with Canon IV.13.2 (a), on November 4, 2024, issued a NOTICE advising Respondent that a response to the STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH ATTORNEY had to be filed, which Respondent filed on December 4, 2024. Subsequently, on February 3, 2025, in accord with Canon IV.13.5 (a), mandatory disclosures of evidence were exchanged between the parties.

The Rev'd Dr. B. Cayce Ramey is additionally the named Respondent in a separate pending Title IV case for which the Hearing Panel for that case after a hearing on the merits issued a HEARING ORDER on May 8, 2024. Respondent filed an appeal to the Court of Review from the HEARING ORDER in accord with Canon IV.15.2. The Court of Review on November 25, 2024, held a hearing on the merits of the appeal. As of this date the Court of Review has not issued a decision.

On January 29, 2025, Respondent for this case filed a MOTION FOR STAY OF PROCEEDINGS, dated January 27, 2025 (hereinafter MOTION), and on January 30, 2025, the Church Attorney filed a RESPONSE OF CHURCH ATTORNEY TO RESPONDENT’S MOTION FOR STAY OF PROCEEDINGS (hereinafter RESPONSE).

Discussion

Respondent’s MOTION states that “...grounds of this motion are that and decision of the Court of Review may affect the validity and efficacy of the Administrative Leave which was solely premised on the [Hearing] Order ... now under review.” In contradiction, the Church Attorney’s RESPONSE states that the “grounds” for Respondent’s MOTION are wrong and that “Respondent’s ‘solely premised’ argument” is a “lie” because “Bishop Stevenson specifically stated in his May 25, 2024 Administrative Leave that it ‘is separate and distinct from any action [he] may take regarding sentencing in response to the [Hearing] Order of May 8, 2024.’” (RESPONSE, paragraph 4(A)) Further, the Church Attorney posits that Respondent on September 30, 2024, requested the Reference Panel stay proceedings arguing substantially the same grounds as asserted in the MOTION, and the Reference Panel declined. (RESPONSE, paragraph 2)

This PANEL has considered the MOTION, RESPONSE, so far submitted evidence, and current proceedings record for this case, and having deliberated fully determined that at least further evidence and a hearing on the dispute as to the “grounds” for granting the MOTION would be required to decide as to the “grounds” dispute. Accordingly, the MOTION’s “grounds” dispute cannot now properly be decided.

The next canonical requirement for this case is to convene a scheduling conference within fifteen days from February 3, 2025, to set “(1) a calendar for discovery, including depositions and written interrogatories ...; (2) filing deadlines and hearing dates for preliminary motions and for dispositive motions; and (3) the date of hearing before the Hearing Panel.” (Canon IV.13.5(c)) Consequently, this case by such scheduling would enter phases requiring expenditures of significant time and financial expense for conducting discovery, preparation and filing of possible preliminary and dispositive motions along with oppositions and conducting hearings on such motions, and preparation for and conducting a hearing on the merits.

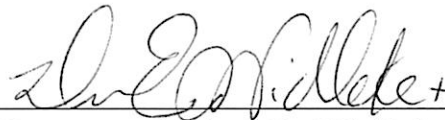
Future proceedings for this case could be directly affected by a to be issued Court of Review’s decision because such decision could sustain the HEARING ORDER’s recommendation that the Bishop Diocesan depose the Respondent from ministry as authorized by Canon IV.14.6(c). In that circumstance, if the Bishop Diocesan deposes Respondent, he would no longer be a member of the clergy and, therefore, no longer subject to the jurisdiction of this Title IV PANEL.

Order

- (1) *Sua Sponte*, this PANEL to responsibly conserve expenditures of time and financial resources consequent with compliance of Canon IV.13.5(c) orders a stay of proceedings until the Court of Review issues a decision on the appeal.
- (2) The MOTION is denied in so far as a properly informed decision as to the validity and consequences of the asserted “grounds” for granting cannot be made on the current record; this denial is made without prejudice as to later determination as to the validity of such “grounds.”

- (3) If the Court of Review issues a decision reversing the HEARING ORDER including reversing the recommended deposition of the Respondent, the stay of proceedings will cease five business days after this PANEL receives that Court of Review decision and the case will then proceed in accord with Canon IV.13.5(c).
- (4) If the Court of Review issues a decision sustaining the HEARING ORDER's recommendation that the Respondent be deposed from ministry as authorized by Canon IV.14.6(c) this stay of proceedings will continue for forty days after that Court of Review decision is issued so the Bishop Diocesan can comply with Canons IV.14.8(a) & (b). After those forty days, or five business days from the date when the Bishop Diocesan completes action on the HEARING ORDER's Canon IV.14.6(c) recommendation, whichever occurs first, and depending on whether the Respondent continues to be a member of the clergy at that time the stay of proceedings will cease.

Date: 10 February 2025



The Reverend Dina E. Widlake, President
Hearing Panel of the Diocese of Virginia