

Catholic Bishops Forum

Statement of Understanding Regarding the Role and Formation of Bishops in the Old Catholic/Independent Catholic Movement

We the members of the Catholic Bishops Forum after having listened deeply, having prayed with and for one another, and having considered all the current understandings of our various ecclesial bodies, do hereby offer the following statement of shared understanding regarding the role and formation of bishops in the Old Catholic/Independent Catholic Movement which we represent.

We understand that a bishop, (ἐπίσκοπος), is most fully a person of deep spirituality, a person in love with God and God's self-revelation as revealed in the person of Jesus the Christ and the historical and accepted Canon of Sacred Scripture, as well as the ancient creeds and traditions of the early church.

We believe that a bishop ought to possess the following qualities:

- be a person who strives to build consensus.**
- be prophetically engaged in the local church and in the world.**
- be accessible and approachable.**
- be a stranger to sin and understand that he/she is also fallible and wounded as all are.**
- be prudent and well known for a sense of hospitality and welcome.**
- be thoughtful, reflective, and self-aware.**
- be a person who exhibits sound theological understanding and grounding in self-reflective theology.**
- be a person who identifies, calls forth, and appreciates the giftedness of others.**
- be committed to empowerment, encouragement, and collaboration.**
- be dedicated to collegiality.**
- be a bridge builder and visionary who demonstrates receptivity to the thoughts, ideas and struggles of others.**

-and finally, be a person who understands that bishops are called to stand as a sign of unity and as representatives of Christ to the Church local (ecclesia localis) and to the Church universal (ecclesia universalis).

Additionally, we believe that prior to their consecration/ordination, bishops:

-should be active clergy for a minimum of five years.

-should be elected in accordance with the synodal practices of the local Church (ecclesia localis).

-should show evidence of formal theological education and pastoral formation, in accordance with the accepted practices of the jurisdiction of their affiliation.

-should demonstrate a desire to continue learning.

-should demonstrate a willingness to participate in the college of bishops as outlined by the jurisdiction of their affiliation.

We intend that this Statement be a living document, one which will evolve as our understanding of the nature of the episcopacy deepens through our continued collaboration with one another.

This Statement of Understanding was reviewed and approved by the Bishops of the Catholic Bishops Forum on _____.