

**The Rev. Canon Lucinda Ashby  
Canon to the Ordinary  
The Episcopal Diocese of Idaho**

**Essay Questions**

**1. What are the most important attributes that a bishop brings to his/her calling and what special gifts underscore your call to the Diocese of the Rio Grande?**

The Office of the Bishop requires of her inhabitant the ministries of presence, steadfastness, patience, love, and wisdom. The Bishop must be cautious, yet not afraid; decisive, yet not impulsive; sacrificial, yet caring of self; forgiving, yet not easily swayed. She must be mindful of her unique, large calling, and live into it for the greater good.

She must always look to the movement of the Holy Spirit both inward to herself, and outward to the diocese and throughout the world. She must be prayerful and faithful, and when faint-hearted, she must, for the good of her diocese and the fulfillment of her call, seek the counsel of wiser minds and truer hearts.

I am blessed with vitality and strength. In thinking specifically about the Diocese of the Rio Grande, I also bring international breadth, and a tongue that is usefully bilingual. I am by nature collaborative, believing that the wisdom is in the room. I intentionally listen for different voices to be heard and find ways to connect people. My experiences in Latin America, Northern New Mexico, international travels, and my life in rural and urban settings among the rich and the poor, have kept me nimble, curious, and open to constant learning. I believe that this has led me to a greater appreciation of the nuances of communication with people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

These experiences, while enriching, are also humbling-- for there are mistakes and yet the reward is one of joy.

**2. Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” How do you answer that question?  
How would you describe the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection?**

When Peter and Jesus had that wonderful encounter in the gospel of Matthew, it was a moment of getting at the core of personal belief—and it was a deeply intense moment. I cannot answer with anything less than that same spiritual intensity: “You are God—savior, teacher, consoler, pacifier, and healer.

Because you have gifted yourself to me and others in these very human forms, I can better understand and relate to the enormous nature of You that would otherwise be unfathomable.”

Jesus’ death was for all time and all place, as is his resurrection. His teaching that we die to self is profound in its psychological, social, spiritual, and ministerial implications. It is the calling of all the baptized to daily die to self, to be less ego-driven, and focus on the call of service to each other, to those in need, to a world in trouble.

Dying to self is what makes room for resurrection—for rising with Christ.

The scriptural resurrection is said to have taken place in early dawn, when darkness was most prominent. There was a faint glow. We as Christians, look for that faint glow, that glimmer of hope. Our calling is to point to that, in every moment of every day, to a world in need of hope.

I see resurrection daily: in a simple act of kindness, a changed mind or heart, and at times, in a total change of life; those simple, personal “resurrections” are the glow which brings about the greater glory.

**3. A bishop is called to “guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church.” (BCP p517) How do you understand this charge as it relates to the current challenges within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion? Give examples of how you have exercised leadership in the Church.**

The richness of Anglicanism lies in that place of tension, where understanding of scripture, tradition and reason are informed by history and culture. The challenges, as I see them, are relational, influenced by historical patterns of colonization.

Right now, our relationships are strained as we all grapple with what Anglicanism means in our post-colonial world. I believe it is important to continue to strive for the ideal of Anglicanism-- where we are not afraid to listen and speak respectfully about theological and scriptural issues that are interpreted differently within our different contexts. During my sabbatical in 2017, I encountered the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion in the US East Coast, Cuba, Israel/Palestine, and Ireland.

While in Cuba representing TEC taskforce on Cuba, and in Israel/Palestine, I was strongly aware that the messages I carried as a leader would be noted and impactful. It was important to meet with everyone from the place of our Baptismal Covenant, and to enter each situation with humility, sensitivity and respect.

In Spanish, the verb to guard, “*guardar*,” also means to keep. Keeping the unity, the faith and the discipline means holding them close, cherishing them. In my encounters with the church in other parts of the Communion, I am mindful that maintaining relationship is what undergirds the charge: relationship with each other, with God, and with the teachings of Jesus and our ancestors. As leaders we have personal and communal responsibility for our part in keeping these relationships and guarding against that which does harm.

**4. The Diocese of the Rio Grande is a geographically massive and culturally diverse diocese, with a combination of urban and rural/frontier congregations. How might you apply your experience to the realities of our situation?**

Because I have served in Northern California, and more recently Idaho, I am accustomed to traveling distances (10 hours) to meet with people in congregations. The richness of a diocese that is both urban and rural has always been my experience, and I know that “one size does not fit all” when it comes to how program is crafted, how a meeting is led, how worship happens, how community relationships are developed, how interfaith connections are forged.

Cultural diversity, some of which is obvious, some of which is not, shaped my experience growing up and my life in professional ministry. I am both comfortable and uncomfortable among Anglo, Latino, and Native American peoples as we minister together and grow the mission of the Risen Christ: comfortable, because I believe that the authentic person meets the authentic person; uncomfortable, because I come from a place of privilege and can only begin to understand the paths that have been worn under the feet of many of my brothers and sisters.

Raised in big cities in Latin America and a small town in Northern New Mexico, I find that I adapt easily to many environments. As a priest, I came from a cathedral, and I served in a small parish, and I loved both. As Canon to the Ordinary, traveling throughout the diocese, I am constantly in a different place; so I leave my assumptions and expectations in my car and walk alongside the congregation simply joy-filled to be a part of the Body of Christ in that place.

**5. Based on your reading of our diocesan profile and any other knowledge that you have, what do you see as your greatest challenge as the bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande, and what excites you about becoming our bishop?**

I believe that the greatest challenge you face is also my greatest excitement about becoming your bishop: diversity. As Bishop, I am called to be a symbol of unity, and I delight in the challenge of working through what that means in a diocese that holds theological, historical, cultural, political and socio-economic breadth. This cuts to the core of our tradition.

How does one work to unite such a diverse Body? How does one persuade people who are so very different from each other to find common vision and plan for the church of the future? I am eager to pursue those answers.

I have asked myself two questions of late: How can the Church continue to be relevant in this very needy, highly secular world, and what is my role in encouraging this relevance?

As Bishop of the Rio Grande, I have the opportunity to explore these questions, to find greater ways to connect through Matthew 25, and to grow and nurture our faith-- and that of those who are seeking the gospel. This is an important time, and you are in an important place for this ministry.

Many believe that our greatest challenges lie with declining numbers, aging congregants, and diminishing resources—and those are important. Yet, I believe that God has a larger dream for us: we are called to be innovative members of the Body of Christ, with an opportunity to take the rich diversity that is ours, and use that same diversity as a means to spread the gospel ever more widely.