

## Two bishops barred from Catholic venues

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The Richmond, Va., diocese rejected a request by the founders of a Pax Christi chapter to hold their kickoff event at a local parish. One of the keynote speakers for the Oct. 2 event was Bishop Walter Sullivan, the retired bishop of Richmond and a past bishop-president of Pax Christi International, the Catholic peace group.

Vincent Sansone, the diocesan theologian who vets all speakers in the diocese, said the event could not be held at a parish because Pax Christi is not a diocesan organization.

The event was held at Virginia Wesleyan College, a Methodist school in Virginia Beach.

In mid-October, two talks by Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, the retired auxiliary bishop of Detroit and a past bishop-president of Pax Christi USA, were canceled after Bishop Alexander Sample of Marquette, Mich., asked Gumbleton not to visit the diocese.

In an Oct. 9 statement, Sample said that because Gumbleton did not follow church protocol in seeking approval to speak and because his "very public positions" on homosexuality and the ordination of women to the priesthood were in opposition to church teaching, he could not speak in a public forum in the diocese.

Gumbleton was to speak about peace at an unnamed church Oct. 11 and on nuclear disarmament the evening of Oct. 12. Both events were canceled. Gumbleton met in Marquette privately with a group of peace advocates and later with survivors of clergy sexual abuse.

Gumbleton told Catholic News Service Oct. 13 that he and Sample "worked it out" so he could meet with the Marquette peace group. "I actually think we made some good progress."

Loreene Zeno Koskey, diocesan director of communications, refuted this, saying there was "no mutual understanding." Sample "still did not want him to come," she said.

In Richmond, Sullivan said he didn't know why the Pax Christi kickoff didn't get diocesan approval. "It's just a big disappointment that we couldn't be at one of our parishes."

The diocese's guidelines state that speakers must be "in good standing in the church" and provide proof they've taken a course in protecting against child abuse. They also must provide a resumé and a letter from their bishop or pastor "attesting to their orthodoxy."

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