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Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Episcopalians urged to reject lesbian bishop

Daniel Burke Religion News Service | Dec. 9, 2009

An international Anglican commission on Tuesday (Dec. 8) urged Episcopalians to exercise "gracious restraint? by not confirming the election of a lesbian as a bishop in Los Angeles.

The Rev. Mary Glasspool was elected a suffragan (assistant) bishop by the Diocese of Los Angeles on Saturday (Dec. 5). Glasspool, 55, has been with her partner since 1988, according to a biography she provided to the diocese.

In the coming months, more than 100 bishops and standing committees from Episcopal dioceses across the country will vote on whether to give "consents,? or confirmation, to Glasspool's election. If she receives confirmation, Glasspool will become the second openly gay bishop elected by the Episcopal Church.

On Tuesday, a 21-member international Anglican committee recently established to promote unity in the communion said they discussed Glasspool's election during their meeting in England Dec. 1-8 and "expressed the fervent hope that `gracious restraint' would be exercised by the Episcopal Church in this instance.? The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order includes one American, the Rev. Katherine Grieb of Virginia Theological Seminary.

Neither Williams nor the commission has the power to stop Glasspool's confirmation, however.

The election of the first openly gay bishop, New Hampshire?s V. Gene Robinson, in 2003 has caused widespread dissent in the Anglican Communion, which includes the Episcopal Church as its U.S. branch. To quell the uproar, Anglican bishops, including the spiritual leader of the communion, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, have asked for a "period of gracious restraint? on consecrating any more gay bishops.

However the Episcopal Church, which has about 2 million members, voted last July to lift its three-year-old moratorium on gay bishops.

Williams reiterated his call for "restraint? on Sunday and said that Glasspool's election "raises very serious questions not just for the Episcopal Church and its place in the Anglican Communion, but for the Communion as a whole.?

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