

'Any other nominees? I didn't think so.'

Dennis Coday | Nov. 12, 2013 NCR Today
Fall bishops' meeting 2013

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The U.S. bishops meeting in fall assembly this morning elected chairmen to various committees, including their Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People.

To fill open chairmen slots, the bishops' committee on priorities and plans presents a slate of two candidates. Other candidates can be nominated from the floor of the assembly, so conference president New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan asked before each vote, "Are there any other nominees?"

That question brought forth no additional candidates for any of the committee slots voted on this morning. In fact there was no response at all to the pro forma question for the election of chairmen for the committees on education, international justice and peace, and evangelization and catechesis.

However, after Bishop Edward Burns of Juneau, Alaska and Bishop Robert Cunningham Syracuse, N.Y., were nominated for the child and youth protection committee, this is what happened:

Dolan: "Any other nominees?" [Pause. Dolan looks around the room.]

Dolan: [Looking down at papers, and in aside:] "I didn't think so."

The floor broke up in laughter.

You know how different tones of laughter, no matter how subtle, convey different meanings? Judging from the tones, I heard, I'd say the tones began as nervous laughter and changed into knowing laughter.

Burns was elected chairman, 118-114.

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