DIOCESE of CHRIST our HOPE

2026.1. Approval of Assistant Bishops
RE: Title I. Canon 4. Sections 1.4 and 3.4
Proposed by Bp. Alan Hawkins

INITIALLY PROPOSED LANGUAGE

Section 1.4. Assistant Bishop
~~With approval of the Synod the Bishop Ordinary may request permission from the College of Bishops of the Province to appoint an Assistant Bishop, or receive a duly consecrated, qualified Bishop from within the Province or from a sister Province, as Assistant Bishop.~~ An Assistant Bishop assists in the oversight and care of the Diocese in ways determined by the Bishop Ordinary in consultation with the Assistant Bishop and the Diocesan Council.

Section 3.4. Assistant Bishop
With approval of the Synod the Bishop Ordinary may request permission from the College of Bishops of the Province to appoint an Assistant Bishop, or receive a duly consecrated, qualified Bishop from within the Province or from a sister Province, as Assistant Bishop.
~~In addition, with a three-quarters approval of the Diocesan Council and the permission of the Provincial College of Bishops, the Bishop may appoint one or more Assistant Bishops to assist in the ministry of the Diocese.~~ Assistant Bishops will not retain episcopal authority beyond the active episcopal ministry of the Bishop appointing them, until (or unless) subsequently elected or appointed by normative means.

Rationale:
The first section referenced above is Title I. Canon 4. Section 1.4. Section 1 defines the various offices of Bishops (Bishop Ordinary, Suffragan, Coadjutor, and Assistant). The second section referenced above is Title I. Canon 4. Section 3.4. Section 3 addresses the election process for each different type of bishop.
First, this amendment removes a contradiction in the above two sections regarding the approval process for the Bishop Ordinary to appoint Assistant Bishops.
Second, this amendment moves the approval process language to Section 3 on Bishop Elections (Title I. Canon 4. Section 3.4).

Constitution and Canons Committee Initial Comments (March 27, 2026 – 221 days before Synod)
The Committee had no comments or proposed revisions to this amendment at this time.

Reviewed by Diocesan Council (April 23, 2026 – 198 days before Synod)
The Diocesan Council had no comments or proposed revisions to this amendment.

Revisions from Submitter
The submitter had no revisions to this amendment.

Submitted for review to the Colleges (May 1, 2026 – 190 days before Synod)

Feedback from Colleges (June 15, 2026 – 145 days before Synod)

Comments from the College of Bishops
The DCOH College of Bishops is united in its support for this proposed canonical amendment and commends the drafters for their careful attention to the internal coherence of Title I, Canon 6.

The revision to Section 1.4 is a welcome improvement. The former text placed appointment process language within a definitional section, which is structurally improper and invited confusion about the nature of the Assistant Bishop's role. The new language rightly focuses Section 1 on what the office is — describing the Assistant Bishop's function in relation to the Bishop Ordinary, the Diocese, and the Diocesan Council — and does so with appropriate flexibility while preserving due collegiality. This is good canonical draftsmanship.

Similarly, the removal of the duplicate approval language from Section 3.4 resolves a genuine contradiction that has existed between the two sections. Consolidating the appointment process into Section 3 — where election and appointment procedures properly belong — brings welcomed clarity and consistency to the Canon as a whole.

The DCOH College of Bishops is in favor of this amendment and thanks the sponsors for their work in strengthening the canonical order of our Province.

Comments from the College of Presbyters
Responses to this amendment were largely supportive, though limited in number. Two respondents offered no opinion. Among the two expressing a view, both supported the proposal, with one noting that it appropriately resolves an apparent contradiction within the current canons and places the approval process in a more suitable section.

Comments from the College of Deacons

No comments offered.

Comments from the College of Laity
No comments offered.

Revisions from Submitter to Constitution and Canons Committee, Diocesan Council, and the Bishop (August 1, 2026 – 98 days before Synod)
The submitter had no revisions to this amendment.

Diocesan Council Governance Working Group Feedback to Submitter (September 1, 2026 – 67 days before Synod)
The Diocesan Council Governance Working Group had no comments or proposed revisions on this amendment.

Final draft provided by Submitter to Constitution and Canons Committee, Diocesan Council, and Bishop (October 1, 2026 – 37 days before Synod)
The submitter had no revisions to this amendment.

FINAL PROPOSED LANGUAGE

Section 1.4. Assistant Bishop
~~With approval of the Synod the Bishop Ordinary may request permission from the College of Bishops of the Province to appoint an Assistant Bishop, or receive a duly consecrated, qualified Bishop from within the Province or from a sister Province, as Assistant Bishop.~~ An Assistant Bishop assists in the oversight and care of the Diocese in ways determined by the Bishop Ordinary in consultation with the Assistant Bishop and the Diocesan Council.

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