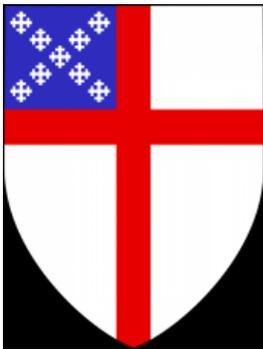


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A Priest Goes on “Time Out” — Time to Rethink the ‘Christian Muslim’ Idea

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The Rev. Ann Holmes Redding of Seattle made news in recent weeks by declaring herself to be both a Christian and a practicing Muslim. The Episcopal priest lives in Seattle and is scheduled to teach for the next academic year at Seattle University (a Jesuit institution).

As previously reported [see article [here](#)], Rev. Redding insisted that she could be both a Christian and a Muslim. This claim presents no small difficulty, of course, since the central claim of Christianity is that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father — a claim Islam explicitly and directly denies.

In order to make her claim, Rev. Redding has to redefine Christianity, Islam, or both. Her understanding of Islam is yet unclear, but her understanding of Christianity is sub-orthodox at best. Consider this statement:

I believe that Jesus is divine in the same way in which all humans are related to God as children of God. Jesus is different in degree, not kind; that means that he shows me most fully what it means to be in total submission to and identification with God. The significance of his crucifixion is that it is the ultimate surrender; and the resurrection—both his and as it is revealed in the lives of his disciples—shows us that God makes life out of death. That is the good news to me and it is salvation. I don't think God said, "Let me send this special person so that I can kill him for the benefit of the rest of humanity." That's not the kind of sacrifice I think that God desires.

The priest has also indicated her doubts about other major Christian doctrines, including the incarnation and the resurrection.

Once again we are reminded that those who buy into a postmodern theory of truth as mere social construction can make up their own worldview as they go along.

The new twist in the story is this: Rev. Redding's Seattle bishop told the press that he has no problem with his Christian-Muslim priest, even speaking of his excitement at her interfaith adventure. But Rev. Redding's ordination to the priesthood is not a matter for the Seattle jurisdiction, it seems. Instead, that question reverts to the Diocese of Rhode Island, where Rev. Reddings was ordained.

The Bishop of Rhode Island, it seems, has a rather different take on Rev. Ann Holmes Redding and her new Muslim faith.

According to *The Seattle Times*:

An Episcopal priest who announced last month that she is also a practicing Muslim has been suspended from the priesthood and other Episcopal leadership roles for a year.

The Rev. Ann Holmes Redding, who until March was director of faith formation at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral

here, should “reflect on the doctrines of the Christian faith, her vocation as a priest, and what I see as the conflicts inherent in professing both Christianity and Islam,” the Rt. Rev. GERALYN WOLF, bishop of the Diocese of Rhode Island, wrote in an e-mail to church leaders.

For the next year Redding “is not to exercise any of the responsibilities and privileges of an Episcopal priest or deacon,” Wolf added.

Redding, a priest for 23 years, was ordained by a former bishop of Rhode Island and remains subject to discipline by that diocese.

Rev. Redding said that she was saddened by Bishop Wolf’s decision, but she willingly handed over her clerical collar for the year in order to follow her bishop’s instructions.

More:

“I understand she’s holding it as an indication that we’re both in this together,” Redding said.

At the end of the year, the two will again discuss the matter and “I understand that one of my options would be to voluntarily leave the priesthood,” she said. “The church is going to have to divorce me if it comes to that.”

The Rt. Rev. Vincent W. Warner of the Diocese of Olympia in Seattle, the bishop who expressed excitement at Rev. Redding’s move, said he found the Rhode Island bishop’s decision to be an acceptable compromise.

No one knows where this will lead, but many observers were surprised by Bishop Wolf’s action. For now, the action appears to send an errant priest into a clerical equivalent of a child’s “time out” punishment. She has time to think about her theological convictions and future as an Episcopal priest.

Give Bishop Wolf credit for taking action and for recognizing the fundamental nature of Rev. Redding’s misunderstanding. However, given the depth of Rev. Redding’s heretical mischaracterization of the Christian faith, action should have been taken long ago.

