

Episcopal priest who embraced Islam suspended for year: Ann Holmes Redding relieved of duties

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An Episcopal priest who announced that she has embraced Islam has been suspended for one year by her supervising bishop, who said the woman's dual religious loyalties were in "inherent" conflict.

The decision by Episcopal bishop Geralyn Wolf of Rhode Island means that Ann Holmes Redding cannot "exercise any of the responsibilities and privileges of an Episcopal priest or deacon" for a year.

Redding, 55, who is based in Seattle, was ordained as an Episcopal priest in Rhode Island in 1984 and remains under the supervision of that diocese.

"I am both Muslim and Christian, just like I'm both an American of African descent and a woman. I'm 100 percent both," Redding told the *Seattle Times* in an interview published in June.

"At the most basic level, I understand the two religions to be compatible. That's all I need," Redding told the newspaper. She said she was initially drawn to Islam because of the intensity of commitment displayed in Muslim prayer.

Her bishop said she issued on July 3 a "pastoral direction" to Redding, giving her "the opportunity to reflect on the doctrines of the Christian faith, her vocation as a priest," and what Wolf sees as "the conflicts inherent in professing both Christianity and Islam."

Redding has agreed to abide by Wolf's directive. She said one option open to her is to leave the Episcopal priesthood voluntarily, though that is not an option she wants to consider. She said that in the 15 months since she embraced Islam she has become "a better teacher, a better preacher and a better Christian." -*Ecumenical News International*