

Priest professing Islam deposed by Episcopalians: Ann Holmes Redding

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An Episcopal priest who professed two years ago that she was also a practicing Muslim has been defrocked by the Episcopal Church.

Rhode Island bishop Geralyn Wolf informed Ann Holmes Redding, who lives in Seattle, of the decision April 1. Although she lives outside the diocese, Redding was ordained in Rhode Island and had remained under Wolf's authority.

"Bishop Wolf found Dr. Redding to be a woman of utmost integrity, and their conversations over the past two years have been open, honest and respectful," the diocese said in a statement. "However, Bishop Wolf believes that a priest of the church cannot be both a Christian and a Muslim."

The diocese learned in June 2007 about Redding's Muslim profession. She was removed from ministry temporarily and told her to spend a year on "discernment of her faith commitment."

After that year, a diocesan committee determined that she had abandoned her Episcopal faith "by her formal admission into a religious body not in communion with the Episcopal Church." She was restricted from public ministry and told she had until March 31 to determine if she would renounce either her Muslim faith or her Episcopal ordination. The diocese "deposed," or defrocked, her when she did neither.

"I am very sad," Redding told the *Seattle Times*. "I'm sad at the loss of this cherished honor of having served as a priest."

Redding, formerly a director of faith formation at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Seattle, told Religion News Service in a recent interview that her two faiths "illumine each other much more than they collide" and that she didn't spend much time on theological disputes.

“My experience and my call is to follow Jesus,” said Redding, who was an Episcopal priest for 25 years, “even as I practice Islam.” -*Religion News Service*