

From: John Holroyd
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PRIME MINISTER

NEXT BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL

The Archbishop of York rang me yesterday to ask if I could give any indication of your likely attitude to the results of the Crown Appointments Commission's names for Liverpool.

I told him that at first sight you did not see the names of Reid and Cassidy as being an adequate choice, given the importance of the Liverpool appointment and the stature achieved by the outgoing Bishop. I added that you would be evaluating both names and, as is your right, the possibility of asking the CAC to meet again to produce further names.

This did not faze the Archbishop. He said that he is making up his mind as to what to recommend in the letter that he will write to you in the next few days reporting the outcome of the CAC.

I have, of course, been reflecting further after our conversation. I do not think that I could recommend that you should go for Reid: he just does not measure up to the requirement or to the job description provided to the CAC by the diocese, and he would be nearly 64 when he took over. I judge that the Archbishop of York shares this view. Cassidy is a more problematical choice. The Archbishop of York - who knew him in London - is uncertain about his judgment and "bottom", especially for such a senior bishopric, but he would be energetic and care for his diocese. One argument for going for him is that George Carey could not take exception to your

preferring him to Reid: you will remember that with 7 votes for Reid and 5 for Cassidy you have every right to go for the latter.

But I am increasingly attracted by going for a return to the CAC for new names. George Carey said to me last week: "the new Prime Minister wouldn't want to flex his muscles this early, would he?" But that is not the point. As I see it, it is not a matter of your flexing your muscles, but of pointing out to the CAC, as I tried to do during its meeting, that the candidates offered do not measure up to what you and the diocese require. As the person who would have to explain this to the CAC I would be prepared to go through with asking it to resume its work, if that is what you wish.

For the moment you need do nothing until the letter from the Archbishop of York is received. Then it may be appropriate for you to talk to David Hope on the phone before you take a final decision.



John Holroyd