

ABSTRACT

THE RHETORIC OF THE MOST REVEREND KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI: RHETORIC OF RECONCILIATION

Episcopalian Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, the first female primate within the 500-year old Anglican Communion tradition, leads the American branch amidst public controversy. Like many historical female rhetoricians, Jefferts Schori integrates distinct rhetorical strategies in order to attend to the controversy surrounding her installation. Like her historical female counterparts, Jefferts Schori integrates the rhetorical strategies of *creating a prophet persona*, *identification*, *referencing primitive Christianity*, and *calling attention to the necessary interpretation of Scripture*. These rhetorical strategies function as a means to negotiate and reconcile polarized positions within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion regarding the consecration of openly gay clergy, same-sex marriage, and women in church leadership. Through the theoretical framework of Bitzer's (1968/1999) rhetorical situation, this study explores how Jefferts Schori's rhetorical strategies function for her as she leads a divided church.

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