

PREPARING FOR HOLY MATRIMONY

Materials for Remarriage

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THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Dear brother or sister in Christ,

You are reading this because you have been married before, or the person to whom you desire to be married has been married before. Rooted in the Scriptures and the history of the Church, our Book of Common Prayer says, "Marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, binding both to self-giving love and exclusive fidelity." It is always a painful tragedy when that covenant is broken and a marriage fails. However, the Scriptures and the history of the Church also acknowledge our fallen and sinful nature, and the need for repentance, as well as transformation and growth. There is guidance for the circumstances of a marriage dissolution and for the possibility of subsequent marriage.

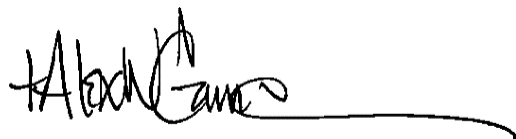
It is because we take marriage seriously, both in our commitment to it and in our desire to support it, that we allow remarriage in the Church, only with the Bishop's permission. Marriages fail for many reasons. When a former partner has been unfaithful or abusive, or has simply abandoned the marriage, we understand these to be biblically supported grounds for a dissolution of marriage. Even in these circumstances, it is important that we reflect on our own contribution to the dissolution and to consider how God is calling us to transformation, having learned from the failure.

It is also because we take marriage seriously, that it is highly unlikely that I will grant permission to remarry when there has been more than one previous marriage which has ended in divorce. It is important that this expectation is set at the outset. In that situation, it may be best to consider a secular ceremony to which, after a time, the Church may be able to give blessing.

This process is not intended to be in any way punitive, but rather to help you and to do everything we can to ensure the success of this subsequent marriage.

Regardless of the nature of the breakdown, or personal responsibility, or even of the plurality of previous marriages, I want to remind you of the love of God for you. I also want to assure you that the Church wants to walk with you and to support you now and throughout the rest of your life.

Grace and peace to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex W. Cameron', followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

The Right Reverend Alex W. Cameron
Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh

Provincial Canons on Marriage

Canon 7 Of Christian Marriage

Section 1

The Anglican Church in North America affirms our Lord's teaching that Holy Matrimony, commonly called a Sacrament (Article 25 and ACNA Catechism 124-125), is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman, binding both to self-giving love and exclusive fidelity. Jesus Christ teaches that God is the author of marriage from the beginning of time. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27; cf. Matthew 19:4-6). God's design for marriage has always involved one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is established by God for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord; for mutual joy, and for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; to maintain purity, so that husbands and wives, with all the household of God, might serve as holy and undefiled members of the Body of Christ; and for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom in family, church, and society, to the praise of his holy Name.

Section 2

It shall be within the discretion of any member of the Clergy to decline to solemnize any marriage.

Section 3

Members of the Clergy of this Church shall conform to the Canons of this Church governing the solemnization of Holy Matrimony.

1. Both parties shall be baptized. Any exception to this requires the permission of the Bishop;
2. There shall be thirty (30) days' notice of intention to marry unless waived for weighty reasons, in which case the Bishop shall be notified immediately and in writing;
3. The Clergy shall provide counsel to both parties on Holy Matrimony with respect to theological and social implications and responsibilities.
4. The Clergy shall ascertain that the man and woman, parties to the marriage, have a valid marriage license.

Section 4

As marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman in which the two become one flesh, it is both an ordinance of Creation, affirmed as such by our Lord, and commended by Saint Paul as a sign of the mystical union between Christ and His Church (Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:22-32). Therefore, the failure of a marriage is always a tragedy. Scripture acknowledges our fallen nature and does provide guidance to know when a marriage may be declared a nullity or dissolved and allows the possibility of a subsequent marriage in certain circumstances (Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7).

1. Couples who request to be married by a member of the Clergy of this Church must have approval from their Bishop if either party has ever been divorced;

2. When a divorced person seeks permission to remarry, the Clergy must ascertain the pertinent facts concerning a declaration of nullity or termination of marriage; and in the absence of a declaration of nullity, forward such information to the Bishop in writing for his godly advice and consent;
3. The Diocese is responsible to create a process by which this discernment may be made with reasonable promptness.

Section 5

1. No Clergy knowingly, after due inquiry, shall solemnize any marriage if they have unresolved concerns regarding any of the following impediments:
 - a. Consanguinity and affinity as defined in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer;
 - b. Mistaken identity;
 - c. Absence of the capacity for free and intelligent choice;
 - d. Bigamy, evidence of sexual perversion or conviction of a sexually related crime;
 - e. Fraud, coercion, abuse or duress.
 - f. Failure to conform to the teaching of this Church regarding man, woman, and marriage as set forth in the Holy Scriptures and in these Canons.
2. Any declarations of nullity may only be granted by a Bishop with jurisdiction and shall be based upon Scriptural principles including the foregoing impediments to marriage.

Section 6

The Clergy shall require the parties to sign the following declaration:

"We, N.N. and N.N., desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. We believe it is established by God for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord; for mutual joy, and for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; to maintain purity, so that husbands and wives, with all the household of God, might serve as holy and undefiled members of the Body of Christ; and for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom in family, church, and society, to the praise of his holy Name. We do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.

Section 7

In all cases marriages shall be solemnized according to the forms contained in an authorized Book of Common Prayer, or other rite authorized by this Church and permitted by the Bishop.

Section 8

The Clergy shall cause to be recorded in the permanent records of the congregation the name, age, and residence of each party. Such record shall be signed by the member of the Clergy, the married parties, and at least two witnesses.

State Marriage Laws

Marriage laws in the US are established by the individual states, not the federal government. State marriage laws are apt to change, and many states have recently eliminated blood tests and/or physical exams. You should check with your county marriage license bureau office, county clerk's, city clerk's, or town clerk's office before making any wedding or travel plans.

State Marriage Law Procedures

The Marriage License requirements for applicants to marry vary from state to state. Although there are differences between the requirements in the various states, a marriage between two spouses performed in one state must be recognized by every other state under the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the United States Constitution.

Pennsylvania State Requirements for a Marriage License

While there are some uniform regulations for marriage in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, you will need to inquire with the county in which you will be married for particular details.

Standards for Marriage Preparation of Divorced Persons

Couples are to meet a minimum of five times usually with the priest officiating at the wedding for premarital counseling. These sessions are in addition to the meeting to discuss a wedding date, wedding plans, etc. The following topics are covered.

1. The nature of the commitment they are making by deciding to undertake a Christian marriage.
2. The nature of each of their commitments to Christ and his Church.
3. Sexuality.
4. Preparation for and the nurturing of Christian children.
5. Relationships with in-laws.
6. The legal and financial implications of marriage in regards to:
 - a. Financial planning
 - b. Wills
 - c. Health insurance
 - d. Life insurance
 - e. Credit
7. Communication skills in marriage.
8. Decision-making in marriage.
9. Conflict resolution in marriage, including the spiritual resources of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

One session should be devoted to filling out and discussing the Application for Remarriage, which is to be sent to the bishop no less than 90 days before the proposed wedding date. The couple shall make no permanent irreversible plans (ex. reception venue reservations, sending invitations) before receiving approval from the bishop.

Beyond what the priest provides in premarital counseling, there are additional resources available for marriage preparation. One such resources is “Engaged Encounter”, a ministry of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh (but is open to all Christian couples). For information, visit their website: <https://diopitt.org/marriage-preparation>



Declaration of Intention

*According to the Book of Common Prayer, 2019,
Concerning Preparation for Holy Matrimony*

Place of Marriage _____

Rector or Priest in Charge _____

Parish _____

Date _____

"We, _____ and _____,
desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. We believe it is established by God for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord; for mutual joy, and for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; to maintain purity, so that husbands and wives, with all the household of God, might serve as holy and undefiled members of the Body of Christ; and for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom in family, church, and society, to the praise of his holy Name. We do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto."

Signed: _____

Application for Remarriage in the Church: Priest

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PRIEST

Page 1 of 2

This form must be submitted to the Bishop at least sixty days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

Names of those to be married _____

Priest's Name _____

Priest's Address _____

Date and place of proposed wedding _____

List the dates you have met with the couple and the topics covered.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Are you satisfied that this marriage is soundly intended? Please give a detailed explanation.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PRIEST

Page 2 of 2

If neither party is a member of your parish, or if you are not holding a pastoral cure, please explain your reasons for officiating at this wedding.

Have all requirements of [Canon 7](#) been met? Please review pages 3-5 before answering.

Has any other minister of the Anglican Church or any other church declined to solemnize this proposed wedding?

If so, you must consult with this minister. In light of this consultation, why have you decided to officiate at this wedding?

The name, address, and phone number of minister who refused to officiate:

If you are not an active canonical resident holding a pastoral cure in this diocese, then this form must be accompanied by the endorsement of such a minister. With this application, the following must be enclosed:

1. An official copy of the FINAL divorce decree(s)
2. The signed Declaration of Intention

Application for Remarriage in the Church: Groom

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE GROOM

Page 1 of 2

Name _____

Date of birth _____ Place of birth _____

Date of baptism _____ Name and location of parish in which you were baptized

Date of confirmation _____ Name and location of parish in which you were confirmed

Name and location of parish you are now attending _____

How long have you been attending this parish? _____

Present address _____

Present marital status _____

Date(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Place(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Name(s) of officiating clergy or other official(s) _____

Date(s) of any divorce(s) _____

Father's name _____

Father's address _____

Mother's maiden name _____

Mother's address (if different from father's) _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE GROOM

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How are the resources of the Christian faith, such as the Scriptures, the Sacraments, fellowship, and prayer, a part of your life?

Why do you want to be married in the Anglican Church?

What do you think makes a marriage a Christian marriage?

What will be your involvement in the Church after your wedding?

Application for Remarriage in the Church: Bride

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE BRIDE

Page 1 of 2

Name _____

Date of birth _____ Place of birth _____

Date of baptism _____ Name and location of parish in which you were baptized

Date of confirmation _____ Name and location of parish in which you were confirmed

Name and location of parish you are now attending _____

How long have you been attending this parish? _____

Present address _____

Present marital status _____

Date(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Place(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Name(s) of officiating clergy or other official(s) _____

Date(s) of any divorce(s) _____

Father's name _____

Father's address _____

Mother's maiden name _____

Mother's address (if different from father's) _____

How are the resources of the Christian faith, such as the Scriptures, the Sacraments, fellowship, and prayer, a part of your life?

Why do you want to be married in the Anglican Church?

What do you think makes a marriage a Christian marriage?

What will be your involvement in the church after your wedding?

Application for Remarriage in the Church: Divorced Bride or Groom

TO BE COMPLETED BY DIVORCED PERSON(S)

Page 1 of 2

The following questions should be answered separately by each divorced person **in addition** to the Groom and Bride forms. If a person has been divorced more than once, he or she should answer all the following questions for each marriage that has ended. Therefore, if more than one form is needed, please make additional copies or attach an additional sheet covering the questions found herein.

Name _____

What circumstances led to the dissolution of the former marriage?

In what ways did your actions or behavior contribute to the dissolution of the former marriage? How have you grown since?

What efforts did you make to seek to improve or heal your former marriage?

TO BE COMPLETED BY DIVORCED PERSON(S)

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Do the biblical grounds for divorce, as cited in the [ACNA Constitution and Canons, Title II, Canon 7](#), apply? How so?

Are there any children by the former marriage (s)? _____

Names and ages

What continuing care and ongoing support have you been maintaining for your former spouse and any children?

How are you providing for the spiritual nurturing of any children?
