
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF MINNESOTA



Application for Episcopal Consent to Solemnization of Marriage after Divorce


A Word from the Bishop

You are applying for permissions to be married in the Episcopal Church after having been divorced. The Church has certain steps which need to be followed for this to happen. They are intended to be far more than a legal procedure.

The Church is concerned for you, a concern being expressed now through both the congregation and the diocese. The church is concerned that you be supported by the Christian community to enable you to have a good marriage. It is concerned that in your marriage you will support each other and strengthen each other to grow. The Church is concerned that for this to happen you grow in the knowledge and love of God as well as in the knowledge and love of each other.

Your parish priest is engaged now in conversations with you to help you express the experiences and the hopes that you bring to marriage. S/he will continue to help you find and use the help of God in your life together.

It is my hope that as your new life together unfolds, the people and clergy of the Church will uphold you and encourage you and always make you welcome in the community of faith – and that you will find this community as a source of strength and opportunity through which you can uphold others.


The Rt. Rev. James L. Jelinek
Bishop of Minnesota

CANON 18: Of the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony

Sec. 1. Every Member of the Clergy of this Church shall conform to the laws of the State governing the creation of the civil status of marriage, and also to the laws of this Church governing the solemnization of Holy Matrimony.

Sec. 2. Before solemnizing a marriage the Member of the Clergy shall have ascertained:

- (a) That both parties have the right to contract a marriage according to the laws of the State.
- (b) That both parties understand that Holy Matrimony is a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman, entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind and will, and with the intent that it be lifelong.
- (c) That both parties freely and knowingly consent to such marriage, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to identity of a partner, or mental reservation.
- (d) That at least one of the parties has received Holy Baptism.
- (e) That both parties have been instructed as to the nature, meaning, and purpose of Holy Matrimony by the Member of the Clergy to be competent and responsible.

Sec. 3. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall solemnize any marriage unless the following procedures are complied with:

- (a) The intention of the parties to contract marriage shall have been signified to the Member of the Clergy at least thirty days before the service of solemnization; *Provided*, that for weighty cause, this requirement may be dispensed with if one of the parties is a member of the Congregation of the Member of the Clergy, or can furnish satisfactory evidence of responsibility. In case the thirty days' notice is waived, the Member of the Clergy shall repost such action in writing to the Bishop immediately.
- (b) There shall be present at least two witnesses to the solemnization of marriage.
- (c) The Member of the Clergy shall record in the proper register the date and place of the marriage, the names of the parties and their status; the witnesses and the Member of the Clergy shall sign the record.
- (d) The Member of the Clergy shall have required that the parties sign the following declaration:
- (e) "We, A.B. and C.D., 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.
- (f) "We believe that the union of husband and wife, in heart, body, and mind, is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.
- (g) "And 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."

Sec. 4. It shall be within the discretion of any Member of the Clergy of this Church to decline to solemnize any marriage.

CANON 19: Of Regulations Respecting Holy Matrimony: Concerning Preservation of Marriage, Dissolution of Marriage, and Remarriage

Sec. 1. When marital unity is imperiled by dissension, it shall be the duty, if possible, of either or both parties, before taking legal action, to lay the matter before a Member of the Clergy; it shall be the duty of such Member of the Clergy to act first to protect and promote the physical and emotional safety of those involved and only then, if it be possible, to labor that the parties may be reconciled.

Sec. 2. (a) Any member of this Church whose marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a civil court may apply to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which such person is legally or canonically resident for a judgment as to his or her marital status in the eyes of the Church. Such judgment may be a recognition of the nullity, or the termination of the said marriage; *Provided*, that no such judgment shall be construed as affecting in any way the legitimacy of children or the civil validity of the former relationship.

(b) Every judgment rendered under this Section shall be in writing and shall be made a matter of permanent record in the Archives of the Diocese.

Sec. 3. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been the husband or wife of any other person then living, nor shall any member of this Church enter into a marriage when either of the contracting parties has been the husband or the wife of any other person then living, except as hereinafter provided:

- (a)** The Member of the Clergy of this Church shall be satisfied by appropriate evidence that the prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction.
- (b)** The Member of the Clergy shall have instructed the parties that continuing concern must be shown for the well-being of the former spouse, and of any children of the prior marriage.
- (c)** The Member of the Clergy shall consult with and obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese wherein the Member of the Clergy is canonically resident or the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Member of the Clergy is licensed to officiate prior to, and shall report to that Bishop, the solemnization of any marriage under this Section.
- (d)** If the proposed Marriage is to be solemnized in a jurisdiction other than the one in which the consent has been given, the consent shall be affirmed by the Bishop of that jurisdiction.

Sec. 4. All provisions of Canon 1.18 shall, in all cases, apply.

Names of those to be Married _____ _____ Date & place of Proposed Marriage _____ Priest who will Officiate _____		Bishop's Decision: _____ Date _____
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To be answered by the man to be married (as applicable):

Full Name _____ Mailing Address _____ Telephone _____ Date of Birth _____ Church Affiliation _____ Date of Divorce/Annulment _____ Court _____ File No. _____ Number of Proposed Marriage _____	Marital Status: (circle one) Single Widowed Divorced
Has any priest of the Episcopal Church declined to endorse your request for Marriage? _____ Are you prepared and willing to sign the Declaration of Intent in Canon 18, Sec. 3? _____	
Signature of Man _____	Date _____

To be answered by the woman to be married (as applicable):

Full Name _____ Mailing Address _____ Telephone _____ Date of Birth _____ Church Affiliation _____ Date of Divorce/Annulment _____ Court _____ File No. _____ Number of Proposed Marriage _____	Marital Status: (circle one) Single Widowed Divorced
Has any priest of the Episcopal Church declined to endorse your request for Marriage? _____ Are you prepared and willing to sign the Declaration of Intent in Canon 18, Sec. 3? _____	
Signature of Woman _____	Date _____

***Comments by the priest who will officiate or the priest conducting the premarital counseling:
(a separate sheet may be used)***

Signature of Officiating Priest _____	Date _____
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(This part will be kept on file in the Bishop's office)

