



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH in the
DIOCESE OF NORTHWEST TEXAS

1802 Broadway, Lubbock, Texas 79401, 806/763-1370

The Right Reverend C. Wallis Ohl, Jr., Bishop
The Reverend Canon J. Michael Ehmer, Canon to the Ordinary

To all clergy:

Enclosed you will find a packet of information and forms relating to remarriage following a divorce. I expect you to spend some significant time with every couple, but with those who have been previously married, I want you to use the questions suggested before filling out the required form which you will send to me. Remember also that I want to see a Xerox copy of either the opening page of the decree or the final page with the court clerk's stamp saying it was filed after signature. I am not interested in the details of the divorce, as you should be, I just want to be able to say in your defense that I have seen the decree and it is legitimate.

As you use the four questions, you might give a copy of this sheet to the divorced individual(s) and ask them to think over the questions for a time before their next session with you. The questions are insightful and may bring new insights to the person or persons who are now entering a new marriage.

Thanks for your help in all of this. Remember you are the one who should make the decision about whether you will participate in a sacrament with this couple. Do not ask me to be the "bad guy" who says no. If you don't think you should participate, tell them. It might just deepen the faith of the individuals.


Pax,

Wallis Ohl
Bishop of Northwest Texas

Enclosures

Section A

(Check "yes" or "no" to every question. Where "no" is checked, attach a full explanation.)

- yes no 1. I have met in person with both parties and they are engaged in a program of premarital counseling satisfactory to me, or they have met in person with a priest of this church satisfactory to me and I have consulted that priest and am assured that they are engaged in a program of premarital counseling.
- yes no 2. Each party has signed the Declaration of Intention.
- yes no 3. At least one of the parties is baptized.
- yes no 4. I have inquired of the parties whether they have consulted any other priest of this church regarding the proposed marriage and if they have, I have personally consulted that priest prior to submitting this petition.
-  yes no 5. I have personally examined the final decree(s) of divorce or annulment and I am enclosing a copy of the filing sheet showing the stamp of the court clerk.
- yes no 6. I believe these parties intend a true Christian marriage.
- yes no 7. I have thoroughly discussed each party's personal readiness for marriage with them, (or such discussion has occurred in a counseling program satisfactory to me).
- yes no 8. I believe each has realistically faced and evaluated the cause(s) of the deaths of the previous marriage(s).
- yes no 9. I am satisfied that each party has an adequate continuing concern for the previous spouse(s) and any children.
- yes no 10. I believe the marriage of the couple is likely to be a demonstrable sign of the spiritual union between Christ and His church.
- yes no 11. I am willing to solemnize the marriage if consent is granted.

Section B

- yes no 12. I am satisfied that the couple (or at least one party with the support of the other) intends to live out their marriage with the support of the Christian community as participants in some congregation of the church.
- yes no 13. At least one calendar year has elapsed since the date(s) of final decree(s).
- yes no 14. All matters of property and custody have been settled.
- yes no 15. I have discussed with this couple, to the degree I believe to be appropriate, differences, if any, in age, income, religious discipline, patterns of conflict, and, especially for older couples with grown children, whether a written, pre-nuptial agreement on disposition of assets, property, or other estate planning would be appropriate for them to consider; (or, such discussion of those issues has occurred in a counseling program satisfactory to me).

(The following question is for situations where either or both parties has/have been divorced (or marriage annulled) more than once.)

- yes no 16. I have received from a professional counselor a statement concerning this couple and the statement is attached along with an explanatory letter from me.

(Where question 1-15 are answered "yes" and question 16 is not applicable, no additional material is required to accompany the Petition.)

1. **WHAT CAUSED THE DIVORCE?** This should be stated from your point of view, ignoring any blaming of the other party. What did you contribute to the situation?
2. **WHAT INSIGHTS DID YOU GAIN FROM THE DIVORCE?** This question depends on you understanding your contribution to the breakup of your previous marriage. You might find useful an examination of any expectations, dreams or hopes which were frustrated in your previous marriage.
3. **WHAT INSIGHTS AND STRENGTHS DO YOU BRING TO THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP?** How does this new knowledge apply? What expectations do you have?
4. **WHAT PART WILL THE CHURCH PLAY IN THE FUTURE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP?** This question is crucial because the Episcopal Church hold sacred the institution of Christian marriage. You need to acquaint the bishop with your view of Christian marriage in contrast with a civil marriage. Since the wedding ceremony is only the beginning of a new life together, our desire is to help you establish a solid foundation for a happy and fulfilling life together.



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Petition to the Bishop for Consent to Solemnize a Marriage after Divorce or Annulment

Petition submitted by:

The Rev. _____ Date _____

Address _____

Telephone (_____) _____

To the Bishop:

I petition for consent to solemnize the marriage of:

a) Name _____
whose prior marriage ended in divorce or annulment
(date finalized _____)

b) Name _____
whose prior marriage ended in divorce or annulment
(date finalized _____)

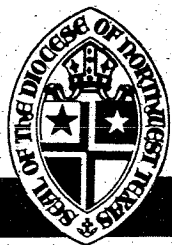
c) Name _____
who has not previously been married

The proposed date of the marriage is _____.

PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED for the solemnization of a marriage between
the above named persons on or after _____.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL (date) _____.

Bishop of Northwest Texas



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Date:

The Bishop of Northwest Texas
P.O. Box 1067
Lubbock, Texas 79408-1067

In accordance with Title I, Canons 18 and 19, I hereby report the marriage of

_____ and _____

took place on (date) _____ in

(place) _____
church city state

Signed Member of Clergy