

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EAST TENNESSEE

The Rt. Rev. Brian L. Cole

Bishop of East Tennessee

Diocesan Policy Regarding Remarriage

Issued – September 2021

Any remarriage in the Episcopal Church is subject to Canon 19.3 and in addition you may assume the following as standard protocol in the Diocese of East Tennessee.

If one or both persons desiring to be married have divorced once with a former spouse still living, the bishop will grant permission for the marriage if:

1. Canon 19.3 has been satisfied...(the front page and signature page of divorce decree and request for marriage be submitted to the bishop *at least 30 days* before intended date of marriage).
2. The couple has undergone counseling by the clergy or a professional counselor.
3. The attached form has been thoughtfully completed and submitted to the bishop.

If one or both persons desiring to be married have been divorced twice with one or more former spouses still living, no assumption should be made that the bishop will grant the request. Each decision will be made on an individual basis and will be considered by the bishop if:

1. Canon 19.3 has been satisfied...(the front page and signature page of divorce decree and request for marriage be submitted to the bishop *at least 30 days* before intended date of marriage).
2. The couple has undergone counseling by the clergy **and** *a professional counselor*.
3. All the forms attached (19.3.One and Two) have been completed and submitted to the bishop.

If one or both persons desiring to be married have divorced three or more times, the assumption may be made that the bishop will not grant the request. However, grace demands that we look at each circumstance individually and if extenuating circumstances are present, the request will be reviewed.

1. Canon 19.3 has been satisfied...(the front page and signature page of divorce decree and request for marriage be submitted to the bishop *at least 30 days* before intended date of marriage).
2. The couple has undergone counseling by the clergy ***and*** a professional counselor.
3. All the forms attached (19.3.One and Two) have been completed and submitted to the bishop.

The attached forms are intended to be an aid for clergy as they counsel and direct the couple seeking re-marriage. In filling out the forms with the couple, clergy will receive insight that can guide future sessions with them.

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EAST TENNESSEE

The Rt. Rev. Brian L. Cole

Bishop of East Tennessee

Application Seeking Permission to Solemnize a Remarriage in the Diocese of East Tennessee

ISSUED September 2021

Please complete and submit all pages at once. Sections A through D are to be completed by the priest who plans to solemnize the marriage in conversation with the couple. Section E is to be completed by the couple in conversation with the priest.

Section A

On _____, I, _____ was informed that the couple
(Date) (Name of Priest)
named below wish to be married at _____ on _____
(Name of Parish) (Date)

Section B: Information on Spouse 1 ...please print

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

(City) (State) (Zip) Telephone: _____
(Area code and Number)

Baptized: _____ Denomination: _____ Active Member of a Church? _____

How many previous marriages for Spouse 1? 0 ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 or more _____ *If so, please continue*

Number of previous spouses still living _____

Date of previous marriage(s) _____ Places: _____

Child(ren) by previous marriage(s): _____ If yes, give ages: _____

Date(s) and Place(s) of Divorce Decree(s): _____

Are there any obligations (financial or otherwise) from previous marriage(s) to a spouse(s) or child(ren)?

Are they being honored? _____ Is the intention to continue honoring them? _____

Section C: Information on Spouse 2 ...please print

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

(City) (State) (Zip) Telephone: _____
(Area code and Number)

Baptized: _____ Denomination: _____ Active Member of a Church? _____

How many previous marriages for Spouse 2? 0 ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 or more _____ *If so, please continue*

Number of previous spouses still living _____

Date of previous marriage(s) _____ Places: _____

Child(ren) by previous marriage(s): _____ If yes, give ages: _____

Date(s) and Place(s) of Divorce Decree(s): _____

Are there any obligations (financial or otherwise) from previous marriage(s) to a spouse(s) or child(ren)?

Are they being honored? _____ Is the intention to continue honoring them? _____

Section D: To be filled out by the Priest

How long has this couple known one another? _____ How long have you known them? _____

Have you examined the Divorce Decree(s)? _____ Date of decree(s): _____

Did you provide the pre-marital counseling? _____ If not, who did _____

Number of sessions? _____

What do you believe to be the most helpful insight the couple learned in the counseling process? _____

*If either party has more than one divorce... please **attach statement from professional counselor** stating findings and opinion from the counselor regarding the suitability of the couple for marriage.*

Priests additional comments:

(If you need more space please use the back of this form)

Section E: To be filled out by the couple

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

When two people come to the Church seeking its blessing at the celebration of their marriage it is our understanding that they are then inviting the Church to be a participant in their marital union. Accepting this invitation we seek to instruct them as to the nature, meaning and purpose of Holy Matrimony as Christians understand it following the model given us by the relationship between Christ and His Church. Further, we offer as a community of faith and love, to support them in their marriage in the years ahead.

Following the Canons of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, the priest who is to solemnize the marriage of a divorced person is required to consult with and obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese prior to the wedding ceremony.

The purpose of this application is to ascertain the intention of the couple with regard to their relationship to the Church, that the bishop might give his consent in good conscience.

Having read the above, and in consultation with your priest, please take time to discuss and answer the following questions.

- 1. When relationships fail, the failure is rarely one-sided. Have you discussed with your priest, and your fiancé, your part in the failure of your previous marriage(s)?

Spouse 1: yes _____ no _____ n/a _____ Spouse 2: yes _____ no _____ n/a _____

- 2. As a couple, please describe what role you see the Church playing in your new relationship, and how you plan to participate in the life of the Church? *(If you need more space, please use the back of this form)*

- 3. Is there any additional information you would like the bishop to know?
(If you need more space, please use the back of this form)

The following is to be signed by both individuals of the intended marriage.

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 two adults as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

We believe that this union, 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.

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.

Signed: _____ and _____ Date: _____

RECORD OF MARRIAGE

***To The Rt. Rev. Brian L. Cole,
Bishop of East Tennessee:***

*This will certify that on _____
(Date)*

I did solemnize the marriage of

_____ *and* _____

at

_____ *(Church and City)*

The Bishop's consent was given on

(Date)

Signature of Clergyperson Officiating

(Date)

Within five days of the marriage, please return this Record of Marriage to:

Mr. Jon Humber, Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee, 814 Episcopal School Way, Knoxville, TN 37932