



# ACNA Marriage Canon

---

## **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. 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.