

POLICY ON HOLY MATRIMONY

November 8, 2016

The College of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) has approved a new liturgy for Holy Matrimony dated June 24, 2016. The new liturgy is available on the ACNA website at www.anglicanchurch.net/?/texts_for_common_prayer under the Volume II entries. There is also a very helpful paper called “Holy Matrimony Explained” on the same page under “Other Resources.”

Bishop Lebhar highlights the following points regarding the new liturgy:

1. A new straightforward means to publish “Banns for Marriage” is provided and its use is encouraged to remind our people that Christian marriage is different from the culture’s and that every Christian marriage needs the prayerful support of the larger Church.
2. We have a new Declaration of Intention that promotes a more comprehensive view of Christian marriage. **Both parties must be baptized.** Use of this form is encouraged along with its teachings for premarital counseling. **It is to be used now when asking the bishop for permission for remarriage.**
3. The service itself contains minor changes with four items worth noting:
 - a. If you are not holding the wedding in a church or chapel, you need the bishop’s permission for outdoor or country club weddings. Most weddings should be in places of worship.
 - b. Congregational responses in the Prayers of the People are more than “Amen.”
 - c. There is only one form for the Blessing of the Marriage prayer.
 - d. There is no form for blessing a civil marriage. The couple may have a civil marriage first. If your conscience will only permit you to perform a church wedding and not sign the marriage license, insure that a civil service was first held. Others are still comfortable with performing the marriage and signing the license for the state as well. In either case, there must be a civil marriage either performed ahead of time or with you signing the license as the agent of the state. **Bottom line: if they are members of your church, they should have a Christian wedding that is somehow civilly recognized.** You may participate in a civil service only rarely and with the bishop’s permission, but not as officiant or celebrant.

Please be in touch with the bishop if you have questions and for more information.