

TO: All Clergy in the Diocese of Connecticut

FROM: The Rt. Rev. Dr. Laura J. Ahrens, Bishop Suffragan

DATE: September 8, 2009

RE: Marriage Judgment Applications

Thank you for your attention to the pastoral care and canonical requirements for re-marriage in the Episcopal Church. We handle a large number of applications and appreciate your timely and thoughtful preparation of these forms.

Please read the instructions carefully, submit the forms on time (at least 60 days prior to the marriage) and make sure that all information is included. We request that signed documents submitted are originals and not faxes or photocopies.

1. **Use the marriage judgment form dated 4/2009 and refer to the Diocesan Marriage page on the website at <http://www.ctdiocese.org/Content/Marriage.asp>** . The marriage judgment form can be found on this page. You can also access this page from the Clergy page or by clicking Marriage on the A-Z find page. If you do not have these forms, please call my administrative assistant, Deb Kenney at Diocesan House ext. 132, and she will send them to you.
2. Include all requested information, and be sure you and the applicants sign the forms.
3. If the marriage is to take place outside of an Episcopal parish please give the name and address of the location.
4. If this is a third marriage for either party, a written analysis from another professional counselor must be submitted with the marriage judgment forms. These counseling sessions should include both parties intending to be married. See "Third Marriages" issued by Bishop Coleridge, 10/1991.
5. **ALL MARRIAGE JUDGMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE BISHOP'S OFFICE AT LEAST 60 DAYS PRIOR TO THE MARRIAGE.**
6. Originals of all forms are necessary. Faxes are not adequate.
7. **Canon I.19.3(c)-(d):**

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:

(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.

— Canon of the Episcopal Church, Adopted and Revised in General Convention, 1789–2006.

8. If a marriage **does not take place** this office needs to be notified,
9. If the marriage does take place, the severed portion (highlighted), which matches the lower portion of the marriage judgment, must be returned to my office as soon as possible.
10. The contents of the letter from the minister to the Bishop that must accompany the applications should address the concerns outlined on the "Summary of Contents" (5: A1-3, B1-4, and C1-6) and is to be "**generally of two or more pages in length.**"
11. "Under no circumstances should the Episcopal Church be a 'place of convenience' for a couple to avoid the marriage standards, requirements or prohibitions of their own denomination."

Thank you for your attention to these matters. They do make a difference!