

**Marriage**  
in **church**  
after **divorce**

**Form and explanatory statement**

A leaflet for enquiring couples



## Marriage in church after divorce

The Church of England teaches that marriage is for life. It also recognizes that some marriages sadly do fail and, if this should happen, it seeks to be available for all involved. The Church accepts that, in exceptional circumstances, a divorced person may marry again in church during the lifetime of a former spouse.

If you are thinking about asking to be married in church, you should discuss this with your local parish priest. Please do this well before choosing a date for your wedding.

Some priests may be willing to take such a marriage; others may not be prepared to do so, on grounds of conscience, and may not allow the use of their church either. The law of the land permits them this choice.

If your parish priest is willing to discuss the possibility of conducting your marriage, he/she will want to talk to you frankly about the past, your hopes for the future and your understanding of marriage. You and your intended spouse should therefore be prepared to consider some questions. You are advised to reflect beforehand on the issues they raise – and should be prepared to answer them honestly.

- What does marriage mean to you?
- What have you learned from your previous marriage?
- Has there been healing of past hurts?
- If you have children, how are they being looked after?
- What do others think of your marriage plans?
- When did your new relationship begin?
- Have either of you been divorced more than once?
- Are you wanting to grow in the Christian faith?

If you wish to proceed with your enquiry, both of you should complete the attached application form and hand it to your parish priest. You will also need to bring with you written legal proof that any divorce decree is absolute. (A decree nisi will not be sufficient).

It is likely that your priest may ask for more than one confidential interview with you and your intended spouse together. Your priest may also feel the need to consult with the bishop or his adviser, before making a decision, although the decision remains with the parish priest. This process could easily take some time, and you should discuss how long it might take with your parish priest at your initial meeting.

If it is not possible for your proposed marriage to take place in church, your priest may consider other alternatives with you. If your priest agrees to conduct a marriage service, you may be invited to take part, possibly with other couples, in marriage preparation.

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The process this leaflet describes reflects the Church's commitment both to lifelong marriage, and to taking seriously your wish to marry in church. You may be certain that your application will be received and considered with dignity, care and loving concern. Whether or not you proceed to marriage in church, your priest and your local church are available to offer you guidance and support as you proceed on life's journey.

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.*

## Application form

### Application for marriage

in the parish of \_\_\_\_\_ (Diocese of Oxford)

*To be completed by the couple, as appropriate, as fully as you can.*

**1. A person who is divorced** (*if both applicants are divorced, the other should fill in section 2*)

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/email \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date and place of previous marriage, and age at that time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of previous spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Date of separation \_\_\_\_\_

Date of decree absolute \_\_\_\_\_

Age(s) of any children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was this your only previous marriage? (If not provide, details of any other marriages – as above on a separate sheet). It is very unlikely that anyone who has been divorced twice or more will be able to marry in church. But if you feel your circumstances are exceptional please give details.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please state why you want to be married in church

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. A second person who is divorced (if applicable)**

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/email \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date and place of previous marriage, and age at that time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of previous spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Date of separation \_\_\_\_\_

Date of decree absolute \_\_\_\_\_

Age(s) of any children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was this your only previous marriage? (If not provide, details of any other marriages – as above on a separate sheet)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please state why you want to be married in church

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. For both applicants**

*(Please note that the parish priest will refer to the information in this application form and other relevant information from meeting with you when considering and responding to your request to be married in church. He/she may also choose to share it with the diocesan bishop and/or the bishop's adviser. If your application is not accepted, and you later make a further application in another parish, the information you have given on this occasion may be shared with the priest who considers your further application. With these exceptions, the information you have given in this form and in your interview will be treated as confidential.)*

We wish to have our application for marriage in church considered, and give our consent to the use of the information we have given in this application form as set out above.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please post the completed document to  
Revd Pat Bhutta  
The Vicarage  
Birds Lane  
Midgham  
READING  
RG7 5UL