



The Military Ordinariate of the Anglican Church of Canada

Some Requirements and hopefully helpful hints for Anglican Chaplains and the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

1. To celebrate a couple's wedding is a great privilege and their special day must be memorable. Share their joy! They are sacramental sign to us of God's love! Our mission is not done at the wedding as we have promised to support them in their life together. We are not simply celebrating weddings but we and the community should be there for their marriage.

2. While the Chaplain's Manual provides direction, which is helpful, all Anglican Chaplains are subject to General Synod Canon XXI (On Marriage in the Church) and should make themselves conversant with its contents. It is on the General Synod website. Also remember that you need a provincial licence to function (Quebec has its own rules). Please seek out the local diocesan official with help for this.

3. In the Military context you will be asked by non Anglicans to celebrate their wedding. As long as one is baptized this is permissible. Also, the couple must agree on our understanding of Holy Matrimony (see #5 – Declaration – below).

While you are still subject to our Canons there should be nothing offensive to others though we require a bit more in preparation and process if they are divorced and seeking remarriage. And speaking of that...

4. Permission to Remarry after divorce:

- a. We no longer have a Marriage Commission in the Ordinariate and it is your call as to whether a couple should be remarried according to the rites of the Anglican Church of Canada. However, if one of the applicants has been married more than once before the matter is to be referred to the Bishop Ordinary for a decision.
- b. An application form is provided on our website. It is not intended as a hoop but a pastoral tool for the purposes of directing conversation. Use it in such a manner but be firm in the requirement that previous obligations must be met, such as alimony, child support, etc..
- c. The remarriage of divorced Roman Catholics is a sensitive issue and this and 'mixed marriages', as they were once called, was the subject of a document produced some time ago by the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops and the Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada. We hope to find it and put it up on the website.

It is not our job to enforce Roman Catholic Canon Law. However, Roman Catholics do not want to be separated from their home church and seeking an easier process for remarriage compromises this relationship. They need to be made aware of that fact. Such couples need our

pastoral care to remain in good standing with their church and to realize the care that it has for them.

d. If in doubt contact the Bishop Ordinary and we will work it through together.

5. The Declaration of Marriage (Canon XXI) Schedule A is required and is on our website. It simply states that the couple are engaging in the Church's understanding of Holy Matrimony and therefore making a contract with the community as well as with each other. This should be discussed and signed during the first conversation with the couple. They should get a copy of this, with their marriage certificate. The chapel should keep a copy and one should be send to the Bishop Ordinary.

6. The Times and the Seasons I am often asked to make exceptions for the Canonical requirement of 60 days notice, which was set for the purposes of adequate preparation. I often hear words about urgent deployment. We all know that with the exception of humanitarian crises the timings of deployments are well known and other deployments are of limited duration. Haste is not good and one needs to test what is really being said, intended or maybe even avoided.

As for the seasons. Any time is good and I am not particularly strict about Lent but not Passiontide the two weeks before Easter in the traditional observance.

7. Marriage Preparation : This is required by our Canons and many bases, Wings and Formations make provision for such preparation. In some cases courses are offered by the civilian church which is often happy to include us. Sometimes the situation is such that we need to take the time to do such preparation on our own with the couple. In such cases one will have to research the materials that are available and the local diocese may be of assistance and may have a resource centre. You might check with your colleagues.

8. Location of the ceremony : I would prefer that you use the chapel if one is available. However, there may be other very reverent locations on the base, Wing and Formation and I should always be asked. Please note, however, that my authority does not go beyond military precincts. If the couple choose a location outside of the base, Wing or Formation precincts the permission of the local diocesan bishop or his/her Executive Officer must be sought.

The wedding ceremony must be distinct from and always precede the reception. It is a legal requirement that the couple and the witnesses that will sign the documents need to be sober.

9. Registers : In Anglican parishes there are various Registers including one for Marriages and Confirmations. CAF chapels are not so assiduous in their record keeping which can be a problem as people sometimes come looking later on for proof of Sacramental Rites.

Do make sure that you register all Sacramental Rites in whatever the chapel provides using as much space as you need to record full names. In the case of marriage : the couple and the witnesses.

10. Same Gender Weddings : At the moment marriage in the Anglican Church of Canada is defined by Canon XXI (reference: Preface) as being between a man and a woman. However, the state does allow for the marriage of same gendered persons and we have a policy to that effect in the Chaplain Branch. I expect all of our chaplains to honour that policy and to support same gendered persons seeking a

wedding and in their subsequent marriage and, if your conscience allows, to participate fully in the wedding ceremony of such persons short of the actual pronouncement of marriage. That must be done by a chaplain or civilian pastor qualified to do so.

Our policy is a work in process. Inasmuch as we are located in various dioceses across the country we are in a difficult position. Even if on military precincts, Anglican clergy cannot be seen doing something that the host diocese does not allow. Honouring local practice is essential to our relationships with our host diocese. There is surely more to be said on this matter but I am committed to supporting and celebrating the faithful love and commitment of our same gendered brothers and sisters.

11. Pastoral Support for you : Most of you have come from many years of experience in the civilian church and in the chaplaincy and marriages are not new to you. For some this will be relatively new and I must admit that after many years in Holy Orders I come across new things and appreciate talking them through with a colleague. If you do not have such a colleague available or if you are not sure of canonical requirements please feel free to contact me. I am always prepared to reflect with and advise you on a number of pastoral matters.

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+Peter
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