

Re: 1.1.6

Leap for Faith

Enclosed is a Capital Campaign update which was presented at Diocesan Council on June 17th. In the September mailing, we will be enclosing posters and other information for distribution in the parish.

Solemnization of Marriages

The General Synod approved changes to Canon XXI with respect to . . .

The Place of Marriage

There is now provision for marriages to be solemnized in locations other than church buildings. In considering requests, clergy are expected to bear in mind whether or not the location lends itself to the "public nature, dignity and solemnity" of the Celebration of Marriage. This should be discussed in full with the couple, and in making the decision, the priest, by provision in Canon XXI, must consult the bishop.

I am pleased to announce that this provision is in effect in our diocese as of July 1, 2004. All requests for marriage in locations other than a church building are to be made in consultation with me or with Bishop Sue.

Re-Marriage After Divorce

Previous to now, all those seeking re-marriage after divorce were, in accord with Canon XXI, Section IV, required to submit an application for permission to marry to a Marriage Commission. The Commission reviewed the case and made a recommendation to the bishop who, after due consideration of the same, would grant permission for the marriage.

For many years - since 1967, in fact - this was viewed as a means for providing comprehensive pastoral care for couples in this situation. The process was intended to ensure that there had been closure with respect to previous marriages and that other responsibilities regarding financial support, etc. were in order. It was also intended to help couples consider their new relationship and its capacity for long-term stability. And clergy, having worked with the couple, then prepared the *Incumbent's Report*.

My experience of reviewing applications for almost ten years is that, for the most part, clergy have taken great care in preparing these reports; and it is obvious from the reports that they know the couple and have cared for them well.

Canon XXI now makes Marriage Commissions an option in each diocese; and in each diocese, the bishop in his/her role as chief pastor and chief liturgical officer, decides whether or not a Commission is retained. In consultation with Bishop Sue, I have decided, in accord with provision in the Canon as amended by General Synod and in my confidence of your commitment to provide adequate pastoral care of those who come to you seeking marriage, that clergy can decide with the couple whether or not the proposed marriage should take place. There will be no need to prepare applications for submission to the Marriage Commission as of July 1, 2004.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, I want to point out that if you are having a particularly difficult time making a decision with the couple as to whether or not a proposed marriage should take place, you may refer it to the Marriage Commission. In effect, what I am saying is that I am not dissolving the Marriage Commission but announcing that it would serve on an "on-call" basis only.

Over the summer months, our own diocesan guidelines will be updated to reflect these changes. The revised guideline will be included in the September mailing.

Blessing of Same-Sex Unions

I commend for your information the enclosed Memorandum from The Rev'd Canon Eric Beresford. It addresses the matter of how we "interpret" the manner in which General Synod handled the discussion, debate and decisions with respect to the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions.

I think it is helpful, and I hope others will find it to be so as well.