

# Marriage in Church after Divorce



## **Can I marry in Church after divorce?**

The Church in Wales teaches that marriage is for life. However, it also recognises that some marriages sadly do fail, and if this should happen, it seeks to be available for all involved.

So in certain circumstances the Church in Wales accepts that 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.

If your priest is willing to discuss the possibility of conducting your marriage, he/she will want to talk to you frankly about your past, your hopes for the future and your understanding of marriage.

If he/she is willing to conduct a marriage service, you may be invited to take part, possibly with other couples, in marriage preparation.

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 ready to answer them honestly.

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*What does marriage mean to you?*

*Have you learned from your previous marriage?*

*Has there been a 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 relationship begin?*

*Have either of you been divorced more than once?*

*Are you wishing to grow in the Christian faith?*

If you wish to proceed with your enquiry, you should contact your parish priest. You will also need to take with you *written legal proof that any divorce / decree is absolute. (A decree nisi will not be sufficient.)* You may be asked to go to another priest to obtain a licence to be married. Your local priest will explain this to you.

It is likely that the 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 advisor before making a decision.

If it is not possible for your wedding to take place in church, your priest may offer you a **Service of Blessing** after a Civil Ceremony.

In the stillness of this moment I hold my breath,  
and marvel at the wonder of this second in marriage.

God, thank you for this second time of marriage.  
We each accept all that has gone before.  
We pledge ourselves to this new love.

May our experiences and differences take on a positive value,  
that through them we may enrich our lives as we learn from one  
another.

Thank you for our past, for the pains and for the joys

Thank you for your blessing on us now.  
May we continue to know this blessing  
and may it always be part of our lives together.

*Taken from Pocket Prayers for Marriage by Andrew Body  
(Church House Publishing)*

**Mothers' Union** is an international Christian organisation that seeks to support families worldwide with prayer and practical help.

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*Produced by the Diocese of Swansea & Brecon*

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