

Diocese of Huron Synod 2017

Considering the Motion to Change the Marriage Canon

Background

General Synod 2016 passed a resolution to change the Marriage Canon (Canon XXI, On Marriage in the Church) so it will apply to “all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage.” This resolution will only come into effect after being passed by General Synod at a second reading (in 2019). Between the first (2016) and second (2019) reading, the resolution is to “be referred for consideration to diocesan and provincial synods.”

In the Diocese of Huron, this process of consideration will begin at Diocesan Synod 2017 with a workshop to introduce synod to the task and the resources available. It will then unfold at the deanery and diocesan levels over the next few years. The objective of the process is to gather opinion, concerns, and recommendations to be forwarded to General Synod. Its intent and aim is one of listening and discussion. As such, and as per our Bishop’s directive, Diocesan Synod will not vote on the General Synod motion. (At the appropriate time, the Huron Synod will elect its representatives to General Synod 2019, who will attend and vote on the motion at its second reading.)

Goals (Individual and Collective) of the Process

- To deepen our skills to listen to views different from our own in order to try to understand and not to manipulate or convince;
- To increase our capacity to move beyond simple opinion to theological language and concepts;
- To increase our capacity to move beyond polarization and assumptions and to consider the potential difficulties and blessings of the issue; and, as a result,
- To deepen our skills to have difficult conversations and good disagreements (about a number of topics, not only the Marriage Canon).

The Consultation Process from Synod 2017 to Synod 2018

In order to be responsive to what we hear and learn, only the initial steps of the larger consultation process have been developed at this point.

1. Workshop at Huron Synod 2017 with the following components:
 - *Information:* Rationale and process for the Diocese of Huron to consider the Marriage Canon resolution;
 - *Information:* Background to Marriage Canon resolution, including reference to resources on diocesan webpage;
 - *Engagement:* Small group, facilitated discussions, focused on the task of considering the Marriage Canon resolution, to model and experience having a difficult conversation and good disagreement;
 - *Sending:* Summary of initial feedback and next steps.
2. Series of deanery-based gatherings to facilitate conversation about the Marriage Canon resolution. These discussions will be the basis for sending our "considered opinion, concerns and/or recommendations to General Synod."
3. Session at Huron Synod 2018 to report back on the deanery gatherings.

Resources

- Briefing paper with background information and list of resources (attached, as Appendix 1)
- Diocesan webpage with background resources related to the Marriage Canon resolution (including links to Anglican Church of Canada and Diocese of Huron resources as well as resources from the Council of General Synod as they become available over the triennium)

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