

The Bishop's Task Force on Marriage and Blessing

Resource Guide



March 2005

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The ‘New Westminster Rite’ follows page 42. When downloading Task Force materials from the diocesan web site, this portion must be downloaded separately.

Appreciative Inquiry Article from Pacific Church News follows the New Westminster Rite. When downloading Task Force materials from the diocesan web site, this portion must be downloaded separately.

Session 2

Citizens of Two Realms: The Separation of Church and State

Relationship: Civil Marriage and Sacramental Marriage

The state is charged with the legal requirements for marriage. The clergy is charged with the religious ramifications of marriage. History has intertwined the role of the state and the church and currently there are some who would keep them intertwined. Many clergy and lay leaders would feel more comfortable in returning state functions to the state and asking the couple to come to the church for the marriage blessing.

States license couples according to the unique laws of each state. The state's job is then complete. Society and government grant rights⁵ to married couples which are not available to single people or non-married couples. Married couples are charged with specific responsibilities.⁶

The church views a couple as an icon of the union of all life in Christ. Marriage is recognized as an example of the fulfillment of the church's mission, "to restore *all* people to unity with God and each other in Christ."⁷ It is a vocation to a lifelong holy union. Participation reflects a theological understanding of the body of Christ, which acknowledges our baptismal covenant and eucharistic communion. The church sanctifies marriage by pronouncing God's blessing upon it, and by seeing it as evidence of God's will at work in the world. A couple's relationship is sustained and renewed through Christ the mediator. The rite of holy matrimony — the act of celebrating and blessing a marriage — is but one moment in the couple's ongoing relationship with each other and with the church.

During the past year, many states have started constitutionally defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Same-sex marriages are legal in many countries including Belgium, Holland, Canada and Spain. In the United States, same-sex couples in Massachusetts can legally wed. Many in the Diocese of California have come to think of marriage in broader terms that move beyond the state's traditional definition. Emphasis is on the couple's love and commitment to one another and to the church, rather than on the gender of the individuals. This is evidenced by the holy unions of same-sex couples celebrated in many parishes without any standard liturgy.

Church and state were not separate at the inception of the Church of England. Marriage in the church was both sacred and secular. The United States constitution separated church and state and gave jurisdiction over marriage to each state. As the various territories joined the new United States of America, the Episcopal Church formed individual relationships with each emerging state, and this was noted in the rubrics for the 1786 *Book of Common Prayer*. The 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* required each couple to conform to the laws of the particular state in regard to licensing the union for legal purposes. This continues to be the case today. In California, we are bound by the canons to conform to the state requirements for licensing; i.e., no liturgical act can produce a *legal* marriage between same-sex partners. However, the law does not prevent the church from blessing or otherwise ritualizing any form of human relationship.

The legal parameters set by the state for licensing or recognition of marriage are well defined. Religious and legal events pertaining to marriage will continue, but this does not prevent the church from extending its ministry to all baptized Christians. "The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ."⁸ We are all—lay and ordained—citizens of two realms: the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of this earthly world. Clergy have been entrusted with a particular legal responsibility. We recognize God's grace in faithful loving relationships and believe no Christian living in a faithful and life-

⁵ Examples of rights granted to married heterosexual couples include: immigration and residency priority for spouses from other countries; access to Social Security after spouse's death; the right to custody of children after divorce; visitation rights for non-biological children; ability to transfer property from one spouse to another without transfer tax consequences.

⁶ For example, issues relating to debt and medical decision-making

⁷ *Book of Common Prayer*, page 855 (italics ours).

⁸ *Book of Common Prayer*, Catechism, page 855.

long union should be denied the church's blessing. We have seen God's grace in the relationships of lesbian, gay and heterosexual persons and believe the rites of celebrating and blessing holy unions should extend to all couples...regardless of the position of the civil authority.

In the Episcopal Church everyone's part in the story of salvation is heard and celebrated. God's work in the lives of all people is recognized. Uniquely in its local setting, and in the larger context of the United States, with its constant struggle to define separation of church and state, the Diocese of California is called to express its unity in the body of Christ by giving regular liturgical form to the wider Christian understandings of marriage.

Session 3

The Gospel: Common Ground for Discussion and Discernment

Together... We Are One

We are in common faith in God's work in Christ and committed to follow Jesus as Lord. We are reconciled to God. All who are involved in this conversation love God and through faith, we are children of God. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are all going to be in heaven together.

Jesus: Key to the Gospels?

The good news is the Gospel and it leads us forward as we are challenged with difficult decisions. We also note the Gospel is more than the four accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Though these books are called Gospels, they are really witnesses to a greater reality: the living Word, Jesus. As Christians, we believe that Jesus' ministry and message — his life, death and resurrection — are the keys to understanding both the words of scripture and God's plan for human beings. In a real sense, Jesus is the Gospel.

The law was given through Moses. Jesus Christ brought grace and truth. It is God the only Son who has made God known.⁹

Jesus has little to say specifically, about marriage and he says nothing at all about homosexuality. Sexuality is not Jesus' or Paul's main concern. Jesus is proclaiming the good news of God's reconciliation with humankind and calling people to a new way of life. By stepping back from a legalistic focus relating to a few unrelated passages and looking instead to this primary Gospel message we can find common ground.

Ramifications of the Gospel

1) God is reconciling the world to God's own self in Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is about God's love for humankind and his passion to be united with people. Jesus' ministry and message provide a sign of God's great love and deep desire to share the fullness of life with all.

"I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly."¹⁰ The radical thing about Jesus' ministry was that he reached out both to people in the mainstream¹¹ and to those on the edges.¹² Jesus touched both Jews and Gentiles and men and women. The call, echoed throughout the New Testament, is of God wanting to be reconciled to all people.

Daily, reaching out and reconciliation are repeated in many of our churches and all are invited to the Lord's table. We are reminded of the need to be gracious as the Lord is gracious: We stand-in for the host, we don't get to decide who is invited, we get to welcome them.

As Christians, we often fail to live into Jesus' radical hospitality and generosity of spirit — with single people, gay and lesbian people, young people, or any who are different from us. We sometimes forget that in the Baptismal Covenant we agree to "seek Christ in all persons, loving (our) neighbor as (ourselves)."¹³

The culmination of God's passion for reconciliation is Jesus' own work of reconciliation through his death and resurrection. In Jesus, God makes possible an ever deepening relationship between people and God. We are offered forgiveness and reconciliation through faith. We are united with God not because of what

⁹ John 1:18

¹⁰ John 10:10

¹¹ Nicodemus the Pharisee is one example.

¹² Mathew the tax collector and the woman at the well are two examples.

¹³ *Book of Common Prayer*, page 302.

we do, but because of what God has done in Christ. “Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁴

2) We are called to follow Jesus through self-giving love.

The Gospel is also a call to repent, which means to turn around. In the familiar Summary of the Law, Jesus issues an invitation to transform our ways of thinking and living based on love of God and neighbor: Jesus said, “The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”¹⁵

The Gospel is about leaving behind old ways of selfish living and about learning to love as Jesus loves. Yet Gospel love is not, primarily, about the feelings we have but about the choices we make. Paul describes love in this way: Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave.¹⁶

Gospel love can express itself in countless ways. As Christians heed the call to love and serve, we are transformed inwardly and outwardly. In Gospel terms, committed Christian relationships become venues where self-giving love is learned and practiced. The most popular reading at Christian weddings reflects this kind of loving: Love is patient and kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things; believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.¹⁷

Understanding Christian Relationship: An Expression of the Gospel

The Gospel of Jesus contains the good news that we are accepted and loved just as we are. We are called to be transformed in the loving image of Christ. Marriage and same-sex unions can be places where the Gospel is lived out in a powerful way.

In committed Christian relationships the reconciliation of God is reflected in the love, acceptance, and affirmation each partner gives to the other. In respecting the dignity of the other every day and in practicing forgiveness as we have been forgiven, God’s grace given through Christ is made real. The reality of God’s grace lived out in committed relationship makes that relationship holy. This holy grace is not meant for the couple alone, but also that such grace lived out may overflow to the world around the couple: Make their life together a sign of Christ’s love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair.¹⁸

Christians living in a committed relationship also find a place to live out the self-forgetful love of Christ. In a real sense a committed relationship can be a school for Christ-like love. We learn about sacrifice for the sake of the beloved and about the kind of faithfulness that Jesus has for us.

In the end, the measure of any Christian relationship is the extent to which that relationship nurtures life in Christ. When marriages and same-sex unions are grounded in the Gospel, the blessings we are considering are not some sort of ‘right’ or ‘spiritual insurance policy’ for the relationship. Instead, the blessings are a facet of the call of Christian couples to holy, Christ-centered, life-giving relationship.

¹⁴ Romans 5:1

¹⁵ *Book of Common Prayer*, page 351, from Mark 12:29–31

¹⁶ Philippians 2:4–7

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

¹⁸ *Book of Common Prayer*, page 429.

Session 4

Pastoral Care: Same Sex Union and Marriage

Is Traditional Marriage in Trouble?

During the latter half of the 20th Century, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that marriage rates in the United States declined by nearly half. Divorce rates doubled.

Marriage is part of a greater change in relationships that has occurred over the past two generations. Formerly, a man's income was sufficient to support a family. Convenient birth control, women as wage-earners in their own right, and widespread acceptance of cohabitation and deliberate single status have also contributed to our understanding of changing couple dynamics. The traditional nuclear family of working husband, housewife and two-and-a-half children living under an umbrella of legal marriage has undergone significant change during the last decades.

Experience in the Episcopal Church and in the Diocese of California

Between 1980 and 2002, the Episcopal Church's annual data shows that marriages in Episcopal Churches declined 50% on the national level and 66% in the Diocese of California. This decline cannot be attributed to the size of our Church because average Sunday attendance dropped only slightly in the same period.

The only familial relationship covenants recognized in the 1976/1979 *Book of Common Prayer* are marriage, the birth of a child, and adoption. In the case of marriage, one or both partners might have been married before, requiring special approval from the diocesan bishop to assure that legal divorce has occurred.

Faithful Episcopalians in our diocese and throughout the Episcopal Church have committed to same-gender relationships, whether or not the Church has blessed or officially recognized them. In the absence of formal rites to celebrate these unions, consenting bishops have allowed the development of appropriate ceremonies. In the Diocese of California, Bishop Swing at one time required that entire congregations embark on a study of the meaning of intimate commitment before granting approval of a same-sex celebration. More recently, he has authorized blessing of 'abiding relationships.' There is no accurate record of the number of same-sex blessings performed in the Diocese of California or in the wider Episcopal Church. Our Bishop has repeatedly affirmed his current stance of 'no policy.' In his charge to this task force he has expressed willingness to consider establishing a clear policy.

Marriage Ceremonies in the Diocese of California

Clergy in the Diocese of California take a variety of approaches to officiating at wedding ceremonies. Some limit their involvement strictly to members of the congregation in which they serve, others view officiating at weddings as an opportunity for evangelism, and still others see weddings as sources of income for the congregation.

Furthermore, the Episcopal Church has no uniform course of pastoral counseling leading to marriage or other unions; all is left to the discretion of the officiating clergy. Some clergy insist on a discernment process with five or more sessions with the couple to explore assumptions and attitudes toward such topics as friendship, money, religion, politics, conflict, children, and sex. Other clergy limit their attention to the logistics of the rite itself.

'The Wedding' Itself as Misplaced Focus

Two individuals who are intent on a lifelong union actually join themselves, one to the other. The rite celebrated in a church makes the unity public and declares it holy. As a church, we are remiss anytime we direct all our attention to this single liturgical act — 'the wedding' — without providing adequate

education and support regarding life in a Godly commitment. An intimate long-term Christian union is not merely between two people; it is rather a complex interrelationship between individuals, a supporting community, and God. If such vows were exchanged between the couple, the local congregation and the church at-large, as we do in baptism, we would articulate our promise to nurture couples through both joy and crisis...both in the short term and the long term.

The Church: Preparing and Nurturing Covenanted Relationships?

Whenever a congregation or clergy treat marriage/union lightly, they miss a significant opportunity for Christian formation. Intimate, lasting relationship between two people should reflect the love between God and all people. Congregations should treat the intention of two people to enter into this kind of relationship as a welcoming, long-term commitment. Counseling with a pastor should be a process of honest discovery and training for the work that the couple's life together entails. The couple needs to understand that love involves effort expended on behalf of another, and that forgiveness and forgiven-ness are cornerstones of mutual life. Furthermore, wise counseling will prepare each partner for healthy expectations. Preparation is successful when the couple and the clergy experience a sense of confidence that the bond they are creating is Godly and strong.

There are many ways in which the community of faith could and should support couples.¹⁹ Any parish serious about nurturing development in holy relationship could develop creative and affirming ways that fit its congregational character.

¹⁹ For example, there might be congregational "sponsors" of the couple joining in marriage/union, on-going meetings with the rector or support group, or "ember letters" to the pastor.

Session 5

The Relationship Between Marriage and Same Sex Unions

The Episcopal Church in Conversation

Every General Convention of the Episcopal Church since 1991 has passed at least one resolution relating to marriage, holy union, and/or human sexuality. No General Convention resolution after 1991 has referred to marriage explicitly as the *only* appropriate venue for two adults to live in a lifelong, committed union. However, each resolution has spoken of the marital relationship between husband and wife.

We Uphold Values

The Church has strongly voted in its General Convention to hold its members accountable to the values characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication “and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God...and we denounce promiscuity, exploitation, and abusiveness in the relationships of any of our members” — both in marriage and other life-long committed relationships. Additionally, the church pledged to provide for them prayerful support, encouragement and pastoral care necessary to live faithfully by them.”

Values are both explicit and implicit in the marriage rite found in *The Book of Common Prayer* and in the Church Canons but they are not, and need not be, lived out solely in heterosexual marriage. We are reminded, “such relationships exist throughout the church.” The blessing of covenanted same-sex unions offers an additional way for the Church to lift up and teach about Godly relationship. Both unions can embody and articulate the Church’s role in affirming and supporting good and Godly relationships. This is the experience in the Diocese of California, where many congregations have benefited from the ministry and witness of lay and ordained gay people.

Same sex-couples, who have come to the church seeking God’s blessing, do so having experienced grace in their relationships. In coming to a public religious arena to offer thanks, they are taking seriously their relationship with God and with each other. This is a matter of most profound sacramental theology.

Marriage and Same Sex Relationships: Similar and Different, One From the Other

Married straight couples and same-sex couples share the same values this church has set forth for life-long committed relationships. Unmarried straight and same-sex couples desire experience they see in married couples, and seek a sense of ‘family,’ whether or not the couple is rearing children; the acknowledgement, support and responsibilities set forth by the church and state for traditional families; and healthy and loving sexual expression, to name a few. The Prayers of the People in the *Book of Common Prayer* marriage rite ask God to “grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows...find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed.” All God’s people (gay and straight) benefit from the ministry of committed couples. Our experience is that same-sex unions also provide a gospel witness.

While there are many similarities between straight couples and same-sex couples, there are also ways in which marriage and same-sex unions are unique. For one, straight couples have a culturally and legally privileged status in most states and countries. Such privileges not only make marriage fiscally appealing, they give partners in relationship a particular kind of monetary insurance in relation to the state. A Christian heterosexual couple also sees their marriage as a vocation and as a sacrament to show forth God’s love. This sacrament of heterosexual marriage is sacred to countless husbands and wives who have experienced God’s forgiveness, grace, and healing within their marital relationship.

Differences between same-sex and straight couples seem to lie within inherent gender differences experienced in the heterosexual relationship. Other differences relate to the traditional roles and cultural norms of man and woman, husband and wife — norms and roles that homosexual couples do not experience in quite the same way. In all of this, we see both biological and cultural realities in play.

Sexuality, in terms of sex role behavior at least, has increasingly come to be appreciated on a continuum, rather than as within two neatly described, entirely complementary categories. Gender and sex role differences vary from culture to culture and, truly, even from couple to couple, as tradition-defined sex roles are typically worked out in each particular relationship. The uniqueness of each and every couple, lesbian, gay, or straight, is often as mysterious as life itself. It might be helpful to consider how all individuals and couples, gay and straight, can best manifest the image of God — with blessing, support, and encouragement from the Christian community.

Do Same Sex Unions Pose a Threat to Heterosexual Marriage?

Who gets to use the word marriage? Concerns about this question are often rooted in state and church definitions of marriage. There are many members of this task force who would support legal changes to allow same-sex couples to enter into formal and legal marriage. At the same time, some people express reservations. However, the Bishop of California has not charged this Task Force with answering questions relating to gay marriage *per se* but with considering questions related to the blessing of same-sex unions. It remains for the church and state over time to solve the nomenclature issue.

Members of this Task Force agree that same-sex couples should be able to have their relationships blessed liturgically and they should be afforded the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities afforded heterosexual married couples by the state. Additionally, the church should provide the same support, encouragement, and pastoral care for all. The church, in proactively supporting, encouraging, and caring pastorally for same-sex couples, offers the best hope for same-sex unions to be successful in the vows they make to each other.

A Common Call: Justice

Heterosexual and homosexual communities hold differences of opinion relating to the form and language of the blessing of marriages and unions. Some same-sex couples prefer to adapt the language of the marriage rite if only because of the familiarity and beauty of the current rite's language and its expression of the traditional values of good relationship. Other couples desire entirely new rites, preferring to step aside from the ancient property language on which the marriage rite is, in part, based. Some straight couples also would like to see the current marriage rite reframed in terms that are released entirely from its origins in property law.

In one congregation in the Diocese of California, a straight couple was the first to request use of a rite developed by that community for same-sex couples. At the same time, some straight couples insist that rites for same-sex blessings should not 'look like marriage' or the marriage rite, which they see as the particular purview of a man and a woman. The issue isn't that rites for blessing same-sex unions resemble the marriage rite, but that both rites 'look like' and are, in fact, based upon the foundational rites of the church—Holy Eucharist and Baptism—which is as it should be.

In referring to the variety of points of view about nomenclature and rites, we should stress that this Task Force and the Diocese of California, while leaning toward more progressive views in these matters, recognizes the variety of opinions and perspectives in the Episcopal Church and in the culture in which we live. Whatever our individual views on the specific details of these matters, let us agree in our commitment to fulfill God's call to us through the prophet Micah "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."²⁰

A Single Standard for Blessing

To date, many clergy in the Diocese of California have understood our Bishop to require that same-sex couples who request a blessing ceremony must have been together for a significant period of time. Seen in one light, the Bishop grants clergy the authority to bless something that already exists. The language of the marriage rite, however, is rather like a calling out and sending forth — an ordination, if you will. This

²⁰ Micah 6:8

language does not take into account, in like manner, the reality that many straight couples receiving the marriage blessing have also been together — in fact, have experienced lovemaking and have lived together — for a significant time prior to their marriage. This has become the typical case rather than the exception. This is the only example we can think of wherein the church is considering providing unique rites for people engaged in like relationships. For example, we all share one Baptism and one Eucharist. If there are, however, distinct rites for straight marriage and same-sex unions, we hope to see a single standard in the church's expectations of couples, straight and same-sex — particularly with regard to premarital and pre-union counseling. Further, we believe that both the marriage rite and a rite of blessing for same-sex couples should include both a sense of blessing something that already exists and also of calling forth/sending out.

In all cases, one aspect of the 'something new' that is added ritually and liturgically is a sense of a corporate "Amen," which is made explicit by the very public-ness of the rites. This public nature enhances the vocational dimension of covenanted relationships and expresses a sense that the relationship is to be lived out for the common and public good. The rite itself, be it the celebration and blessing of the marriage of a woman and man or the union of a same-sex couple, is merely the tip of the relationship iceberg. The relationship exists as vocation and mission not only for the good of the partners and their family, but also for the common good, upholding the social order, and building up the community of faith.

We Learn: Covenanted Relationships

Using again the language of General Convention, we are learning from committed relationships the values of "fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection, and respect, careful, honest communication, and...holy love." We are seeing in both same-sex and heterosexual relationships the image of God. We might too easily assume that straight married couples manifest these values and God's image primarily to other straight married couples and that same-sex couples provide such ministry predominantly to other same-sex couples. The joyful reality, however, is that all godly relationships minister to the whole people of God, single/widowed/divorced or married/partnered. Gay people want their relationships blessed, in part, because they have found themselves blessed by the ministry of married couples they admire. Similarly, heterosexual couples often experience blessing and positive challenge by the examples of good relationship witnessed in gay and lesbian couples. Blessing is both a noun and a verb! The ministry of committed relationship is shared by the entire community and is the responsibility of all couples, gay and straight.

We have not yet learned what we might receive from truly valued and blessed same-sex relationships. Even in the Diocese of California, we have tended to hide same-sex unions under the proverbial bushel basket. The title and public nature of the BCP marriage rite — The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage — implies an important message: we can bless in private but we cannot celebrate in private! We have barely scratched the surface of the blessings we might all realize in living among same-sex couples in church-sanctioned and blessed relationships. What joy are we likely to discover? What new lessons might we learn about love and about God's intentions for us today? We encourage one another, in considering the blessing of same-sex unions, to imagine room for the Holy Spirit to act amongst us all — room for couples to flourish with the blessing and support of the Church.

Experience: Parenting

Same-sex couples in loving, committed union desire essentially the same things that straight married couples desire. For some single-sex couples this includes, when it is God's will, parenting and the nurture of children in the knowledge and love of the Lord. The diocese is experiencing the benefits of good parenting by both straight married couples and same-sex couples.

The stories we hear from same-sex families tell us that family life in their households is very typical. Some have been single parents. Some same-sex couples have incorporated children from previous marriages to form new families. Some have adopted children. Some have had to work hard to form families through the adoption process or the act of giving birth. In today's typical household where both parents have careers outside the home, parents learn that it truly does take a village to raise a child — extended family, friends, neighbors, childcare professionals, teachers and the like are critical for all families. The same might be asserted for families with a stay-at-home mom or dad. Is the experience of 'being family' in same-sex

households very different from those in households with heterosexual parents? Not really.

If there is one way in which same-sex households are different, it is that households with two straight parents are more culturally valued and acknowledged by the church and society than same-sex households. The same, of course, can be said about single parent households. We believe the church's role to be one of supporting families of all sorts and conditions, to help parents meet the challenges of parenting and to help children meet the challenges of growing up, and to celebrate and honor the diversity in today's church and world.

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Online Resources

[http://www.claimingtheblessing.org/docs/CTBTheology\(Final\).pdf](http://www.claimingtheblessing.org/docs/CTBTheology(Final).pdf)

The Claiming the Blessing theology statement provides an Anglican theological perspective on the blessing of same-sex unions.

<http://www.integrityusa.org/samesexblessings/sclm2000.pdf>

The Report of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music includes several brief essays on aspects of the question of blessing same-sex unions. It recommends local option with respect to the authorization of such blessings, i.e. leaving it to the discretion of diocesan bishops.

<http://windsor2004.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004/downloads/windsor2004full.pdf>

The Windsor Report is the report of the Lambeth Commission created by the Archbishop of Canterbury in response to the tensions in the Anglican Communion over the consecration of the Bishop of New Hampshire and the authorization to bless same-sex unions in the Diocese of New Westminster, Canada.

<http://www.oasiscalifornia.org/windorresources.html>

The Oasis/California website has links to a number of reflections on the Windsor Report, as well as a helpful congregational study packet developed by the Diocese of North Carolina.

http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/ethicalperspectives/gay_marriage.html

This article provides a Roman Catholic perspective on gay marriage.

<http://www.ucc.org/justice/marriage.htm>

This web site includes a variety of resources for engaging the question of marriage and blessing same-sex unions produced by the United Church of Christ.

<http://www.integrityusa.org/samesexblessings/index.htm>

Integrity U.S.A. hosts a web page with links to diocesan rites and policies regarding the blessing of same-sex unions, as well as links to a number of reflection papers.

<http://www.diocal.org/downloads/HolyRelationships.pdf>

The California Report: Holy Relationships and the Authority of Scripture is the Diocese of California's response to the 1998 Lambeth Conference resolution that declared "homosexuality is incompatible with scripture."

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