

Dear friends,

Now that it is legal, clergy in the diocese of El Camino Real have permission to officiate at same-sex marriages. They have been informed, and we have discussed over recent months, that they may sign the license in the State of California by virtue of their status as clergy. Other dioceses have also interpreted previous general convention language of exercising "generous pastoral response" in states where same-sex marriage is legal, as having the freedom to officiate at the marriage for a same-sex couple, just as they would a heterosexual couple.

At clergy conference, we reached verbal consensus to include words to the effect that the marriage is performed on behalf of the state. Many clergy expressed their desire to include words to this effect for heterosexual couples as well in order to respect that while in the eyes of the state all marriages are equal, the church has not yet reached this conclusion as a whole; while at the same time wishing to express the equality with which same-sex couples are regarded by so many of us.

As we know, General Convention recently approved a blessing rite to be used for same-sex couples, and as noted in my most recent customary (which is online), we will adhere to that resolution when performing same-sex blessings. There is detailed information in the customary regarding blessings. It should be noted that the requirements for same-sex couples are the same as that of heterosexual couples.

I rejoice with our clergy and congregations who will choose this honor, officiating at marriages and blessings for couples who have waited so long as legal marriage for all couples now begins. May your relationship with them, and your service to them as pastor and celebrant - and as the family of Christ - be holy and good!

+Mary