

# *The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh*



## **Guidelines for the Use of the Rite for Blessing a Lifelong Covenant**

*(revised July 3, 2014)*

The rite is permitted for local use as of The Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 2014, by the rector or priest-in-charge of a parish, or by an assisting priest acting under the authority of that rector or priest-in-charge, within that parish.

No priest may be compelled to use this rite in violation of his or her own conscience.

The rite may only be celebrated either with the priest or other validly licensed person signing a certificate of civil marriage at the time of the rite, or subsequent to such a civil marriage already entered into by a same-sex couple in Pennsylvania or elsewhere.

The rite may be used outside the diocese by clergy canonically resident in the Diocese of Pittsburgh only by joint permission of the Bishop of Pittsburgh and of the bishop in the hosting diocese.

The rite must be used according to its rubrics and may only be adapted within their provisions. No other liturgy may be used for the blessing of same-sex covenants.

It shall be the responsibility of any pastor contemplating the use of this rite to assess the likely pastoral and liturgical implications, and to address them with the couple, the parish leadership, and the bishop well in advance of the prospective date of its use.

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