



## THE BISHOP OF LONDON

### **Ad Clerum**

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011

Dear Friends

### **Marriage in Church of Foreign Nationals**

You will know from recent press reports that this remains an issue of major concern. The House of Bishops has recently issued advice on the subject, and I attach the following (which can also be found and downloaded from the Diocesan Website at <http://www.london.anglican.org/regulations/marriage>) :

1. An explanatory note from the Diocesan Registrar;
2. Guidance from the House of Bishops;
3. Guidance from the UK Border Agency;
4. The recommended form of questionnaire for completion by applicants seeking marriage in Church by Common Licence.

I commend the enclosed advice to you. Please read it carefully. As you will see, the clear recommendation is that, in the case of marriages involving a non-EEA national, a Common Licence should normally be sought. In this Diocese it has for some time been the policy that **all** non-British nationals, regardless of their country of origin, should normally be married by Common Licence. This policy remains.

You will note the Diocesan Registrar's guidance as to the process for seeking a Common Licence. The questionnaire will need to be completed and a copy of this, together with a letter from the minister who is to conduct the marriage, must be sent to the Surrogate.

I know you all understand the importance of welcoming people who genuinely seek to enter into marriage as the Church understands it. However, it is extremely important that we continue to guard against the Sacrament and the Church being misused in circumstances in which the parties do not intend to form a genuine marriage. The enclosed guidance is intended to help in this difficult and sensitive area.

The Archdeacons and, of course, the Diocesan Registry are able to advise in particular cases.

I am tremendously grateful to all our Surrogates, who have been shouldering a particular burden lately. I very much hope that, for the reasons outlined in the Registrar's note, this pressure will soon be reduced.

In issuing the enclosed advice, I have liaised with the Bishop of Southwark and his colleagues. Our two Dioceses are in a similar situation on this issue, and we want to ensure that consistent advice is given to clergy on both sides of the Thames.

Thank you for all you continue to do to try to ensure that the Diocese of London complies with current best practice in this matter.

With thanks for our partnership in the Gospel.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Chartres". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Richard Chartres KCVO DD FSA