



MARRIAGE TRIBUNAL
Catholic Pastoral Centre
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Office of the Judicial Vicar

Dear Petitioner,

You are to be commended for taking this first step in clarifying your marital status in the Church. We hope that this process will be a time of healing and spiritual growth.

The Catholic Church believes that marriage is sacred and that it affects the family, society, and the Church. Canon 1055 of the *Code of Canon Law* states, “The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature ordered to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized.” This teaching forms the basis of the tribunal’s investigation.

The Church teaches that marriage is indissoluble. Divorce does not bring a marriage to an end, and a properly celebrated marriage is presumed by law to be valid until proven otherwise. Therefore, before a divorced person can be declared free to marry in the Catholic Church, it must be established that he or she is in fact not bound by the previous union. However, divorce is a reality of contemporary society and is a challenging and often extremely difficult experience for all involved. Catholics, as well as non-Catholics who wish to marry in the Catholic Church, have the right to ask the appropriate tribunal to investigate the possible nullity of their marriage.

A marriage can be declared null only if it can be shown through the tribunal’s formal inquiry that at the time of consent, at least one of the parties lacked an intention or capability required to establish the binding commitment of marriage as understood by the Catholic Church. If nullity is declared, both parties are free to enter marriage in the Catholic Church (though in certain situations, restrictions may apply).

A declaration of nullity does not deny that a real relationship existed, nor does it imply that the relationship was entered with ill will or moral fault. It does not seek to place blame or establish a guilty party. When a marriage is declared null by the Church tribunal, the legitimacy of any children of the union is not affected, and there are no consequences whatsoever in civil law.

The following instructions and forms are intended to assist you in better understanding the annulment process and in completing the application. We look forward to working with you. Meanwhile may God be with you in your journey of faith.

(Rev) Alexander M. Laschuk, JCD, PhD
Judicial Vicar

Yahweh asks of you only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.
(Micha 6:8)