



DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

Diocesan Tribunal

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Dear Petitioner:

Divorce is always a most difficult time for both partners and their children. And initiating a canonical process to determine the sacramental validity of a prior marriage is not an easy step to take. I encourage you to work with your parish priest/deacon/pastoral minister throughout this process. While the process can seem overwhelming, it often can be a source of healing and even reconciliation for you. Please do not get discouraged or disheartened if this process seems to drag on or take time. We realize the importance of resolving your situation and will do our best to do so in a timely fashion.

Our Church teaches that the marriages of all people (even non-Catholics) are presumed valid unless proven otherwise. The annulment process is designed to determine whether or not the marriage in question is indeed valid, or if there is an impediment, a defect of marital consent, or an inability to fulfill the requirements of marriage as the Church sees them.

In order to initiate this process, we ask you to read carefully and fill out the attached **REQUEST FOR MARRIAGE NULLITY CASE IN THE ORDINARY PROCESS (Parts I and II)**. When you have completed the General Preliminary Questionnaire (Part I) and written the Personal and Marital History (Part II), please return them along with the \$25 filing fee and the required sacramental certificates and civil documents to your parish, which will forward them to us. **Be sure to make photocopies of all materials you submit.**

Please understand that no arrangements or commitments for a future wedding or validation may be made before the completion of this process!

Upon receipt of your **completed** application, the Tribunal will contact you to set up an interview and begin the process. If you do not hear from us within two months, please contact our office. To help defray the operating cost of the Tribunal, we ask that you, as the Petitioner, be responsible for certain administrative fees for this process. In addition to the \$25 filing fee which accompanies the petition, \$125 is due at the time of your personal interview with a member of the Tribunal and \$125 is due at the time of the final decision. It is possible that during the course of our study, the services of an expert witness may be needed. In that case, at this time, the expert's fee is \$300. All checks should be made payable to the **ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF FALL RIVER**.

Please be assured of our prayers for you as you begin this important step of healing and reconciliation to ascertain the truth of your prior marriage. If you have any questions, you can bring them with you at the time of your personal interview with a member of the Tribunal staff, or you can call our Diocesan Tribunal Office at 508-675-7150. Please be assured of our cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Very Rev. Jeffrey Cabral, J.C.L.
Judicial Vicar