



**GUIDELINES FOR FILLING OUT AND SUBMITTING
PETITION FOR DECLARATION OF NULLITY OF MARRIAGE**

1. Before you answer any of the questions, please read the entire questionnaire.
2. Study each question carefully and think about how you will answer it. It is important that you answer each question as *truthfully and fully* as possible.
3. Please provide as much detail as possible. There is also space for any additional information that you may wish to provide, or you may use as many additional pages as necessary. Type or print only on the front side of each page, not on the back side. Specific and detailed answers are most helpful to the judge in reaching a decision.
4. If you do not understand a question, or are unable to fill out the questionnaire, please contact your Pastor or Advocate. If you live outside the Diocese of Dallas, you may contact the Tribunal of your Diocese.
5. The questionnaire should be either *typewritten* or completed *legibly* in *black* ink.
6. If a question does not apply to you, please write “N/A”.
7. If you need more space to answer a particular question, you may use a separate sheet of paper.
8. The Petitioner is the person seeking the annulment. The Respondent is your former spouse.

We realize that some of the questions may appear to be very similar to other questions that you have been asked. Please understand that each question is significant to a particular time, such as **dating**, the **engagement**, or the actual **marriage**.

CONCERNING THE WITNESSES:

- A. As a general rule, witnesses should have knowledge of the marriage in question, especially the courtship, engagement, and wedding. When possible, they should have known at least one party *before* the wedding. **Children of the marriage and your current spouse should not be named as witnesses.**
 - B. Talk with your prospective witnesses and be sure that they are willing to complete a questionnaire.
 - C. The witnesses should answer each question *fully*.
 - D. If witnesses are unable to read or write or do not speak English, inform your Pastor or Advocate, and other arrangements will be made to take their statements.
 - E. The expert testimony of physicians, other health-care professionals, and counselors may be of great importance. A release form is included to allow them to testify.
9. The following documents *must* accompany your Petition for a Declaration of Nullity. Cases *cannot* be accepted if a necessary item is missing. If you want the documents to be returned, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please keep a copy of all information sent to Tribunal.
- A. A civil marriage license
 - B. A marriage certificate issued by the Catholic Church, if applicable
 - C. A *certified* copy of the divorce decree signed by the Judge
 - D. A *recent* copy of the baptismal certificate of Catholic parties, with notations. The baptismal certificate can be obtained from the Church in which the person was baptized. Your Advocate may need to assist you in obtaining this information.
 - E. The *required* letter from the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Deacon, or other parish-based Advocate. This letter follows in this document.

In order that you may be aware of the possible outcomes of this process, we offer, informally, the following information.

IF AN AFFIRMATIVE DECISION (a declaration that the marriage in question was invalid) IS GIVEN by the Dallas Tribunal, there are two courses the case may take:

1. *If there is no appeal* (by the Respondent or the Defender of the Bond) against the decision of the Dallas Tribunal:
 - The Tribunal of the Diocese of Dallas will issue a decree declaring the parties free to marry.
2. *If there is an appeal*
 - The case goes to the Court in the Archdiocese of San Antonio for a full appellate hearing or to the Tribunal of the Roman Rota in the Vatican. The Petitioner or the Respondent may offer additional evidence and arguments in their appeal.

IF A NEGATIVE DECISION IS GIVEN, that is, the Dallas Tribunal does not declare the marriage invalid, the case will ***not*** be acted upon further, unless the Petitioner appeals to the Court of second instance.

If the second-instance decision is the ***same*** as that given by the Dallas Tribunal, whether two affirmatives or two negatives, the case is complete, and no further appeal is possible.

PLEASE RETAIN THESE THREE PAGES FOR YOUR RECORDS.