



Diocese of Venice in Florida

The Tribunal

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING A MARRIAGE TRIBUNAL APPLICATION

Providing accurate and complete forms, detailed Marital History, and all the requested documents is the best way to ensure the Tribunal can process your petition promptly. Remember that a Declaration of Nullity is not a guaranteed outcome. Do not schedule a wedding/convalidation until your freedom to marry in the Catholic Church is established. If you plan to come into the Church at Easter, The Tribunal needs your completed petition with all the documents by September 1st.

1. Complete all the lines on the cover page for both parties. Note: According to Canon Law, the Tribunal needs the respondent's contact information to accept a petition. If you do not know the information, then use available means to search for it before submitting your petition. Without respondent contact information, your petition will likely be significantly delayed.
2. Please ensure your Baptismal information includes the Church's name, street address, City, State (Country-if not USA), and Zip Code. When seeking your Baptismal Certificate, ensure it was issued recently, at least within six months.
3. Complete the Marriage Information section (Parts A and B), answers the questions, providing all requested information.
4. Complete the questions regarding Previous Marriages (Parts A through G). The Tribunal needs all documentation for every marriage.
5. Civil Separation, Divorce, or Dissolution Information is essential. Parts A through E are required, and the requested documents are needed to accept the petition.
6. Provide the information about Future Marriage Plans Information (Parts A–C), and please be forthcoming about any plans.
7. Provide accurate contact information for witnesses, listing them and their information on a separate sheet. Professional Witnesses are helpful. List these witnesses on a separate sheet and note you may be asked for a release form by these witnesses (Complete a release form before submitting your petition).

Marital History: If your Marital History does not provide enough information, the Tribunal may not be able to accept your petition, request a more detailed history or an in-person interview at the Tribunal. Review your Marital History with your Advocate to ensure it provides sufficient information.

8. Please number your responses according to the question (i.e., 1, 2, 3. – 56 —You don't need to include the question in your history). Do not skip questions.
9. Simple yes-or-no answers or bullet points are not helpful to the Judges. Please provide as much detail as possible in narrative form. Use hindsight and remember that your answers should be intelligible to the Tribunal.
10. Question 56 is very important. Please explain succinctly why your marriage failed and why it should be declared null with no extraneous material.
11. Sign and date your form and provide all the requested documents when submitting your petition.



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MARRIAGE TRIBUNAL APPLICATION

PETITIONER

Legal Name _____

(Maiden Name) _____

Street Address _____

City & State, Zip _____

Permanent Residence Yes - No

Home Telephone _____

Mobile Telephone _____

E-Mail Address _____

Occupation _____

Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Baptized/ Christened Yes - No – Uncertain

Denomination _____

Name of Church _____

City/ State of Church _____

Present Religious Affiliation _____

RESPONDENT

Legal Name _____

(Maiden Name) _____

Street Address _____

City & State, Zip _____

Permanent Residence Yes - No

Home Telephone _____

Mobile Telephone _____

E-Mail Address _____

Occupation _____

Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Baptized/ Christened Yes - No – Uncertain

Denomination _____

Name of Church _____

City/State of Church _____

Present Religious Affiliation _____

NOTE: Per Canon Law the Respondent section must contain contact information so the Tribunal can notify the Respondent.

MARRIAGE INFORMATION

Date of Marriage: ____/____/____ Church or Place of Marriage _____

Civil License # _____ City & State, Zip _____

A. Please list on a separate page, the names, and dates of birth of all children born/ adopted by you and your former spouse:

B. Was this the first marriage for each of you? Yes – No

(If your answer to this last question is “No” please complete the “Questions Regarding Previous Marriages” before submitting your Application)

QUESTIONS REGARDING PREVIOUS MARRIAGES

A. How many times were you, or your previous spouse, married to another person before marrying each other? Number: _____

B. Were these prior marriages a first marriage for each party? (Circle) Yes – No – Uncertain

C. Full legal name of his/her first marital partner: _____; Maiden name (if a woman): _____

D. Date and Church/place, City and State of this first marriage

E. Was either of these people Catholic, Orthodox, or Christian? Yes - No – Uncertain

F. Was your or your former spouse’s first marital partner alive:

1. At the time you and your former spouse married? Yes – No – Uncertain

2. At the time you and your former spouse divorced? Yes – No – Uncertain

G. Date of civil divorce/dissolution and place, i.e., county and state of this previous marriage?

CIVIL SEPARATION – DIVORCE – DISSOLUTION INFORMATION

A. Were there any formal or informal pre-nuptial agreements to this marriage? Yes – No
(If “yes” please explain on a separate piece of paper.)

B. Please supply dates and reasons for any temporary separations and reasons for reconciliations on a separate paper and provide information on both.

C. Date of Final Separation __/__/____.

D. Date of Final Civil Divorce/Dissolution __/__/____; County/ State of civil proceedings

E. Has your marriage/divorce ever been brought to the attention of the Venice Tribunal, or any other tribunal or chancery? Yes – No – Unknown

Note: If you, or your former spouse, was married more than one time previous to your union to each other, the Tribunal will need similar information on each marriage!

FUTURE MARRIAGE PLANS INFORMATION

A. Are you, or an intended spouse, presently enrolled in OCIA? Yes – No

B. Are you currently planning marriage with a certain person? Yes – No

C. Are you presently civilly married with another person? Yes – No

If “yes” to any of the above, please supply the full legal name and/or maiden name of this person along with their baptismal status (i.e., Catholic, Protestant, non-baptized) along with the date and place (city, county, state) of this civilly recognized union.

WITNESS CONTACT INFORMATION

A. The Tribunal requires the testimony of three to four witnesses, individuals who were adults and knew both you and your former spouse at the time you married. Formal cases are not able to be successfully completed without witness testimony. Ideal witnesses who could evaluate your readiness for marriage would be parents, siblings, uncles, and aunts, cousins or friends that would have knowledge of this union at time of consent and courtship. Formal cases may not be considered if there are no witnesses. **On a separate page please supply the following contact information for each witness:**

Name of the Individual

Street/Box Address of the Individual

City/State/ Zip Code

Relationship of this person to either you or your former spouse

Telephone number at which they may be contacted.

Have you asked this person about participating in this process?

B. If you approached a counselor, medical provider, or professional concerning your marriage, you may list this person as a professional witness. While such professionals may require a

release from you, their testimony may be extremely valuable. On a separate page please supply the contact information as indicated above.

MARITAL HISTORY

Please type or legibly write your answers numbering your responses with the corresponding numbers on separate paper, one side only.

I. YOU AND YOUR FORMER SPOUSE AS A COUPLE

1. Before you and your former spouse met, how much dating was done by each of you? Were any of these relationships serious? Were any engagements broken?
2. What date and under what circumstances did you meet your former spouse? How long was your courtship? Did you ever break up? Was there a pre-marital pregnancy in this relationship? Were either of you inconsiderate or abusive to each other?
3. Do you recall any serious arguments, misunderstandings, differences, or separations during your dating and engagement? After your engagement, did you and your former spouse date only each other?
4. Can you describe why you were attracted to your former spouse and he/she to you?
5. Why did you decide to marry your former spouse? Why did he/she decide to marry you? Prior to marriage did you both discuss what your roles in marriage would be?
6. What did you discuss as a couple regarding faithfulness, children, and civil divorce? Did you or your former spouse have children from a previous relationship?
7. Shortly before the wedding, did you or your former spouse voice or express any doubts or reservations to anyone about whether or not to go through with the wedding; and, if so, how did you resolve them?
8. Did you or your former spouse enter marriage under any type of pressure? Before marriage did either of you have some concerns about infidelity or third parties in your relationship?
9. How did the religious training, background, and actual practice by each of you shape the understanding of your marriage? Were you both attending Church before marriage?
10. Describe any pre-marital counseling and/or church preparation for this marriage? Did you withhold any information from the priest or minister about your marriage plans?
11. What did you and your spouse understand "a permanent union binding until death" to mean? Was divorce a possibility if the marriage proved to be "unhappy?" When did you first discuss divorce, either theoretically or as a reality? Was divorce in other family members a matter of

concern to either of you?

12. Did any friends or family caution or advise against this marriage? Did either of you expect the other spouse to act differently as a result of being married?

13. Prior to marriage could either of you have been described by family or friends as being deceitful or manipulative? Did either of you bring any personal problems into the marriage?

14. Prior to marriage, how did each of you practice your faith? Did you consider your marriage to be a sacrament, an outward sign instituted by Christ to give you grace?

15. Before you married, did either of you make, even theoretical ones, any conditions that had to be met in the marriage? Can you describe how the other spouse responded to these conditions?

II. YOUR MARRIED LIFE TOGETHER

16. Describe the general temperament or personality of both of you about career and relationship before your marriage.

17. Were there any unusual conflicts or events on the wedding day or during the honeymoon?

18. Describe a typical day in your married life together in three stages: during the first year; about halfway through the marriage, and toward the end of the marriage.

19. When did serious problems become evident to you in marriage? Describe them.

20. Did you experience any problems affecting sexual demands or intimacy with your former spouse during the marriage?

21. Did both of you agree to have children when you entered the marriage? If not, what were the reasons? If you agreed to only delay the birth of children, please explain. Was it possible for children to be conceived during this marriage?

22. Was anything done during the marriage to prevent the possibility of conception; and, if so, was this by mutual agreement?

23. Did either of you verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually mistreat each other or your children?

24. What were the main complaints regarding you and your former spouse about each other as a spouse or as a parent?

25. If either you or your spouse was unfaithful in this marriage, could you address the following items: when did it begin; on whose part was it; was it with one or more other partners; what was the cause of infidelity; how did you or he/she learn of the infidelity?
26. Did either of you have a tendency to lie? Give examples.
27. Was suicide ever contemplated, threatened, or attempted either before or during the marriage?
28. Describe your ability to talk and communicate with each other during your time together.
29. Was your former spouse always a loving and affectionate person? Were you? Was expression of affection a problem in your marriage?
30. Explain by examples how you treated each other with respect and understanding.
31. How were marital responsibilities shared, e.g., parental, financial, housekeeping?
32. Did either of you abuse controlled substances or alcohol during this marriage? If so, when did this abuse become apparent? How did it affect your marriage?
33. At the very beginning and during the marriage, was there any mental, emotional or nervous difficulties on the part of either of you? Did either of you ever seek professional help at any time?
34. How would you describe religious values and practices played a part in your married life? For example, was church attendance regular, did the two of you pray together, did the two of you talk about religious beliefs?

III. REGARDING THE TERMINATION OF THE MARRIAGE

35. Do you believe the problems that ended your marriage in the civil courts originated after marriage, or were the problems always present?
36. How long did you actually live together? In view of the difficulties, why do you believe the marriage lasted as long as it did?
37. What efforts were made at marital counseling or resolving problems during this marriage?
38. Was the decision to file for divorce or a civil dissolution a mutual one? Was a third party an

influence on the civil proceedings?

39. Was there any emotional, physical, or sexual abuse by either of you during the course of this marriage?

40. At any time during the marriage, was the presence and intervention of law enforcement personnel summoned for problems in the marriage?

41. Do you know if your former spouse will cooperate in this ecclesiastical process?

IV. FAMILY AND PERSONAL BACKGROUND

42. Describe the personality of each of your parents and their own marital relationship.

43. Describe your relationship with your parents, brothers and sisters before and at the time of your marriage. Was there any verbal, physical or sexual abuse in your family of origin?

44. How were both affection and anger displayed in your family as you were growing up? Who did the disciplining in the family?

45. Describe your educational background and the type of student you were, e.g., where you went to school, your grades, special interests, problems, etc.

46. What type of social life did you have before marriage? Did you make friends easily? Did anyone call you, or accuse you, of being immature?

47. Did anyone in your family other than you suffer from an emotional problem, or drug or alcohol addiction?

48. Have you ever experienced any physical, emotional, or adjustment problems? Were these before or during this marriage? Did you consult medical doctors or seek medical care?

49. List your occupational history and reasons for any job changes.

50. Explain your attitudes towards sex before marriage, toward cohabitation, towards homosexuality. Was there any sexual activity before marriage with your spouse or others?

51. Describe any problems you may have had before marriage with alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Were you ever arrested for any reason?

52. How would you describe the judgment you exercised in everyday situations at the time of marriage?

53. Did you serve in the military? What effects, if any, did military service have on you?
54. Was anything kept from you about your ex-spouse, or his/her family, that you wish you had known about before marriage?
55. Was there anything from you or your spouse's family background that caused problems in this marriage?

Before you continue, please go back, and answer the above questions on Family and Personal Background as they pertain to your former spouse. If you do not know how to answer a particular question about your former spouse's background, simply write "I do not know."

56. Please clearly and concisely state why you believe your marriage ended and the reason you believe the Catholic Church should not hold the marriage in question to be an indissoluble sacramental bond of marriage according to the teaching of Jesus (cf. Matthew 19 or Mark 10).

PLEASE SIGN AND DATE THE PAGES OF YOUR MARITAL HISTORY AND ATTACH THEM TO THE APPLICATION

I hereby swear/attest that the information I am providing for this investigation is a true and accurate account of the marriage in question. I provide this photocopy of my driver's license or government issued identification as proof of my residency in the Diocese of Venice.

Petitioner's Name

_____/_____/_____
Date

PASTORAL RECOMMENDATION

_____ The Petitioner consulted with me in the preparation of this application.

_____ I recommend this application for serious consideration

Priest/ Deacon/ Pastoral Minister

Church

- A. Civil License and Certificate of all Marriages by either Party**
- B. Final Decree of Civil Divorce or Dissolution for the Marriage in Question**
- C. For Catholics a recent copy of your baptismal certificate with all notations from the Church of Baptism**
- D. The signed Pastoral Recommendation noted above**
- E. A photocopy of your Florida Driver's License of Government Issued Identification as proof of residency.**
- F. There are no filing or processing FEES (unless there is an appeal to the Second Instance Tribunal).**

Mail to: (A confirmation will be sent upon receipt of the Case File)

The Tribunal
Diocese of Venice
1000 Pinebrook Road
Venice, FL 34285

(Revised May 2023)