



**MARRIAGE TRIBUNAL**  
**Catholic Pastoral Centre**  
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*Office of the Judicial Vicar*

## **Guidelines for Initiating a Nullity Case at the Toronto Marriage Tribunal**

### **1. Contact your parish.**

Your parish priest, associate pastor, deacon, or lay pastoral minister will provide pastoral assistance to you during the annulment process.

- If you are not associated with a parish, please contact the church closest to you and make yourself known to the pastor.
- If you and your former spouse are both seeking a declaration of nullity, you may present yourselves together, as co-petitioners, at the parish you agree upon.
- If you are a non-Catholic wishing to submit an application, please make yourself known to the parish priest of the Catholic person you hope to marry.

During your appointment at the parish, you will receive the forms to begin the process. These forms are also available on the Archdiocese of Toronto website, <https://www.archtoronto.org/>: Offices & Ministries → Pastoral Ministries → Catholic Marriage Tribunal → Marriage Tribunal Cases → Tribunal Application.

### **2. Complete the Preliminary Application and Marital History forms.**

Please fill out the Preliminary Application and answer the Marital History questions completely. It is very important that you submit the current mailing and contact information of yourself and former spouse. Try to provide an accurate picture of what occurred prior to and during the marriage. Once you have answered all the questions to the best of your ability, set them aside for a couple of days in case any useful additions occur to you. If you need assistance in answering the questions, please contact your parish priest or pastoral minister.

### **3. Name your witnesses.**

Please provide the names, addresses and phone numbers of at least two witnesses – people who knew you and/or your former spouse before the marriage or early in the marriage, if possible. Witnesses should have knowledge of family backgrounds, your courtship/engagement, and marital situations, though it is not necessary that every witness have a good knowledge of all of these areas. Please make an effort to include witnesses from your side and from your former spouse's side. Parents and siblings are often good witnesses, as are friends who knew both of you. We ask that you personally contact all persons prior to listing them as witnesses to ensure that they are willing to cooperate.

#### **4. Have your Divorce Certificate ready.**

It is presumed that when a person approaches the tribunal, all avenues of reconciliation have been attempted and have proven unsuccessful. A divorce provides the tribunal with the assurance that the common life of the couple has definitively ended. It is our policy that a copy of your divorce decree must be submitted with your application.

#### **5. Finalize the application material.**

Once you have completed the forms, make an appointment with your parish priest, deacon or pastoral minister. Together, go over your Preliminary Application, Marital History, and witness list, and establish that you have a copy of your civil divorce decree. It is then necessary for the two (or three, in the case of co-petitioners) of you to initial, sign, and date the agreement. The priest, deacon, or pastoral minister will complete the referral section and send everything to the marriage tribunal.

#### **What will happen when the tribunal receives my application?**

Once your complete application is received, you will be given a protocol number. A member of the tribunal staff will write up a formal petition and send it to you. If you and your former spouse are co-petitioners, the petition will be sent to both of you to sign and return. After you sign and return the petition, we will contact you to make an appointment to come to the tribunal to give your testimony. At that appointment you will have the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns.

Please know that we will do all that we can to assist you. Your openness and willingness to work together with your parish priest and the tribunal staff are greatly appreciated.

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#### **Check list:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Initial appointment with parish priest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete application, marital history, and witness forms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of civil divorce decree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd appointment with parish priest.