

MARRIAGE NULLITY PROCESS OVERVIEW

STEP	STEP DETAIL
1. The process starts at your local parish. Please contact your pastor or deacon to guide you through the process	Your pastor or deacon reviews your application to make sure everything is completed, and all the pertinent documents are included. Please ask your pastor or deacon to serve as your Case Sponsor. He will provide helpful guidance throughout the process.
2. <i>Initial Review of the Application</i>	Once the application is submitted to the Tribunal, it will be evaluated, as to whether the petition has merits.
3. <i>Acceptance or Rejection (First Notification)</i> Please know that the Respondent (the ex-spouse) must be notified of this process, thus we need you to provide a good mailing address for him/her. The lack of the Respondent's participation, however, does not prevent the case from proceeding.	<p>If the application has merits, the Judicial Vicar accepts it and notifies, in writing, the Petitioner, Respondent and the Defender of the Bond.</p> <p>The Respondent has 15 days to respond to this citation.</p> <p>If the application is rejected, the Petitioner is notified in writing of this rejection and their submitted materials will be returned to them.</p>
4. <i>Constitution of the Court and Formulation of the Grounds (Second Notification)</i>	Once the Defender of the Bond and the Respondent reply to the Notification of Acceptance, the Judicial Vicar constitutes the Court, formulates the grounds under which the case will be adjudicated, and remits the case to the Ordinary Process, or to the process before the Bishop (if/when both parties participate and the marriage nullity grounds are apparent).
5. <i>Instruction (Third Notification)</i>	Ten (10) days after notification, the Instruction of the case begins. This is the phase during which testimony is taken from the parties and the witnesses. During this phase, if written testimony is insufficient, it may be absolutely necessary for the Petitioner and/or the Respondent to come to the tribunal for an interview. At times, some of the witnesses may also be required to come to the tribunal for a meeting, as well.
6. <i>Evaluation by the Court Expert</i>	When a case falls under canon 1095, §1, 2 or 3; the evaluation of a court psychological expert will be necessary. The Petitioner will be required to cover the fees (\$200.00) for this evaluation.
7. <i>Publication of the Acts (Fourth Notification)</i>	Once all the testimony has been gathered, both parties will have the opportunity to review the Acts of the case and to add any additional or supplementary testimony, if they wish to do so.
8. <i>Conclusion of the Case (Fifth Notification)</i>	Once there is no further evidence to add, the Decree of the Conclusion is issued. The parties, their Case Sponsors, and the Defender of the Bond will be invited to submit their final observations. The Case Sponsor has 15 days to submit a final brief.
9. Animadversions of the Defender of the Bond	The Defender of the Bond has the right to review the case last and to present any reasonable arguments that can be made in favor of the bond. They have 30 days after receiving the Case Sponsor's final brief.
10. <i>Judge's Definitive Sentence (Sixth Notification)</i>	Once the animadversions of the Defender of the Bond are submitted, the Judge studies the case and writes his definitive sentence, and the parties are notified of the decision of the Judge. Any of the interested parties and their respective Case Sponsor may come in to the Tribunal to read the sentence.
11. <i>Execution of the Sentence (Seventh Notification)</i>	If no one provides the Tribunal with a written notice of their desire to appeal the affirmative decision within the time limit of 15 days of the notification of Definitive Sentence, the Parties will be declared free to contract new canonical nuptials; if and when necessary, provided any imposed <i>Vetitum</i> or <i>Monitum</i> has been lifted. If an appeal is lodged, the Acts of the case will be transmitted promptly directly to the Tribunal of Appeals, either the Archdiocese of Denver or the Tribunal of the Roman Rota.