

Marriage Annulment Ministry

A Declaration of Nullity is obtained after a divorce is final. It is granted by the Church Court or Tribunal. A Declaration of Nullity states that something was missing from the very beginning of a marriage that it was not a valid, Christian sacramental marriage. Individuals trained by the Tribunal assist in the process as a liaison between the petitioner and the Tribunal leading one through the process including advice on written testimony.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Are divorced people automatically excommunicated?

No. They can participate fully, unless they remarry outside the Church. They must obtain a Declaration of Nullity before remarrying.

What is an annulment?

A Declaration of Nullity is a Church Tribunal/court's decision that something essential was lacking from the very beginning of the marriage. Thus the union is null and void. [A Declaration of Nullity is not a moral judgment or a vehicle for placing blame on one party or the other. It has no bearing on the legitimacy of children from that union because it was a legal, civil marriage.

What is the cost?

There are few fees for common cases. Some unusual cases may have fees attached.

How long does a formal case take to reach a conclusion?

It varies, but generally about a year.

Who can apply for a Declaration of Nullity?

Any person, Catholic or not, baptized or not, whose marriage has already civilly ended has the right to ask the Church to investigate the relationship for such a declaration. No case is too weak to explore the possibility of a Declaration of Nullity.

How does one start the process?

Contact the parish. A priest, deacon, or trained lay person should be available to help. You can also contact the Tribunal.

How long does a formal case take to reach a conclusion?

It varies, but generally nine months to two years.

How long does a Lack of Form take?

It can be as brief as six weeks. In this type of case, a Catholic needs to show that they were married without the required form. That means they were **not** married before a priest or deacon in the presence of two witnesses.

Can I reapply if my case did not go through previously?

Yes. And it may be a good idea to do so, particularly if your case was submitted before 1983. Canon law changed greatly in looking at what constitutes a valid marriage. It now takes into much greater account psychological causes for nullity.