

Annulment Process

Commonly asked questions:

Why should I get an annulment?

The annulment process offers the opportunity for healing as both you and the Church reflect on the circumstances surrounding your marriage and come to a clearer understanding of what happened. It allows you to make peace with it and move on. A declaration of nullity means that there was a serious flaw in your relationship from the very beginning, and therefore you were not sacramentally married.

Does an annulment mean I was never married?

The Church still recognizes the civil nature of your marriage and how deeply it has affected your life. However, a declaration of nullity means that your marriage was never a sacramental marriage in the eyes of the Church. Therefore, after an annulment, you are free to marry again in the Church.

Does an annulment make my children illegitimate?

No, your children remain legitimate, because, legally, you were married.

How do I start the annulment process?

You may begin the process by contacting any priest or deacon, or a lay Tribunal Advocate (contact the Tribunal Office at 814-693-9485 for the name of a lay advocate).

What if my former spouse won't cooperate?

The process can still proceed even without his or her cooperation.

What does an annulment cost?

For residents of this diocese there is no formal charge, although an anonymous donation is suggested at the completion of the process. For those outside the diocese, a fee of \$350 is required to begin the process. However, no one need ever put off beginning the process due to a lack of money.

"Is an Annulment the Same as a Divorce?"

For this article and more information, see the Tribunal Office webpage.

BOOKS: (Can be borrowed by mail from the Family Life Office)

Catholic Annulment - Spiritual Healing by Dennis & Kay Flowers. A practical guide; includes a helpful chapter for non-Catholics. (can also be purchased for \$8)

Annulment - The Wedding That Was by Michael Smith Foster. Explains how the Church can declare a marriage null.

Catholics, Marriage and Divorce: Real People, Real Questions by Victoria Vondenberger, RSM, JCL.