

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Hints for Utilizing the Tribunal Process



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(Revised August 20, 2014)

1. Select a Procurator-Advocate with whom you are comfortable to introduce your case. If you are not comfortable with any of the clergy or lay ministers in your own parish who introduce cases, telephone the Tribunal so that you can be put in contact with potential Advocates.
2. Complete the appropriate Petitioner's questionnaire in black ink utilizing backs of pages if necessary. The Tribunal does not require an elaborate presentation on the computer. Your own handwritten questionnaire will suffice for Tribunal purposes. Keep copies of all materials you submit to the Tribunal.
3. In telling your story, give the necessary facts recognizing that the Tribunal is not in the business of placing blame on either party. You do not have to build up yourself at the expense of the other party. When you are writing your declaration, remember that your former spouse will have be able to read it as you will the declaration of your former spouse.
4. Include whatever information is pertinent, regardless of how embarrassing it might be to you or someone else. The Tribunal is better able to assist you if you provide the necessary information. Your Advocate can guide you in making such a decision.
5. Alert your former spouse ahead of time to expect contact from the Tribunal and enlist her/his support.
6. Provide the complete names and current addresses of four witnesses who are knowledgeable about you and your former spouse while you were dating, making the decision to marry, engaged, going through the wedding ceremony, and living out the early period of your married life. Prior to proposing a witness, enlist her/his support and remind the witness that to be helpful to you the witness should not take sides but should present information in a direct, honest way.
7. Consider releasing "expert witnesses," such as counselors or health professionals, clergy, social workers, etc., who in their professional capacity might know something about your marriage.
8. Periodically contact your Advocate so that he or she can check on the case. Your Advocate is your liaison with the Tribunal and will contact the Tribunal for you concerning the progress of your case. You may be asked by the Tribunal, via your Advocate, to provide additional information or to contact your witnesses if they are not responding in a timely manner to the Tribunal.
9. Do not set a wedding date including a date for convalidation until you have received a decision in First Instance which has been, if necessary, confirmed by the Appellate Court and until any stipulations placed by either Court have been fulfilled.
10. Inform the Tribunal in writing of any changes of address for yourself, former spouse or witnesses.