

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Items Required for Introduction of Cases



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(Revised January 20, 2016)

1. Fully completed CURRENT [Petition for Investigation of a Marriage Bond](#) for each marriage under review.
2. Fully completed CURRENT [questionnaire](#) appropriate to the case under review; that is, the [formal questionnaire](#) for formal cases, the [convalidation questionnaire](#) for cases involving a convalidation, the [Absence of Form questionnaire](#) for absence of form cases, the [ligamen questionnaire](#) for *ligamen* cases, etc.
3. **Copy** of civil marriage certificate for marriage under review. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE OBTAIN, ALSO, THE APPLICATION FOR THE CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE AND THE LICENSE ITSELF from the County Clerk. For records in Texas since January 1966, contact the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health, 1100 W 49th St, Austin TX 78756, **1-(888) 963-7111, ext. 2150 or (512) 776-2150**, or at www.dshs.state.tx.us/. For Dallas County, contact the Dallas County Clerk's office at Vitals Division, Records Building, Second Floor, 509 Main Street, Suite 200, Dallas TX 75202-3551, (214) 653-7131 or www.dallascounty.org/.

For *ligamen* cases, not only do we need a copy of the civil marriage certificate for the marriage under review, but also a **copy of civil marriage certificate for the marriage that will serve as the binding bond**.

4. **Copy of complete, final, signed, civil divorce decree filed in county in which divorce took place** for marriage under review. These documents can be obtained from the District or Circuit Court Clerk. Records in Texas since March 1968 can be obtained from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health, 1100 W 49th St, Austin TX 78756, **1-(888) 963-7111, ext. 2150 or (512) 776-2150**, or at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>; or if you know it took place in Dallas, contact the District Clerk, 600 Commerce Street, Dallas TX 75202, (214) 653-6136, or www.dallascounty.org/districtclerk/.

For *ligamen* cases, not only do we need a copy of the civil divorce decree for the marriage under review, but also a **copy of the complete, final, signed, civil divorce decree filed in county in which the divorce took place for the marriage that will serve as the binding bond**.

5. Current (issued within the last six months) baptismal certificate with notations for Catholic Petitioner can be obtained from the church of baptism. Submit the original (not a photocopy) of the recently issued certificate. (See example of a request on the back of this sheet.)
6. Current (issued within the last six months) baptismal certificate with notations for Catholic Respondent can be obtained from the church of baptism; or the church of marriage can provide, for the Respondent's baptismal information, the name of the church and baptismal date from the marriage register. Submit the original (not a photocopy) of the recently issued certificate. (Normally, the Petitioner cannot obtain this certificate but must rely on the Case Sponsor/Advocate or Tribunal to do so.)
7. Catholic Church marriage certificate (issued within the last six months) for marriage under review can be obtained from church of marriage. (See example of a request on the back of this sheet.)
8. **Copy of prenuptial papers** for marriage under review can be obtained from church of marriage. (Normally, the Petitioner cannot obtain a copy of the prenuptial papers but must rely on the Case Sponsor/Advocate or Tribunal to do so.)

9. As provided for on the Petition, the names and addresses of four witnesses, in addition to parents and stepparents, who are knowledgeable about the courtship and early marriage of the parties. (Include relationship to these witnesses and the length of time known.) A counselor or counselors, who counseled one or both parties either prior to the marriage or during the marriage, can be considered as one or more of the four witnesses. Counselors require [Releases](#) completed by each party seen.

Before proposing any witnesses, including an expert or counselor, the Petitioner or Respondent should verify that the witness is willing to be contacted and to provide in-depth answers.

10. Copy of the letter to the Respondent informing him/her of the Petition and inviting the Respondent's participation. See [Sample Letter](#) on the website.
11. Completed Character Reference Questionnaires (credibility references) from the three character references listed on the Petition for Investigation of a Marriage Bond. Character references/credibility witnesses are people who, from a lengthy association, have sufficient knowledge to speak to the good name of the Petitioner or Respondent to confirm the veracity of the Petitioner and/or Respondent regarding her/his confessions/declarations. (Include relationship to these witnesses and the length of time known.)
12. **Copies** of any public documents, not protected by laws of privacy, that would clarify the circumstances of the marriage and its demise as those circumstances might relate to invalidity. These public documents might include counselors' reports, medical records legally in the possession of the Petitioner, police records, evaluations done for custody hearings, investigations made by Child Protective Services, etc. The Petitioner should submit only documents in his/her legal possession.

The case, once ready for presentation, should be mailed to the Tribunal:

Tribunal
Diocese of Dallas
PO Box 190507
Dallas TX 75219

Should there be questions, contact Margaret Gillett at (214) 379-2840 or mgillett@cathdal.org.

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PLEASE SEE FINAL PAGE OF THIS FORM FOR A SAMPLE LETTER TO ASSIST YOU IN OBTAINING
CATHOLIC CHURCH DOCUMENTS

On your parish letterhead

Note: If the case already is in the Tribunal, please indicate case name and number on your letter and send a copy of your letter to the Tribunal.

Date

Complete address of church/diocese or archdiocese

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to request *(name of document you want)* for *(person's full name)* who was *(baptized/confirmed/married)* in *(city/state/country)*. Would you be so kind as to assist us in getting a currently issued *(name of document you want)* with any appropriate notations for *(person full name)*. The following information will assist you:

Name:
Date and Place of Birth:
Church of Sacrament:
City/State/Country of Church:
Diocese of Church:
Date of Sacrament:
Father's Name:
Mother's Name:
Bride/Groom names if marriage information

We are hopeful that you will be successful in this matter and are most grateful for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Your Name

Your Title

Note: This letter may be adapted with appropriate changes to request assistance with any sacramental church documents from inside and outside the United States.

The Tribunal has a sample letter for the Apostolic Nuncio, whose assistance can be requested after trying all other methods.