

St Anthony Parish Marriage Annulments Parish Policy

The following shall be the policy of St Anthony Parish regarding the handling of requests for annulment as a prerequisite to Catholic marriage.

1. In order to avoid the dissemination of inaccurate or misleading information, all discussions with parishioners [or RCIA participants] concerning actual or potential annulments will be conducted only by:
 - a. An ordained member of the parish staff;
or
 - b. A parish Advocate appointed by the Metropolitan Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Seattle.
2. All potential petitioners for annulment, whether identified through the RCIA process or by other means, will be immediately referred to the Pastor or Parochial Vicar (or Deacon?) for an initial interview. The petitioner's current situation and marital background will be determined. The following will be explained to the petitioner during that interview:
 - a. The Church's basic teaching on the sacrament of marriage;
 - b. Sacramental marriage vs. civil marriage;
 - c. What annulment means (and does not mean);
 - d. The effect on children of an annulled marriage;
 - e. Possible lengthy process that may ensue;
 - f. The role of an Advocate;
 - g. The necessity to provide personal details to facilitate the process;
 - h. The necessity of gathering information from former spouse/witnesses.
3. The interviewer will make it very clear to the petitioner that a wedding date **must not** be set until a declaration of nullity has been received.
4. Petitioner will then be referred to one of the parish Advocates for more detailed interviews and to initiate the petition paperwork. The Advocate will be provided copies of any notes taken during the initial interview.
5. The Advocate will accomplish the following during the first meeting with the petitioner:

- a. Assure the petitioner about confidentiality;
 - b. Explain the annulment process, to include definition of terms;
 - c. Explain what the Tribunal is and what it does;
 - d. Explain how a marriage comes into being;
 - e. Explain the concepts of consent, form and impediments;
 - f. Explain what a declaration of nullity is;
 - g. Explain the fee requirements;
 - h. Provide the petitioner with all necessary forms;
 - i. Review and explain the forms;
 - j. Emphasize the importance of accurate, detailed information, especially about all former marriages;
 - k. Identify necessary paperwork (baptism/marriage certificates, divorce decrees, etc.)
 - l. Advise the petitioner to begin identifying potential witnesses;
 - m. Set follow-up appointments with the petitioner to check the paperwork preparation;
 - n. Exchange contact information with the petitioner and encourage him/her to keep in touch on a regular basis during petition preparation.
6. Following the meeting the Advocate will document any comments, concerns or other pertinent information relating to the case. The Advocate will meet as often as necessary with the Petitioner to assemble the case for submittal to the Tribunal.
 7. The Advocate will initiate a case file, containing all notes and documents pertaining to the case. The case file will be secured in the Parish Ministry Center (PMC) in a designated location. Only the assigned Advocate will have access to the file. The assigned Advocate will prepare and submit the case to the Tribunal.
 8. The parish Advocates will submit a (monthly)(quarterly) status report to the Pastor for all open cases, including those that have been submitted to the Tribunal. However, the Pastor will not normally have access to the case file details.

Signed
 Very Reverend Gary M. Zender, Pastor

March 5, 2014
 Date