



Memo

Date: September 26, 2022
To: All priests
From: Fr. Dan Ketter, JCL, judicial vicar, Metropolitan Tribunal
Re: Involvement in the annulment process

It has come to my attention that some priests are under the impression that, since we require tribunal advocates to assist individuals petitioning for an annulment, priests should have no involvement, or even any contact, with the petitioner. On the contrary, the pastor or parochial vicar has a very important pastoral role to play.

The pastor or parochial vicar is the one best suited to explain the Church's teaching on marriage and the nature of an annulment. Further, the priest should encourage the individual to approach the process prayerfully and honestly, assuring them of God's closeness. Moreover, they should urge the individual to stay close to the Church and, when possible, have frequent recourse to the sacraments of penance and Eucharist.

While most priests prefer to have an advocate assist the petitioner in preparing the annulment application, those priests who have the time and interest can take on this task. However, they should not complete the final page of the application, the judicial libellus, as it must be completed in consultation with the advocate and signed by the same. Therefore, a priest who has assisted a petitioner in preparing an application must always refer the petitioner to an advocate to review the entire application, complete the libellus and submit the packet to the tribunal.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at 404-920-7506 or dketter@archatl.com.