

The procedures the Tribunal must follow in processing your petition for the nullity of your former marriage are governed by the Church's *Code of Canon Law*. In order to assist you in understanding these procedures and to avoid any misunderstandings as your case progresses, please read carefully, then initial, each of the paragraphs contained in the Agreement below. *No case will be accepted by the Tribunal unless the Agreement is completed in its entirety.*

## AGREEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand and accept the following in reference to my petition for the nullity of my former marriage:

\_\_\_\_\_ That in light of the purely religious nature of these proceedings, and in order to allow the Tribunal to process my case free from undue civil entanglements, I freely and voluntarily waive now, in the future, and without reservation or condition, any right in civil law to the subpoena or judicial discovery of the acts of this case.

\_\_\_\_\_ That not every marriage which ends in a civil divorce is necessarily invalid according to the theology and law of the Catholic Church, and thus, by accepting my petition for examination, the Tribunal of the Diocese of Metuchen does not guarantee that an affirmative decision, i.e. declaration of nullity, will be given.

\_\_\_\_\_ That since marriage enjoys the favor of the law, my claim of the nullity of my marriage must be proven.

\_\_\_\_\_ That my former spouse, i.e. the respondent, has the right to know about the existence of my petition, to give sworn testimony about our courtship and marriage, and to propose witnesses on his/her behalf; likewise I agree to come to the Tribunal to be interviewed by the auditor assigned to my case.

\_\_\_\_\_ That any evidence of, or reason to suspect, collusion will render a witness's statement inadmissible; therefore, I will ask each witness to write or type his/her own statement, giving his/her own observations and knowledge without any input whatsoever from me.

\_\_\_\_\_ That, while the Judge may decree that "a given act" not be shown to one of the parties, the respondent and I have the right to inspect all other evidence collected in the case at the conclusion of the process.

\_\_\_\_\_ That given the Tribunal's large caseload and the many variables involved in the study, no assurance can be given as to the time it will take for the Tribunal to render a decision in my case, and therefore any arrangements I make concerning a future marriage I undertake at my own risk;

\_\_\_\_\_ That every affirmative decision rendered by the Metuchen Tribunal must be appealed, and that I am not free to contract a new marriage in the Catholic Church until the Metuchen Tribunal is informed of the results of the appeal process. The appeal process does not usually involve a retrying of the case, but rather a review of the decision by a college, or panel, of three judges.

(OVER)

\_\_\_\_\_ That the stipend of \$650, which helps to offset some of the cost to the Diocese of Metuchen of processing my petition, will be my responsibility and will be paid in full no matter the outcome of the study of my marriage. (It will be expected that, in addition to the non-refundable filing fee of \$350, the petitioner will make an additional payment of \$300 at the time of the deposition. In instances of financial hardship, the Tribunal will agree to the petitioner's covering the cost of the stipend by monthly installments.)

\_\_\_\_\_ That the circumstances causing the invalidity of my marriage could cause the judge to require additional preparation, including professional counseling, prior to my contracting marriage in the Catholic Church, and that all expenses connected with such counseling are also my responsibility.

\_\_\_\_\_

Petitioner

Date: \_\_\_\_\_