



EXPECTATIONS BETWEEN PARTIES AND STABLE ADVOCATES

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A canonical advocate's role is to help you present your case to the tribunal in the most effective manner. To do so well, it is important for both you and your advocate to have appropriate expectations of one another. If you are using one of the tribunal's stable advocates, here are some practical expectations that should guide your interactions.

You Should Expect Your Advocate To:

- Learn and defend your canonical interests in the case, starting with the advocate's first involvement and going through to the possible initiation of an appeal
- Help you propose effective witnesses and other evidence
- Submit a brief on your behalf at the conclusion of the process
- Meet deadlines set by the judge
- Work with you to figure out the best method for communicating with one another, and set shared expectations regarding appropriate times for calls/emails, appropriate duration of communications, etc.
- Respond to your communications in a timely manner (at least acknowledging the communication within two business days) or inform you in advance of periods of longer unavailability
- Answer your questions about the process and its development
- Respect your confidentiality as a client

You Should *Not* Expect Your Advocate To:

- Take legal actions on your behalf, such as proposing a new witness or new grounds of nullity, unless you have given a signed mandate specifically authorizing the advocate to do so
- Contact you without being requested, e.g., for a periodic check-in
- Submit questions for every deposition, attend depositions, or submit responses to closing arguments
- Give any kind of therapy, emotional support, pastoral guidance, spiritual direction, or any kind of assistance outside of the canonical realm
- Assist you beyond the placement of an appeal or serve as your advocate at the appellate tribunal
- Do anything immoral or unethical
- Be constantly engaged in case activity; the bulk of an advocate's activity will typically come at the conclusion of the case

Your Advocate Should Expect You to:

- Make the initial contact at the email address provided by the tribunal
- Provide the information that will allow the advocate to know and defend your interests
- Proactively ask for information and guidance when needed
- Respond to communications in a timely manner
- Submit documents and acts to the tribunal when needed
- Respect the advocate's time and expertise and honor the boundaries established between yourselves

Your Advocate Should *Not* Expect You to:

- Have expertise in canon law or the marriage nullity process

If you feel that your advocate is seriously falling short of these expectations, please contact the tribunal.