



MARITAL STATUS and IMPEDIMENTS for those BECOMING CATHOLIC or SEEKING CONFIRMATION

As you begin the RCIA/Inclusion process or seek Confirmation, one thing we must address is your marital status. We want you to receive all the grace God has in store for you in the sacraments and ensure the road to full initiation is clear of any impediments. If impediments are present, we are here to assist you in whatever process is required, and to pray with you throughout. We will go over your current marital status in the following ways. *If you are:*

CURRENTLY MARRIED (FIRST MARRIAGE):

- **If either you or your spouse are a Baptized Catholic:** Were you married in a Catholic Church by a Priest or Deacon? – If you were NOT and you were married civilly or in a non-Catholic church, then you will need to seek a **Convalidation** (see details below). You will complete Convalidation Preparation and be married in the Church (convalidate your marriage) **BEFORE** you become Catholic or are Confirmed.
- **If neither you nor your spouse were Baptized Catholic:** Since both you and your spouse were not baptized Catholic and this is your first marriage, your marriage is recognized by the Catholic Church as valid, and you will not need to go through the Convalidation process.

CURRENTLY MARRIED (PREVIOUSLY DIVORCED):

- **If either you or your spouse were Baptized Catholic:** You will file a **Petition for Nullity** (see below) for any previous marriages that ended in divorce. Depending on the petition, it could take up to a year or more to be approved. After you have filed for the Petition for Nullity, you will begin **Convalidation** Preparation (see below). Once you have received a Declaration of Nullity, you will be married in the Church (convalidate your marriage) **BEFORE** you become Catholic or are Confirmed.
- **If neither you nor your spouse were Baptized Catholic:** You will file a **Petition for Nullity** (see below) for any previous marriages that ended in divorce. Depending on the petition, it could take up to a year or more to be approved. Once you have received a Declaration of Nullity, your current marriage is then recognized by the Catholic Church as valid and sacramental. You will not need to go through the Convalidation process. You must receive a decree of nullity **PRIOR** to any reception of the sacraments of the Church.

CURRENTLY DIVORCED:

- **If you are divorced but not remarried,** you may enter into the Church or be Confirmed. If you plan to remarry in the future, you would need to be granted a Declaration of Nullity before being married in the Church.

What is a Convalidation?

A Convalidation occurs when a couple exchanges marriage vows in the Catholic church and forms an unbreakable covenant with God and each other. You may already be married legally, but a Convalidation makes your marriage valid in the Catholic Church.

What is a Petition for Nullity?

A Petition for Nullity (sometimes referred to as an “annulment”) does not make a marriage null. Rather, it declares that a marriage that was thought to be valid was missing at least one of the essential elements required for a binding union. To begin this process please contact Mary Batey at mbatey@ap.church.