

The TOP 10 Annulment MYTHS

Answering your questions about the annulment process in the Catholic Church

MYTH# 1 The annulment process dissolves the marriage bond.

FACT: The purpose of the annulment process is to determine whether or not a valid marriage took place on the day of a couple's wedding. Scripture clearly states the only thing that can dissolve a valid marriage bond is death (Matthew 19:6).

MYTH# 2 Receiving a decree of nullity (annulment) means my marriage relationship never existed.

FACT: An annulment means you and your spouse did not have a sacramental/valid bond. The Church recognizes the real relationship you had with your ex-spouse.

MYTH# 3 The annulment process Renders children illegitimate.

FACT: Any marriage that was presumed to be valid, but later defined through the annulment process to be invalid, is a "putative" marriage. The Church clearly states that children of a putative marriage are legitimate (CIC 1137).

MYTH# 4 The annulment process is expensive, but if you pay enough money You will get one.

FACT: First, the cost of an annulment varies from diocese to diocese. Second, tribunals do not "sell" decrees of nullity. You can discuss any financial hardships with the tribunal.

MYTH# 5 The annulment process Is just a loophole in canon law Or a "get out of jail free" card.

FACT: The annulment process does not guarantee a right to remarry. Its sole purpose is to determine if there was a valid bond. Some people receive a decree of nullity, some do not.

MYTH# 6 After divorce, you cannot receive the sacraments until you receive an annulment.

FACT: If you are civilly divorced without an annulment, but you are in a state of grace, you are welcome and encouraged to attend Mass and other parish functions and receive the sacraments as often as you can.

MYTH# 7 If you declare "lack of form" as grounds for your annulment, you will automatically receive a decree of nullity.

FACT: This applies only to marriages between two baptized Catholics who did not obtain a dispensation of form from the bishop before they married.

MYTH# 8 If i don't know how to find my ex-spouse Or if he or she chooses not to participate, the process will not move forward.

FACT: If you don't know how to find your ex-spouse, the tribunal will ask you to go to reasonable lengths to find him or her so he or she can be notified of the proceedings. However, if you are unable to reach your ex-spouse, or if your ex-spouse refuses to participate, your case will still be heard.

MYTH# 9 I can get remarried during the annulment process and have my marriage blessed when i receive a decree Of nullity.

FACT: It is not guaranteed that you will receive that declaration, so the Church recommends that you do not make any plans to remarry before receiving an annulment.

MYTH# 10 The annulment process is only for Those who want to remarry.

FACT: The annulment process is mandatory for those who want to remarry, but there are many good reasons to go through the annulment process even for those who do not want to remarry.



Lisa Duffy is the author of the new book *The Catholic Guide To Dating After Divorce* (Ave Maria Press). For a free download of *The Everyday Catholic's Guide To The Annulment Process*, from which this fact sheet is taken, visit LisaDuffy.com.