

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago's Application for Judgment as To Marital Status In The Eyes of The Church

- 1.** Completing the Application is only a small part of a prayerful conversation which divorced persons should have with their clergy and their intended spouse about relationships; their failures, successes and spiritual meanings. Completing the form allows some of that prayerful conversation to be shared with your bishop.
- 2.** In order to ensure that the Bishop's response contains correctly spelled names, please print the information requested on the cover of the Application. Be sure to include everything for which the Application cover asks. On all the other pages of the document, handwriting is perfectly acceptable.
- 3.** If both members of a couple intending marriage are divorced, one form must be completed for each member of the couple. Application for the two of them may not be submitted on one form. This requirement exists because the Application is a document which we are required by canon law to keep as a permanent record in the archives of our diocese. They are filed by petitioner's name and, therefore, if two petitioners are on one form, the second petitioner's records are effectively lost.
- 4.** When supplying the name of the petitioner, if that person changed her or his name at marriage, it is helpful to have her or his name prior to the marriage recorded on the Application. For example, if Ms. Smith married Mr. Jones, and the form only states that Mrs. Jones and Mr. Jones were divorced, we do not have an adequate record of the former Mrs. Jones' identity.
- 5.** On page 2 of the Application, please do not forget to check one (and only one) of the boxes under the heading, "Instructions for the Clergy." Similarly, on page 3, under the heading "What the Clergy Should Do," there are a series of boxes to be checked. Checking those boxes is the way to document that the actions required by the canons have been completed.
- 6.** If the petitioner has been married more than once, an Application only needs to be completed for the last marriage. However, it is very important for the petitioner, clergy, and intended spouse to discuss each of the former marriages (see #1 above). It is also important for the clergy person to see the decrees of divorce or annulment for each of those relationships. Further, it is very helpful if the names of the former spouses and the order of the marriages is included in the section of the Application called, "What the Clergy Should Write."
- 7.** The clergy person who is counseling the couple needs to see legal documentation of the divorce(s). A copy of the divorce decree, however, does not need to be submitted with the Application. Simply checking the box on page 3 which says, "I have examined a copy of each civil decree of divorce or annulment involved," records that the clergy person has seen the relevant documents.