

**PETITION TO BISHOP TO PURSUE RECONCILIATION,  
OR SEPARATION**

**Reconciliation**

1) Petitioner asks The Most Reverend \_\_\_\_\_,  
[Arch]Bishop of \_\_\_\_\_, to cite the Respondent-spouse  
\_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of implementing the pastoral means of  
agreement and conciliation, in order for the conjugal life to be reestablished peacefully,  
according to the prescript of canon 1695. As described in canon 49, Petitioner asks the  
Bishop to issue a singular precept urging the Respondent-spouse to uphold the lawful  
obligations to maintain common conjugal life; and instructing the Respondent-spouse that a  
judge in the civil forum has no competence to relieve the Respondent-spouse of the  
obligation to maintain common conjugal life.

2) Parties contracted marriage on date of \_\_\_\_\_ at church of  
\_\_\_\_\_. The Church was in the state of \_\_\_\_\_ in the city of  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Attached Certificate of Marriage). On the date of  
\_\_\_\_\_, the Respondent-spouse abandoned the conjugal life, or filed for civil  
divorce. Further description is provided in the attached: *General Facts and Circumstances  
that will Prove the Allegations*.

3) Petitioner will participate in mediation in hopes of restoring/maintaining the  
common conjugal life. Petitioner asks the Ordinary to issue a precept in accord with canon  
49, instructing the Respondent to cooperate in mediation. In accord with canon 1446 §2,  
Petitioner asks that the parties employ reputable persons to mediate between the parties.  
[(Optional) Petitioner proposes that \_\_\_\_\_ be employed because

\_\_\_\_\_ ]

4) If Respondent-spouse remains unwilling to restore common conjugal life, a report to  
the Bishop from the reputable person will provide the Bishop with insights about the reasons  
Respondent-spouse chose to separate.

**Separation Decree**

5) In conformity with canon 57 §1, in consideration of canons 1151-1155, if  
Respondent-spouse does not restore common conjugal life, Petitioner asks the Ordinary to  
issue a singular decree of separation of spouses based on the ground of abandonment  
(*malitiosam desertionem*), to be in effect for an indefinite period of time ending when the  
Respondent-spouse chooses to cease the abandonment. Petitioner asks that parties be

instructed about a separation plan that is in accord with divine law specifying support (*mutuum adiutorium*) and preventing scandal to children.

6) Petitioner asserts that Petitioner has committed no offenses against the Respondent-spouse meriting the separation of spouses. If the Respondent-spouse suggests that another ground for separation exists (other than abandonment by the Respondent), then Petitioner upholds the right to be informed, in a general way, of the facts and proofs alleged by the Respondent-spouse to support another ground for separation.

### **Basis in Law and Rights**

7) As described in canon 221 §1, the Petitioner is pursuing and vindicating rights associated with the Respondent-spouse's obligations to maintain a common conjugal life.

8) The marriage of Catholics is governed not only by divine law but also by canon law (cf. c. 1059).

9) The parties' marriage must be assumed valid until proven otherwise (c. 1060).

10) The Petitioner claims the right to the common conjugal life and rights to those things that belong to the partnership of conjugal life. The Respondent-spouse is bound by a special duty to work through marriage and family to build up the kingdom of God. Respondent-spouse is reneging on obligations (cf. cc. 104, 226 §1, 1151, 1135). Petitioner asserts that Respondent-spouse has no legitimate reason for separation, no *legitime separationis ratione vel alia iusta de causa*.

Canon 104. Spouses are to have a common domicile or quasi-domicile; by reason of legitimate separation or some other just cause, both can have their own domicile or quasi-domicile.

Canon 1151. Spouses have the duty and right to preserve conjugal living unless a legitimate cause excuses them.

11) If a party broke off an engagement and refused to marry ones' fiancée, canon 1062 §2 shows that an action to repair damages could be warranted. The Respondent-spouse is likewise responsible to repair damage caused by breaking up after the wedding.

12) (Optional) For children born to this marriage, or adopted, the Petitioner claims the parental right to educate children in all ways natural to any child born to married parents; and the Petitioner claims the right to take care for the physical, social, cultural, moral, and religious education of children (cf cc. 226 §2, 1136).

13) (Optional) Divorce is a grave offense against the natural law, immoral, and gravely wounds the deserted spouse and children (CCC 1607, 2383-2386, *damna gravia, profunde vulneratis*, citing *CIC* cc. 1151-1155).

- Civil divorce is legally and factually known to the relatives, friends, and faith community of those involved. Separation (regardless of whether it is accompanied by a civil divorce) is subject to the power of governance of the Church. Therefore, a Catholic

should not exercise on his own behalf the power of ecclesiastical governance, or the pastoral and administrative power of the bishop.

- Because separation of spouses involves the public good, it requires the involvement of the Promoter of Justice (*cf.* c. 1696 CIC). When the Respondent-spouse initiates a civil divorce without the bishop's permission, there is no mechanism to insure the required involvement of the ecclesiastic authority to promote justice and defend the public good, particularly the defense of the rights of the children and an innocent spouse.
- Canon 1692 §2 shows the bishop "can grant permission" for a Catholic to approach the civil forum. Just because a bishop "can permit" a Catholic to initiate a divorce, does not mean that any Catholic on his own authority, can legitimately do so.
- When deciding whether or not to grant permission for a Catholic to initiate a civil divorce, the bishop is supposed to consider the situation "in light of their particular circumstances," or "after having weighed the special circumstances" *perpensis peculiaribus adiunctis*, (*cf.* c. 1692 §2). This implies that the bishop or his mandated delegate must learn about the special or particular circumstances of any Catholic that plans to file for civil divorce.

#### **Initiate Process to Inflict Penalty (Optional Section)**

14) In accord with canon 57 §1, the Petitioner proposes plea to obtain a decree initiating the process to inflict or declare a penalty. The Respondent-spouse has illegitimately abandoned marriage.

15) (Optional) The Petitioner is accusing another who should be admonished or penalized, because the other is an explicit, formal, cooperator with objective evil. The Respondent-spouse is the primary agent of morally wrong behavior: marital abandonment and all that it entails. The other accused is a formal cooperator because the other is a willing participant explicitly supporting and enabling the evil. The other is also a necessary, material, cooperator with objective evil, because without the other's material cooperation, the wrongful marital abandonment or divorce could not continue to occur.

16) The Petitioner asks the Ordinary to exercise fraternal correction, rebuke, or other means of pastoral solicitude in an attempt to sufficiently repair the scandal, restore justice, and reform the Respondent(s) (*cf.* c. 1341).

17) If the Respondent(s) does not repent, have the firm resolve to stop offenses, and make, or at least seriously promise to make, reparation for damage and scandal, the Petitioner proposes punishments would be appropriate in accordance with the law:

Canon 1315: Person in legislative power can strengthen divine or ecclesiastical law.

Canon 1319 §1: Insofar as a person can impose precepts in the external forum in virtue of the power of governance, the person can also threaten determinate penalties by precept, except perpetual expiatory penalties.

Canon 1371, 1<sup>o</sup>: Respondent(s) rejects moral teaching mentioned in Canon 752.

Canon 1371, 2<sup>o</sup>: Respondent(s) does not obey command of his Ordinary.

Canon 1393: Respondent(s) violates obligations imposed by Penalty.

Canon 1397: Respondent(s) gravely wounds *graviter vulnera* the Petitioner  
(Optional) and children.

Canon 1399: Respondent(s) is externally violating divine and canon law.

### **Repair Material / Financial Damages (Optional section)**

18) (Optional) In addition to proposing that penal action should be initiated against the Respondent(s), the Petitioner brings a contentious action, per canon 1729 §1, and alleges that those Respondent(s) are bound to **repair material damage** caused. The Petitioner has lost significant money as a direct result of the actions of the Respondent(s). Had the Respondent-spouse only broken a promise to marry the Petitioner, breaking that promise could have given rise to an action to repair damages (c. 1062 §2). In today's action, the damages are far greater, because the Respondent-spouse is breaking the marital promises and the Respondent(s) are destroying the Petitioner's family, and the Petitioner's marital life.

### **Prevent Sacrilege and Scandal (Optional section)**

19) The Petitioner alleges that the Respondent-spouse is in grave sin because the Respondent-spouse has unlawfully reneged on marital obligations and is destroying the parties' marriage and family. The former Prefect of the Apostolic *Signatura*, Cardinal Raymond Burke, wrote a book published in 2012 wherein he provided instruction regarding those in grave sin, Divine Love Made Flesh, The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of Charity:

... If we receive holy Communion and then think, speak, and act in a way which betrays Christ, then we give scandal to others. We lead them to think that it is all right to receive Christ in to our soul and, at the same time, to ignore or contradict His teaching by the way we live. (page 176).

20) If the Respondent-spouse continues to persevere in the grave manifest sin of marital abandonment [or divorce], the Petitioner asks the Ordinary to advise the Respondent-spouse to not receive Holy Communion (c. 916), and to instruct that Holy Communion should be denied (c. 915).

21) (Optional) In accord with the same canons, the Petitioner asks the Bishop to advise other Respondent to not receive Holy Communion, and to instruct that Holy Communion should be denied.

**Response to Respondent-Spouse’s Petition for Decree of Invalidity (Optional Section)**

Request Suspension or at least Simultaneous Proceeding

22) The Petitioner received a notice dated \_\_\_\_\_ from the Tribunal of the diocese of \_\_\_\_\_ advising the Petitioner that the Respondent-spouse has asked for a decree of invalidity of the parties’ marriage: case number \_\_\_\_\_.

23) As an incidental matter in the nullity case, the Petitioner is asking the judge to suspend the cause for nullity until the Respondent-spouse restores common conjugal life, or until the Respondent-spouse obtains and follows instructions from the local Ordinary delimiting parameters of a separation plan that is not contrary to divine law for parties’ special circumstances (*non contraria iuri divino [pro] perpensis peculiaribus adiunctis*).

24) Observing canon 1590 §2, the petitioner requests an interlocutory judgement answering Petitioner’s request for a suspension of the nullity case. If Petitioner’s request for suspension of nullity case is denied, Petitioner would find that the denial has the force of a definitive judgement as described in canon 1618. The denial prevents a trial that could give immediate relief to the Petitioner in the form of instructions to the Respondent-spouse about the parameters of a separation plan that is not contrary to divine law (*cf. can. 1692 §2*). The present separation arrangement obtained by the Respondent-spouse in the civil forum is contrary to divine law and entangles itself with effects of marriage that are beyond the merely civil effects.

25) If the tribunal judge will not suspend the Respondent-spouse cause for nullity, the Petitioner raises the actions herein as a counterclaim. As required by canon 1463, the counterclaim has been made before thirty days have passed after the joinder of the issue.

26) The Petitioner asserts that the Respondent-spouse’s allegations of invalidity of parties’ marriage are unfounded and the marriage is repairable. Even in a definitive sentence in a nullity case, the decree must instruct the parties of their moral obligations toward each other and their children (*cf. CIC 1983 c. 1689. Mitis Iudex c. 1691 §1*). The law strongly urges that a judge determine that conjugal life cannot be restored before he accepts a petition for nullity of marriage.

27) PETITIONER:

Petitioner’s Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

28) RESPONDENT-SPOUSE:

Respondent-Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

29) RESPONDENT-2:

Respondent-Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Petitioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Notary

30) Notary Seal Printed Name of Not \_\_\_\_\_