



December 13, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Church takes seriously its responsibility to promote and protect marriage and family because these institutions contribute to the good of each person, society and the Christian community. According to the teaching of Christ and the Church, the vow which husband and wife make to each other at their wedding is permanent and so is their union. They are to be faithful to each other for life. They are to be open to children and are to be ready and willing to nurture and educate their children. By God's plan marriage is an intimate partnership of life and love in which the husband and wife give themselves to each other completely and accept each other unconditionally. Their love and faithfulness to each other is in turn shared with their children. They become a family. Every marriage (whether it involves Catholics, Christians of other denominations or non-Christians) is presumed to be binding once it has been entered into by a man and woman. The good of all concerned, including children, society and the Church, demands this presumption.

Unfortunately, many good and sincere people find themselves in conditions or circumstances that result in divorce. Their faith and their membership in the Church are still important to them and often they would like the chance to marry again in the Church. The law of the Catholic Church directs the Bishop to establish a Tribunal whose purpose is to investigate these failed marriages at the request of one or both of the parties in order to determine whether there is any possibility of a declaration of nullity. The goal of the Tribunal's investigation must always be the truth about each marriage in light of the Church's teaching and discipline. A declaration of nullity can only be granted if there are sufficient proofs that the marriage was not valid from the beginning. Our Diocese is committed to spending a considerable amount of time, energy and resources on this work. We are also committed to looking after the spiritual good of everyone who is concerned, recognizing that the process of seeking a declaration of nullity is often painful. I want to assure you that in our Diocesan Tribunal you will find persons who are compassionate and fair, and who are ready and able to assist everyone with integrity and appropriate confidentiality.

Be assured of my prayerful remembrance of all of you whose lives are touched by this special ministry of the Tribunal.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Lawrence T. Persico

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
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