

# NARRATIVE OUTLINE

## For Petitions for Marital Nullity

The following questions are to be answered as completely as possible and on separate paper. (Contact your pastor or [carolyn.juenemann@salinadiocese.org](mailto:carolyn.juenemann@salinadiocese.org) for a Word or PDF template of this outline.)

This narrative is to accompany the completed *Preliminary Questionnaire and Petition* form.

### INTRODUCTION

Please begin by 1) listing your full name (include maiden name); 2) your current address & e-mail; 3) what religion you profess and how active a member you are.

### AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Describe your childhood including your parent's relationship and marriage. Describe your relationship with your parents and siblings. Detail any notable family problems while you were growing up, and include how they affected you. Include any drug, alcohol, physical or sexual abuse. Please include any history of infidelity, divorce and remarriage in your immediate and extended family.
2. Please describe the religious practice in the home while growing up. For example, describe the frequency of your Mass, church, synagogue or mosque attendance and the religious education (e.g., CCD, Sunday school) in which you participated.
3. Describe your educational background and your attitude towards school and education.
4. Describe your work history. Describe significant goals and accomplishments as well as major setbacks or failures. Describe your sense of personal achievement.
5. How do you respond to criticism? How do you handle conflict? How do you express anger?
6. What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?
7. Describe your attitude toward children? How did you relate with them?
8. Describe your dating history. Include any relationships you viewed as serious, their duration, their exclusivity, the reasons the relationships were terminated, and by whom.
9. Detail any past serious illnesses, including when they occurred. Describe your present state of health.
10. Detail any history of alcohol or drug abuse; include any involvement with the law and treatment sought, if any. Include when the abuse began, and how long it continued.
11. Describe any periods of extreme emotional distress or episodes of depression. Describe the circumstances of the distress and/or depression, how long it lasted, and any treatment sought.

*(over)*

(Revised: 10/01/2017)

**BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF FORMER SPOUSE**  
(Please disclose as much information as possible.)

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**Please begin by listing his/her full name.**

1. Describe the childhood of your former spouse including your former spouse's parents' relationship and marriage. Describe your former spouse's relationships with his/her parents and siblings. Detail any notable family problems while he/she was growing up, and include how this affected him/her. Include any drug, alcohol, physical or sexual abuse. Please include any history of divorce and remarriage in his/her immediate and extended family.
2. Please describe the religious practice in the home while growing up. For example, describe the frequency of his/her Mass, church, synagogue or mosque attendance and the religious education (e.g., CCD, Sunday school) in which he/she participated.
3. Describe your former spouse's educational background and attitude towards school and education.
4. Describe your former spouse's work history. Describe significant goals and accomplishments of your former spouse, as well as major setbacks or failures. Describe his/her sense of personal achievement.
5. How does he/she respond to criticism? How did he/she handle conflict? How did he/she express anger?
6. What are his/her personal strengths and weaknesses as you see them?
7. Describe your former spouse's attitude toward children? How did your former spouse relate with them?
8. Describe your former spouse's dating history. Include any relationships he/she viewed as serious, their exclusivity, their duration, the reasons the relationships were terminated and by whom?
9. Detail any past serious illnesses, including when they occurred. Describe his/her present state of health.
10. Detail any history of alcohol or drug abuse; include any involvement with the law and treatment sought, if any. Include when the abuse began, and how long it continued.
11. Describe any periods of extreme emotional distress or episodes of depression. Describe the circumstances of the distress and/or depression, how long it lasted, and any treatment sought.

**DATING/COHABITATION/ENGAGEMENT**

1. Please describe your dating period with your former spouse including how you met, the frequency of dates, and how you spent your time together. Specify when your dating became exclusive. Detail any significant disagreements or problems you may have had during this time, when and how they were resolved.
2. Please describe the religious practice while dating, including church attendance.
3. If you lived together before marriage, explain the decision to live together as opposed to marriage. Explain how and if living together differed from marriage. Include both families' reaction to the cohabitation.
4. Describe your view of marriage and that of your former spouse. Include the purpose of marriage and the roles and responsibilities of husband and wife to each other.
5. If you lived together before marriage, explain the decision to marry after cohabiting.
6. If you were sexually intimate before marriage, what impact, if any, did this have on you and your former spouse's decision to marry?
7. Describe any internal and/or external force, pressures, or fears, which compelled you or your former spouse to marry.
8. Describe both families' reaction to engagement (favorable or unfavorable) and their involvement in your wedding plans and the ceremony.

9. Describe the marriage preparation you and your former spouse received, if any. What did you bring away from it? Describe how it did or did not prepare each of you for marriage.
10. Please explain any reservations or hesitations you or your former spouse had about marriage. Describe how it affected you or your former spouse's ability to commit to a lifelong marital relationship.
11. At the time of the wedding, what was your belief, and that of your former spouse, about marriage being a lifetime commitment dissolved only by death?
12. At the time of the wedding, describe your belief and that of your former spouse regarding divorce and remarriage.
13. At the time of the wedding, describe whether you or your spouse would have entered into this marital union if divorce and remarriage were not a possibility.
14. At the time of the wedding, describe any situations you believe justify a divorce and give freedom to marry another.
15. At the time of the wedding, describe your belief, and that of your former spouse, concerning fidelity (an exclusive sexual relationship between husband and wife).
16. Describe your plans and those of your former spouse to have, to postpone, or not to have children in your marriage. If applicable, describe how you and your former spouse planned to delay or prevent having children. Please also describe the strength of these convictions.
17. Describe any conditions either you or your former spouse had regarding the other party before marriage (e.g. practice of faith, children, fidelity, financial status, etc.).

#### **THE WEDDING:**

1. Describe your attitudes and feelings and those of your former spouse, before, during and after the ceremony.
2. Please explain any reservations you or your former spouse had about going through with the wedding ceremony. Describe how it affected your commitment to the marriage.
3. Please detail any consumption of alcohol or drugs before the marriage ceremony and what effect it had on you and your former spouse.
4. Describe the wedding ceremony. Include your recollection of the vows spoken and your understanding of these vows. If you did not use the traditional vows and composed your own, describe the vows you exchanged.
5. Describe any unusual conflicts on the day of the wedding or during the honeymoon. Include how these conflicts were resolved.

#### **MARRIED LIFE:**

1. Please describe the religious practice during the marriage, including church attendance.
2. Describe a typical evening at home. Describe both of your attitudes toward domestic chores and sharing of responsibilities.

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3. Evaluate the depth of your communication with your former spouse. Include your ability or inability to overcome disagreement and achieve resolution or compromise.
4. What were the areas of disagreement and conflict? How did each of you contribute to these areas of difficulty?

5. Describe any instances of financial instability during the marriage, including how each of you contributed to or resolved this problem.
6. Describe any incidents of infidelity during your marriage. Detail when they began, their duration, and your and your former spouse's individual attitudes towards infidelity.
7. Describe anything about yourself or your former spouse which was not revealed prior to your marriage. Please explain whether this was deliberate or inadvertent and what happened when the thing concealed was discovered.
8. Describe any occurrences of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse. Describe any substance abuse during the marriage. Describe whether these abuses were related.
9. If there were no children born into the marriage, please explain why. Include any use of contraceptives, the method(s) used, when use first began, the consistency and duration. Include whether not having children was a deliberate choice, whether it was a mutual decision, and whether either person could change their mind. Describe how this affected your relationship.
10. Explain your view and that of your former spouse during the marriage towards divorce and remarriage. Include any threats of divorce, when they were made, and who made them.
11. Give the number, dates, and details of any separations and reconciliations.
12. If counseling was sought for the difficulties in your marriage, when? Specify whether it was joint or individual counseling and the purpose of the counseling (eg.. marriage counseling, family counseling, divorce counseling, etc.).
13. What was the cause of the final separation and the decision to seek divorce?
14. Describe any subsequent courtships and marriages for you and your former spouse.

#### **WITNESS INFORMATION:**

The Tribunal will need **three or more** potentially knowledgeable witnesses to help corroborate the facts of the case. These witnesses may not know all the details of the marriage, but will be able to provide supporting testimony regarding some of the issues and events that took place prior to and after the time of the wedding. You may list family members, extended relatives, friends and co-workers who may have information to share. You are encouraged to list as many witnesses as possible who may have useful testimony. ***Please list the name and current addresses of witnesses at the conclusion of your narrative, listing your best witnesses first.***

It would be helpful for you to contact the potential witnesses first to find out if they are willing to complete a questionnaire that would be mailed to them.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

**Please sign** and date your narrative at the end. Attach the original narrative to the *Preliminary Questionnaire and Petition* form. Keep a copy for your own files.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_