

## **GUIDE FOR FORMULATING YOUR WRITTEN ACCOUNT**

(Revised January 2021)

To determine whether this marriage was canonically valid or not, the Tribunal must understand your background and that of your former spouse, what happened in your relationship from the very beginning, what influenced your decision to marry, and the progression of significant events leading to your civil divorce. Please type or write carefully in narrative style, and on one side of the paper, your "history" in the following categories. It will help us if you keep the information in sequence and number the sections as we have. The questions themselves are only guidelines, and not to be answered one by one, but only used to guide your "story." Some may not apply to you at all.

### **1. Background of Petitioner:**

When and where were you born, and what was your place in the birth order? How many brothers and sisters did you have? Describe your home life, significant events from your school age years, how you got along socially and academically in school, type of discipline at home, your parent's personalities and relationship with each other. How would you describe the place of religious faith in your growing up years? Was there alcohol abuse, divorce, extensive hospitalization, deaths of immediate family members, verbal, physical or sexual abuse? How would you describe your teen years? What image of marriage did you take with you from your experience of growing up in this family? How would you describe your personality at the time you left home? Were there significant developmental issues regarding sexuality? Was homosexuality an issue? How would you describe your relationships with friends, family?

### **2. Background of Respondent:**

Describe what you know of the background of your former spouse, using the above questions as a guide. Specify any significant differences from your background.

### **3. Dating, courtship and decision to marry:**

How and when did you meet? What attracted you to each other? How old were you when you began dating? Going steady? How did you treat each other during the time of dating? How did you arrive at decisions? Did you know and like each other's families? Had either of you been engaged or married before? Did you know this about each other? When and how did you become engaged? Were there any pressures that moved you toward marriage? Were you sexually involved with each other prior to marriage? Did you live together prior to marriage? Was alcohol abuse present during your dating? Was pregnancy a factor in your decision to marry? Was there any outside or internal pressure to marry at this time? To marry this person? Did you discuss seriously practice of religious faith, fidelity, children, problem solving, finances, prior to marriage? Was there any sign of emotional, physical or sexual abuse?

### **4. Wedding and honeymoon:**

Was your wedding day a happy time for you? For your spouse? Who made the decisions, and how were they made regarding the type of wedding, honeymoon plans, career options, where you would live, spacing of children and/or use of birth control? When was the marriage consummated? Was alcohol or other drug abuse present in either of you at the time of the wedding?

### **5: Marriage:**

What was your attitude and feelings regarding permanency, fidelity, equality issues, mutual respect? Did you both intend to have children, to raise them and educate them in faith? What was your religious practice during the duration of the marriage? Were there any problems in your sexual relationship? Did you have mutual friends? What was your relationship to your parents, and to the parents of your former spouse? If you had children, when were they born? How did you each respond to the responsibilities of parenting?

6. Divorce:

When did you first realize your marriage was in trouble? What was your response? Did you seek marriage or personal counseling? Were there separations during the course of your common life? When and why did you finally separate? Who filed for divorce? Was it a mutual decision? If there were children, who received custody? Are child support payments current?

7. Current Situation:

Describe your experience since the divorce. Have you had counseling or participated in any support groups? Is alcohol or the use of other drugs a problem for you at this time? For your former spouse? Has your former spouse remarried? Is there any hope or desire for reconciliation between you?

Is there anything you would like to add that might help us further understand your experience of the marriage under study?

**\*\*PLEASE WRITE THESE WORDS AT THE END OF YOUR HISTORY:**

*I solemnly swear, before God and my conscience, that in this narrative, I have told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, insofar as I know it.*

**\*\*PLEASE SIGN AND DATE YOUR NARRATIVE AND ATTACH IT TO THE LIBELLUS (FORMAL PETITION)**