

A GUIDE TO WRITING YOUR SUMMARY

A written petition is presented by the person wishing to initiate an examination of their marriage for possible invalidity.

Keep in mind that a marriage depends on the consent both parties gave to marriage. Thus, the cause of invalidity had to be present at the time of the wedding.

This guide assists you in recalling significant details of your courtship and marriage.

Use the questions as a prompt to give us a good idea of your relational issues. A summary of one to three pages is normally sufficient.

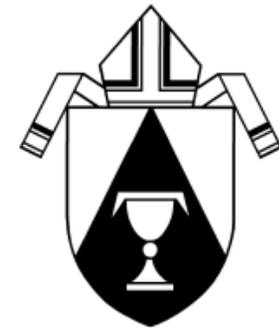
Marriage law states that marriage is brought about by: (a) the consent of the parties, (b) legitimately manifested, and (c) by those qualified according to law. If it can be proved that the consent was defective at the time of exchange of vows, on the part of one or both parties, then marriage was not brought about.



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**THE TRIBUNAL
DIOCESE OF
SACRAMENTO**



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**Salus Animarum
Suprema Lex**

**“The salvation of souls is
the supreme law.”**



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Petitioner's Summary Statement

Please thoughtfully consider the following questions as you compose your summary. Your parish advocate can assist you.

Courtship Period

1. When, where, how, and at what age did you meet your former spouse?
2. What initially attracted you to your former spouse, and why was s/he attracted to you?
3. When did you begin dating?
4. What did you do on dates, and how often did you spend time together?
5. Describe your relationship during this courtship time and detail any serious fights or breakups.
6. When did you believe you were in love with your former spouse?
7. What did it mean to you to be in love?
8. Did you feel you were growing in love, emotional intimacy, and commitment during this courtship period?
9. Did you and your former spouse engage in premarital sex?
10. Was there a premarital pregnancy?

Engagement Period

1. When was marriage first mentioned, and who first suggested it?
2. Who proposed marriage? When?
3. How long did you date each other before you became engaged?
4. Did you and your partner seriously discuss what you hoped for in marriage?
5. During your engagement, were there any break-ups, issues (physical, psychological,

sexual), or other major problems (family issues, substance abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, etc.) that affected the relationship?

6. How did your parents, relatives and friends feel about the relationship? Were there any objections?
7. Prior to the marriage, what kind of instruction did you receive regarding marriage, if any?

Your Marital Consent

1. Why did you marry your partner, and why did he/she marry you?
2. Did you enter marriage freely and of your own accord?
3. What did you understand marriage to be?
4. Did you truly commit yourself to this partnership?
5. At the time of marriage, did you have any doubts about spending the rest of your life with this person?
6. Did either of you place any condition(s) for the marriage to take place? If so, what and who made it/them?
7. Did you have plans to raise a family?
8. Did either of you fail to disclose anything significant about yourselves, from the other? If so, please explain.
9. Prior to marriage, to what extent did you observe any odd or immature behavior on the part of your former spouse?
10. Did you believe your intended spouse possessed any certain quality that later you discovered s/he did not possess?

The Wedding

1. Did you have any serious doubts about going through with the wedding? Why?
2. Was the wedding day a happy occasion?
3. Did you have a honeymoon, and were there any problems, frustrations, or disturbing discoveries on the honeymoon?

Breakdown of Marriage

1. When did you first become aware of the problem/s in the marriage?
2. What was the nature of the problem/s?
3. Did your spouse prove to be different than what you thought? Please explain.
4. Did you and/or your spouse seek professional or pastoral counseling for the problem/s?

The Final Separation

1. When and what caused the final separation? Who left?
2. Were there any attempts at reconciliation?
3. Describe the reasons why you believe that this marriage was never valid in the eyes of the Church.

