



Diocese of Saint Petersburg Office of the Tribunal Informal Cases: Documentary Cases

Informal Cases: Documentary Cases

There are two types of Cases that meet the criteria of Documentary Cases. The First is Lack of Form Case and the Second is Ligamen Case.

Lack of Form

A Lack of Form Case can only be invoked when one of the parties of the union was Catholic at the time of the marriage. By Church Law, a Catholic party is required to follow a “form” of marriage. This “form” of marriage requires a Catholic to have the marriage performed by a Catholic priest or deacon with two witnesses. Without the proper dispensation, a marriage of a Catholic by a civil official can be classified as Lack of Form. If the exchange of vows takes place and is witnessed by a minister of another Church, it must be shown there was no dispensation given for the non-Catholic minister to officiate in this case.

To submit a Lack of Form contact a priest or deacon (preferably one in your parish). Included with the form should be a copy of the marriage certificate, of the divorce decree, and the original copy of a recent updated (showing all notations) baptismal certificate (within 6 mos.) for the Catholic party(ies). Return the completed form and documents to the priest/deacon who will forward it to the Tribunal.

Prior Bond (Ligamen)

Prior Bond (Ligamen) is a process to show the marriage in question was invalid because the ex-spouse is bound by a prior valid bond. For the Petitioner, this means the Respondent had been validly married before this subsequent union.

To submit a Ligamen contact a priest or deacon (preferably one in your parish). The application for marriage license, the marriage certificate and divorce decree for the Petitioner and Respondent must be provided. In addition, the same documents (i.e. the application for marriage license, the marriage certificate and divorce decree) for the union of the Respondent and the previous spouse must be provided. Return the completed form and documents to the priest/deacon who will forward it to the Tribunal.