



Parish Advocate Job Description

DEFINITION OF A PARISH ADVOCATE

In the Diocese of Sacramento, a *Parish Advocate* is a person approved by ecclesiastical authority who safeguards the rights of a party in a canonical process. The *Parish Advocate* is first and foremost a representative of the Church, ministering to people who need the assistance of the Tribunal to determine and clarify their marital status. The *Parish Advocate* accompanies the party throughout the canonical process. The *Parish Advocate* may be a member of the same parish as the party or may be an *Advocate* located in the same deanery as the party. This is an unpaid role.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Using Tribunal guidelines, meet with the party to determine/propose the type of case to submit (Formal, Lack of Form, *Ligamen*, etc.).
- The *Advocate* regularly meets with the party, providing support and advice throughout the process.
- Write a brief assessing the party's circumstances, character, and credibility. The *Advocate's* observations and evaluations assist the Court in understanding the context of information provided.
- Assist the party throughout the process with completing forms, providing quality testimony, procuring witnesses, etc.
- With the party, inspect the Acts (testimony) and review the documents produced by the parties and their witnesses.
- Encourage the party to be active on their own behalf.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

A *Parish Advocate* must be an adult who is a Catholic in good standing. In the Diocese of Sacramento, the position of a *Parish Advocate* requires (1) recommendation of his/her pastor/parochial administrator, (2) attendance at two three-day workshops led by the Tribunal, (3) appointment by the Tribunal (for a term of four years), (4) completion of the Oath of Confidentiality, and for continued service (5) attendance at update workshops once every three years.

PREFERRED SKILLS

- Compassion, intelligence, and integrity
- Organization (capacity to fulfill the procedural functions of the role)
- Ability to keep matters confidential
- Communication and listening skills
- Computer literacy/ability
- The ability to speak and write in Spanish, Korean, Tagalog, or Vietnamese is always an added benefit in many of the Tribunal's cases but is not required.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The Tribunal provides training, support, and resources for *Parish Advocates*. Tribunal staff members are available to *Parish Advocates* to answer questions, consult on cases, and troubleshoot as needed.