



## DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

2110 Broadway • Sacramento, California 95818-2541 • 916/733-0225

### THE TRIBUNAL

#### 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.

##### 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 two-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, 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.