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St. Anthony of Padua  
Catholic Church

*A Guide to Marriage  
Convalidation*



Welcome to St. Anthony's and thank you for being a part of our faith community. Our parish marriage coordinator will assist you in preparing for your convalidation. There are defined diocesan and parish policies for the convalidation of a civil marriage. It is not our intent to make it difficult for couples, but rather, the Church recognizes the seriousness of marriage and the responsibility of a caring church to help couples prepare adequately for a community of life and love together.

### ***What is a Convalidation?***

For various reasons, a Catholic party or parties find themselves in a civil marriage or in a marriage that took place before a non-Catholic minister, without the knowledge or permission of the Catholic Church. In time, some seek to have their marriages approved or “blessed” by the Catholic Church. When this can be accomplished, the ceremony that constitutes the marriage as a true sacramental union is called a convalidation. A convalidation involves the willingness of both parties to make a new act of the will to enter into a valid Catholic marriage, thus demonstrating that they desire a bond that “by its nature is perpetual and exclusive” and which “strengthens and, as it were, consecrates the spouses in a Christian marriage for the duties and dignity of their state” (*Code of Canon Law*, Canon 1134).

### ***Preparation Process***

The preparation for marriage convalidation requires the following:

† Contact the parish marriage coordinator to schedule an appointment .

During this meeting you will:

- provide the required documents, complete the Diocesan Pre-Nuptial Investigation forms, and pay the church fee
- schedule a date for the convalidation
- schedule an appointment with the priest or deacon who is to witness the convalidation

† If you have been civilly married for less than 6 years, you will be required to complete formal marriage preparation. For couples civilly married more than 6 years, the amount of formal preparation will be determined by the pastor.

## *Required Documents*

The following documents are to be presented at the first meeting:

- A certified copy of your marriage license
- A Baptism certificate for each baptized party; **Catholic baptism certificates must be dated within six months of the date submitted and include notations.**
- First Communion certificate(s)
- Confirmation certificate(s)
- Death certificate, if either party is a widow or a widower
- A Diocesan Tribunal “Declaration of Nullity” or “Decree of Freedom to Marry (Due to Lack of Form)”, if either party has a prior marriage
- Two “Freedom to Marry” forms must be filled out for any non-Catholic party. These forms will be provided by the marriage coordinator at the first meeting.
- Names and addresses of the two official witnesses for the ceremony

## *Fees*

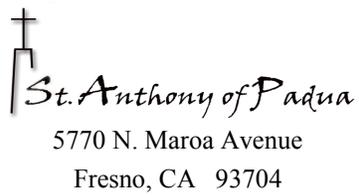
The Church Fee for a convalidation is **\$200.00** (for a ceremony without a Mass).

**Please note: This fee is non-refundable. Should you have to cancel your convalidation for any reason, you will forfeit all fees paid to St. Anthony of Padua.**

It is customary to provide a gratuity for the priest/deacon. The gratuity is *not included* in the convalidation fee. A suggested amount is \$50.00.

## *Location, Day, and Time*

A convalidation is customarily done with little fanfare and only a small gathering. It will be scheduled in the Guadalupe Chapel on either a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening. Scheduling is dependent upon availability of the chapel and the priest or deacon who is to witness the ceremony. No more than 20 guests should be in attendance.



For more information contact:

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