



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

PRESSRELEASE

For Immediate Release

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A Statement From Bishop Richard Pates on the Pope's Initiatives on Annulments

The Diocese of Des Moines welcomes the directives of Pope Francis under the title of Motu Proprio (on the Holy Father's initiative) entitled "The Gentle Judge, The Lord Jesus" on Tuesday, September 8, 2015.

This action responds to a proposal made at the Synod of Bishops in October, 2014, and is in line with the upcoming Holy Year beginning on December 8th: "The Jubilee of Mercy."

In its applicability to the Diocese of Des Moines the streamlining of the process will involve:

- 1) One sentence of nullity will be sufficient in decisions emanating from the Tribunal of the Diocese of Des Moines when the judge assigned to the case has "moral certainty" that the marriage was not valid. Previously an appeal was automatic and a declaration of nullity had to come from two tribunals. The Court of Second Instance for the Diocese of Des Moines is the Archdiocese of Dubuque.
- 2) In the case of the annulment being "evident" a shorter process will be applied. Those conditions include: when it is clear one or both parties lacked the faith to give full consent to a Catholic marriage; when the woman had an abortion to prevent procreation; remaining in an extramarital relationship at the time of the wedding or immediately afterward; one partner hiding knowledge of infertility, a serious contagious disease, children from a previous union or a history of incarceration; and when physical violence was used to extort consent for the marriage.

- 3) The Diocese of Des Moines had already contemplated eliminating the fee for annulments. In light of the Holy Father's "Motu Proprio" this step will be implemented immediately covering all cases which had not been finalized as of September 8, 2015.
- 4) In those cases when the sentence requires an appeal it can be dealt with locally, namely, the Archdiocese of Dubuque. A second appeal can be made to the Holy See, namely, the Vatican.

Further information regarding the action of the Holy Father will be posted on the website of the Diocese of Des Moines. Specific inquiries can be directed to:
cgearhart@dmdiocese.org.

The Diocese of Des Moines includes 80 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.