



# DIocese OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS

## OFFICE FOR TRIBUNAL SERVICES

Dear Priests, Deacons, and Parish Advocates,

May 21, 2026

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois will host a Tribunal training course to equip priests, deacons, and qualified parishioners to assist parishioners in preparing a petition for a declaration of nullity of marriage. The content offered will be the same as was offered to the Alton Deanery in the fall of 2025. All current Advocates are encouraged to attend, and pastors are asked to identify new parishioners who they think would serve well in this function.

A good Advocate should possess the following qualities:

- Is a practicing and faithful Catholic with a personal prayer life
- Has a solid understanding of the Church's teaching on marriage and sexuality
- Is well-respected by the parish community
- Is not currently in an invalid marriage
- Has a healthy respect for the authority of the Church
- Has good interpersonal and communication skills
- Is open to ongoing formation from the Tribunal staff
- Is able to maintain a high degree of confidentiality
- Is recommended by his/her pastor to serve in this function

**Date: Friday, June 12, 2026**

**Location: Catholic Pastoral Center  
1615 W Washington Street  
Springfield, IL 62702**

**Schedule: 9 am Mass (Solemnity of the Sacred Heart)  
9:30 check-in  
10 am – 4 pm training (with hour lunch break – lunch provided)**

Please RSVP with [this link](#) to let us know that you are coming. If you have any questions, please email Chelli Branyan (cbranyan@dio.org) or Fr. Dominic Vahling (dvahling@dio.org).

Sincerely,

Fr. Dominic Vahling  
Judicial Vicar