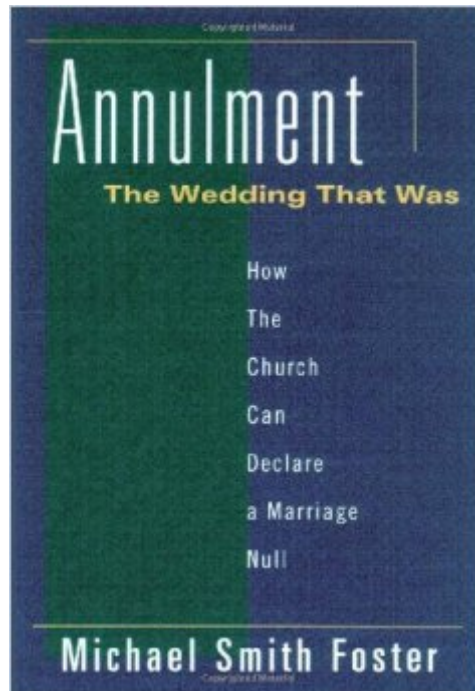


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# Annulment, The Wedding That Was: How The Church Can Declare A Marriage Null



## Synopsis

A primer on how the church determines nullity of marriage and the mechanics of canon law process.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a user-friendly one. The question and answer format is used to its highest possibility. It deals with all of those questions we never bothered to ask our high school religion nun or college theologian, and now wish we had. As both a civil and a canon lawyer dealing in divorce and annulments, I cannot think of one question not asked and answered here. The index makes it even easier to navigate the concepts explored. The result is a book that explains the concepts but also tells you how to deal practically with them in the context of the Church's laws and canons. This book takes the whole package of married life and puts it into Catholic perspective. This start to finish result, especially starting at the time of the marriage, is the crux of what so many do not understand about the Catholic Church and marriage. Foster's approach is totally successful just because of its simplicity. The book should be read by those thinking of marriage and not just those far down the road. It's assistance to both is what makes this book so important.

Annuling a marriage is one of the thorniest practices of the Roman Catholic Church. People who are granted annulments are given a whole new lease on life, but for those who are denied an annulment, the news can be devastating. For Catholics, an annulment means that a sacramental marriage never took place. The most common reaction to this is "I went to the wedding, what do you mean a marriage never took place?" People begin to wonder if an annulment means that children

from such unions are illegitimate (no). Others wonder what right the Church has to declare a marriage null, and see the process as judgmental and vindictive. Others believe that annulments are only granted to those willing to pay a hefty price tag. With so much negative press, it is no wonder why so many people find the annulment process intimidating and decide not to pursue having a marriage annulled. Michael Smith Foster, a Catholic priest and canon lawyer who works at the Marriage Tribunal for the Archdiocese of Boston has written a clear, easy to understand book answering the many questions of what an annulment is, and what an annulment is not. The book is published by Paulist Press, and is set up in a question and answer format, like many books released by this publisher. In discussing the annulment process, the author also explains what a Catholic marriage is supposed to be. His style is pastoral and non-threatening. The book is compassionate and hopeful for people who have been hurt by a marriage coming apart. While this book will be most helpful to people going through the annulment process and those who are ministering to them, it will be of interest to any Catholics who want to understand more about this procedure and what the Church truly teaches about marriage.

I have worked in the field of church law for over 20 years. I have met with over 1000 petitioners who really don't understand the annulment process. All they understand is that they would like to enter into a new marriage and they want to be able to "make it right with the church." And, on the other side is their ex-spouse who doesn't understand as well, what is going on when they receive their letter from the tribunal informing them of their ex-spouse's application. What I have begun to do is to send them a copy of this book, in advance of my meeting with them. When that happens, their defenses are down, they understand so much better what is happening and their questions are no longer harassing or attacking. They have such a clearer picture of the process and they are much more able to handle the situation because they have had it explained to them in language that they understand. I would encourage any tribunal to have a number of these books on their shelves, so that when someone appears at their door who is beleaguered, and bewildered, just hand them the book, give them a chance to read it and your worries will be over- they now have a clearer picture of what the process is all about.

And I thought I knew the law. As a recent convert to the Catholic faith, I suddenly realized that my first marriage would have to be annulled. As a lawyer, I thought that a couple of Google searches and a few web sites would supply everything required. Nothing could be further from the truth. Michael Foster's book proved to be the compass that guided me through the process. Working

through each chapter, there were times that I thought I was back in law school or at least studying at a bar review course. That's how thorough the author is with each topic and each example. Throughout the entire process I was blessed with a great study guide. The chapters are organized in a logical fashion and I particularly liked the Q & A approach. This is a book for both the novice and the more experienced reader.

There are so many myths and misunderstandings about annulments that it's great to have a ready resource that is so easy to understand. It answers basic questions on how divorce is viewed by the Church, the issue of a child's legitimacy after an annulment and how an annulment application is processed. It also guides you on what to expect which for me personally has made the process so much less intimidating. I was also reassured that the book had a "Nihil Obstat" from the Church something that I found lacking in other books on the topic. This means that the Catholic Church confirms and approves that there is nothing incorrect or objectionable in the book. This was important to me as a devout Catholic. I wanted a "good seal of approval" from the Church to the book's accuracy for my own peace of mind. I highly recommend this book to anyone thinking about getting an annulment and an essential purchase for those who have decided to undertake the process!

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