



ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

Metropolitan Tribunal

3424 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90010-2241
Tel.: (213) 637-7888
(213) 637-7245
Fax: (213) 637-6178

**TIME DEADLINE & SPECIAL HANDLING FEES
for TESTIMONIAL LETTERS**
For normal processing, all documents and \$40 fee must be received by this Office no later than four (4) weeks prior to the wedding. Otherwise an extra fee of \$30 must accompany the paperwork for expedited handling.

TESTIMONIAL LETTERS OR NIHIL OBSTAT

Groom

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Telephone: _____
 Religion: _____
 Parish: _____

Bride

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Telephone: _____
 Religion: _____
 Parish: _____

Place of Marriage:

_____ Church
 _____ City
 _____ Diocese

Priest/Deacon Celebrant:

_____ Name
 _____ Phone
 _____ Date of Marriage

Documents Submitted

- | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Prenuptial Investigation: | Groom _____ | Bride _____ |
| 2. Testimony of Witnesses Concerning Freedom: | Groom _____ | Bride _____ |
| 3. Certificate/Proof of Baptism: | Groom _____ | Bride _____ |
| 4. Granted Dispensation/Permissions: | Groom _____ | Bride _____ |
| 5. Other Documents: _____ | | |
6. For Testimonial Letters only, fee (**required in advance of processing**): \$40 for normal handling, \$70 for expedited handling. Please make check payable to *Archdiocese of Los Angeles*: \$ _____

Concerning Banns: _____ Announced, with no objection _____ To be announced _____ Dispensed

I know of nothing that stands in the way of the valid and licit celebration of the proposed marriage (c. 1066). Permission, insofar as it is required, is hereby given for this marriage to take place outside of the parish (c. 1115). Therefore, I respectfully request the issuance of the **Testimonial Letters / Nihil Obstat** (c. 1070) for the marriage.

Signature of Priest/Deacon/Parish Minister Parish City Telephone

As delegate of the Archbishop of Los Angeles in these matters, I hereby grant the **Testimonial Letters**.

By: _____ Date: _____

Nihil Obstat: We have no objection to the above-mentioned marriage taking place in this (Arch)diocese.

By: _____ Date: _____

Dear Pastors:

It frequently happens that marriages of our parishioners are celebrated in other dioceses in the United States or in other countries.

When one of the parties to a marriage resides in this Archdiocese, his/her parish priest has the responsibility to assist in establishing freedom to marry, even when the wedding is to take place in another diocese. Canon 1066 states: "Before a marriage is celebrated, it must be evident that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration." Canon 1070 adds: If someone other than the pastor who is to assist at the marriage has conducted the investigations, the person is to notify the pastor about the results as soon as possible through an authentic document."

This responsibility is usually fulfilled by facilitating the necessary course of pre-marriage instructions and by forwarding to the parish where the wedding is to take place all sacramental documents, letters of freedom, pre-nuptial investigation form, and any other pertinent documents establishing the readiness and freedom of the party to marry. When the place of the wedding is another parish located within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, those materials can be sent directly by you to the parish. However, **when the parish of the wedding is located in another diocese**, these documents must be accompanied by **TESTIMONIAL LETTERS** from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and a **NIHIL OBSTAT** from the diocese of the place of the wedding. **Problems** can be encountered by our people if they arrive for the wedding in another place and find these **TESTIMONIAL LETTERS** and **NIHIL OBSTAT** **have not been issued.**

Priests, deacons and other parish ministers who are approached by a parishioner for help in preparing for a marriage in another diocese are asked to use the form: "**Testimonial Letters or Nihil Obstat.**" The form is available in English and Spanish. If the marriage is to take place in a country where Spanish is the primary language, please use the Spanish version. For dioceses in the United States or other countries, please use the English version. Once completed, the form, along with the documents and fee, is to be sent to the Office of the Tribunal in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. We will issue the TESTIMONIAL LETTERS and forward the materials to the diocese where the wedding is scheduled to take place. The receiving diocese will then issue the NIHIL OBSTAT and forward them to the parish of the wedding.

Occasionally, when there is doubt about international mails, the parties may want to hand carry a copy of the documents with them. If this is the case, please inform our office when you send in the request. We will issue testimonial letters, forward the originals, but then return to you an authenticated copy for the parties to deliver to the parish of the wedding.

We hope these forms will facilitate your service of parishioners in these matters. If you have any questions, please feel free to consult with the Tribunal.