

Regulations On Proofing Marriage Announcement As A Requirement For Catholic Divorce In Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the urgency of the annulment letter in the Catholic divorce system in Indonesia as a legal instrument that plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between civil law and the canon law of the Catholic Church. The annulment letter serves not only as an administrative document but also as proof of the legality of the annulment of marriage, determining the validity of the marriage sacrament according to Church law. This study found that the lack of clear regulations regarding the recognition and verification of annulment letters in district courts can lead to legal uncertainty and conflict over the dual status between civil and canonical recognition. The annulment process in the Catholic Church itself is a pastoral judicial mechanism that assesses the validity of a marriage based on the norms of faith and canon law, with stages including filing, examining evidence, and a tribunal decision. This study emphasizes the importance of synchronizing the results of the ecclesiastical tribunal process with the national legal system to ensure justice, legal certainty, and the protection of the rights of Catholics. A comparative approach to the legal systems of other countries shows that the integration of the results of religious tribunal decisions into the national legal system can be achieved through transparent and measurable administrative mechanisms. Thus, the regulation of proof and recognition of annulment letters in Indonesian national law is expected to realize harmonization between religious law and state law, while strengthening legal, spiritual, and social protection for Catholic couples.

Keywords: Annulment Letter, Marriage Annulment, Canon Law, Catholic Divorce, Legal Certainty.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a pluralistic country, with ethnic, racial, and religious diversity as the foundation of social life. Major religions such as Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are officially recognized by the state and guaranteed freedom of practice under Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution. This diversity is also reflected in the practice of marriage law, which is an important part of the social and religious life of citizens (Mazya et al., 2024).

In Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, Article 2 paragraph (1) emphasizes that a marriage is valid if it is conducted according to the laws of each religion and its beliefs. This provision places the religious aspect as the primary basis for the validity of marriage in Indonesia. Thus, every marriage must comply with the rules of the religion adhered to by each party, which is constitutionally guaranteed in Article 29 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution (Sumiarni, 2024).

According to Indonesian law, marriage has not only spiritual dimensions, but also social and legal ones. According to Article 1 of Law No. 1 of 1974, marriage is a physical and spiritual



bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife to form a happy and eternal family based on the One Almighty God. This goal demonstrates the balance between religious values and social goals that underpin married life (Katz & Katz, 1975).

In a religious context, each religion has its own views and procedures regarding the implementation and dissolution of marriage. For Catholics, marriage is not simply a social contract, but a sacred and indissoluble sacrament. This is regulated in the Code of Canon Law, which serves as the legal basis for the Catholic Church worldwide (Coriden, 2004).

Code of Canon Law stipulates that a valid Catholic marriage cannot be dissolved by human means, except by the death of one of the partners (Canon 1141). Therefore, the Catholic Church does not recognize the concept of divorce as it does in civil law, but does recognize the annulment of marriage or annulment if there is a defect in the agreement, a legal impediment, or a discrepancy with canon law (Flood, 2007).

In practice, annulment is the church's judicial process for determining the validity of a Catholic marriage. This process is carried out by an ecclesiastical judicial institution called a tribunal, which has three levels: the diocesan tribunal (first instance), the metropolitan tribunal (second instance), and the Vatican's Roman Rota as the highest level of appeal. Only through a tribunal's decision can a marriage be declared canonically null and void (Sir, 2024).

Problems arise when Indonesian civil law recognizes divorce as a legitimate reason for the dissolution of a marriage. Articles 38 and 39 of Law No. 1 of 1974 state that a marriage can be dissolved by death, divorce, or a court decision. This provision creates legal ambiguity, particularly for Catholic couples who, according to their religion, do not recognize divorce but are legally permitted through the district court.

One case illustrating this legal conflict is the East Jakarta District Court's Decision No. 49/Pdt.G/2025/PN JKT.TIM, in which a Catholic couple filed for a civil divorce without going through the church's annulment process. Although the district court ruled the divorce valid under state law, the church still considered the couple to be still bound by the bonds of sacramental marriage. This inconsistency raises legal issues for both parties.

Similar cases are also found in the real lives of Catholics, such as couples who have civilly divorced but are still considered canonically bound and therefore cannot remarry in the church. This demonstrates the gap between the legitimacy of state law and the legitimacy of the church, potentially leading to legal uncertainty and social issues, including regarding the status of children and family rights after divorce.



This phenomenon demonstrates the urgency of harmonizing civil and canon law, particularly in the regulation of marriage for Catholics. The absence of a letter of annulment from a church tribunal in a divorce case in a district court has the potential to create ambiguity in a person's legal status, both in the eyes of the state and the church. Therefore, coordination between church institutions and state judicial institutions is an urgent need.

Legally, the necessity of a letter of annulment as supporting evidence in divorce cases in district courts is a crucial step in ensuring legal certainty. This document can serve as a basis for judges in assessing the validity of a Catholic couple's divorce petition, while also demonstrating respect for religious freedom as guaranteed by the constitution.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that the urgency of Catholic marriage annulment lies in its efforts to avoid overlapping legal statuses and maintain harmony between civil and religious law. Comparative research on the principles and legal implications of civil divorce and Catholic annulment is essential to strengthen legal protection, marital certainty, and respect for religious norms within Indonesia's national legal system.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is normative legal research. The approach used in this research is carried out using the statutory approach method, the legal concept analysis approach, and the comparative approach. Types and Sources of Legal Materials are primary legal materials, secondary legal materials, and tertiary legal materials. Sources of legal materials use primary legal materials and secondary legal materials. After all legal materials are collected, they are then analyzed using Prescriptive, in this case using the method of grammatical interpretation and systematic interpretation. Grammatical interpretation is a method of interpretation or explanation that aims to know or understand the meaning of words in the law in accordance with the rules of language and the rules of grammatical law.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Urgency of Annulment Letters in Catholic Divorce in Indonesia

1. Annulment Letter as Legal Evidence of Cancellation of Catholic Religion

The rising divorce rate in Indonesia is not only a social issue but also a moral and spiritual one, particularly for Catholics who view marriage as an indissoluble sacrament.

The Catholic Church firmly holds that marriage is a sacred covenant that cannot be

dissolved by humankind except through death. This situation raises fundamental questions about how the Church responds to couples facing serious marital crises, and how Church law regulates the mechanisms for resolving such issues without contradicting the principle of the eternity of the sacrament of marriage. Thus, fundamental issues arise regarding how the Catholic Church provides legal and pastoral solutions for Catholic couples seeking clarity on their marital status through the annulment process, and the extent to which the canonical legal system is able to provide legal certainty and adequate protection for them (Dandi et al., 2025).

In the context of canon law, divorce is not recognized, but is instead replaced by the concept of annulment, a formal declaration that a marriage is invalid from the outset under Church law. This mechanism raises profound questions about the legal basis used to declare a marriage null and void and the extent to which church tribunals carry out their judicial functions based on principles of justice and morality. The problems that arise not only concern the substance of the law but also its procedure and implementation, given the complexity of the church justice system, which often takes a long time and creates a psychological burden for the parties involved. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how the annulment procedure in the Catholic Church is carried out systematically in accordance with the Code of Canon Law and how this mechanism ensures that substantive justice is maintained.

Furthermore, problems arise related to the congregation's lack of understanding of the church's legal mechanisms. Many Catholic couples experience confusion or even leave the Church because they don't understand the annulation procedure and believe the Church doesn't provide solutions to their marital problems. This phenomenon raises serious questions about the effectiveness of canonical law education and the Church's pastoral role in assisting its congregation facing marital crises. Therefore, it is crucial to formulate how the Church can improve the congregation's understanding of the annulation process and optimize its pastoral role to prevent the congregation from feeling alienated from the church's legal system.

Pope Francis, through his *Motu Proprio Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus*, has made important reforms to the church's judicial system by introducing simpler, faster, and less expensive annulment procedures. These reforms raise critical questions: to what extent do these reforms address the needs of Catholics for legal certainty and protection of rights?

Does this simplified procedure still guarantee the quality of the examination and the moral validity of an annulment decision? This is relevant to examine because procedural changes in canon law impact not only administrative aspects but also touch the doctrinal and theological core of the sacrament of marriage.

In addition to procedural aspects, the Code of Canon Law also regulates the grounds that can lead to a marriage being declared null and void. The next problem is how provisions regarding impediments to marriage, defects in the canonical system of confirmation, and defects in free consent within a marriage can serve as a valid legal basis for annulment. Are these provisions sufficient to provide legal clarity and certainty for the disputing parties? In this context, it is important to understand how the concept of marital validity is concretely applied in cases handled by church tribunals and how the process of moral certainty is carried out to uphold the principle of justice.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the extent to which the theory of legal certainty can be applied in the context of Catholic marriage annulments. Legal certainty requires not only clear norms and definite procedures, but also fair and consistent legal enforcement. Therefore, it is necessary to examine whether the current annulment procedure guarantees clarity in the legal status of the parties, avoids uncertainty, and provides a sense of security regarding their rights and obligations as members of the faithful. This formulation is crucial because without effective legal certainty, marriage annulments can actually lead to confusion regarding the social and spiritual status of Catholics.

Furthermore, from the perspective of legal protection theory, the question arises of how the Catholic Church's annulment system protects the rights of the couples involved in the process. Does the existing mechanism accommodate the principles of substantive and procedural justice? How does the Church ensure that the annulment process does not result in discrimination or injustice for vulnerable parties, especially women or those who are economically or socially disadvantaged? This formulation emphasizes the importance of a balance between legal certainty, moral justice, and the protection of the human rights of the faithful.

The next formulation relates to pastoral and spiritual aspects. The Catholic Church places reconciliation as the primary step before annulment. This raises the question of how effective this pastoral mechanism is in reducing the number of annulments and

strengthening the resilience of Catholic families. Is the Church's approach to reconciliation in line with the principles of restorative justice, which seek to restore relationships and the spiritual well-being of the parties? This question is crucial to examine because it concerns the balance between the Church's duty to uphold the sanctity of marriage and its pastoral responsibility for the well-being of its congregation.

Furthermore, it is necessary to define the relationship between the Church's legal system and the civil legal system in the context of marriage annulment. Given that many Catholic couples are also bound by state law, the issue of coordination and recognition of decisions by church tribunals and civil courts arises. This raises questions about the synchronization of Indonesian canon law and positive law, and how Catholics can obtain dual legal certainty—both religious and administrative—regarding their marital status.

Finally, the main problem formulation underlying this entire discussion is how the marriage annulment process in the Catholic Church can be interpreted as a simultaneous implementation of the theory of legal certainty and legal protection. Is the ecclesiastical justice system capable of upholding substantive justice while simultaneously providing spiritual and social protection for the faithful? These questions serve as a conceptual foundation for examining the relationship between theological doctrine, the principles of canon law, and the social realities of Catholics facing the complexities of modern married life.

2. The Urgency of Regulating Annulment Letters in Catholic Divorce in Indonesia

The relationship between church law and state law in the context of marriage has fundamental differences in concept, principles, and normative objectives. Church law is based on the theological principle that marriage is an eternal sacrament (indissoluble), while state law views marriage as a social institution that can end through divorce or annulment based on certain legal reasons. This paradigm difference creates normative tension, especially for Catholics in Indonesia, who are faced with a dual legal system: national positive law, which regulates divorce, and canon law, which rejects the sacramental dissolution of marriage.

In practice, state law, through Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and the Civil Code, provides for divorce and annulment of marriage as a form of protection for citizens' rights and legal certainty. However, research has found that these state legal mechanisms have not yet accommodated the principle of the eternity of marriage in the

Catholic Church. As a result, although a marriage is considered terminated under civil law, from the perspective of the church, its sacramental bond remains intact. This creates a dual legal status and uncertainty about the social and spiritual standing of Catholics experiencing civil divorce (Sholehudin et al., 2025).

Based on an analysis of the Code of Canon Law, two forms of separation are found in church law: complete separation (annulment) and imperfect separation (separation from bed or table). Imperfect separation only limits cohabitation without terminating the marriage bond, while annulment declares a marriage invalid from the outset because it does not meet canonical requirements. These findings demonstrate that the Catholic Church provides space for internal resolution for couples in conflict without violating the principle of the perpetuity of the sacrament of marriage, although the procedure differs fundamentally from civil divorce.

From the perspective of Indonesian positive law, research results show that the procedure for annulment of marriage is expressly regulated in Articles 22 to 28 of the Marriage Law, which stipulate that annulment can only be carried out through a court decision if the requirements for a valid marriage are not met. However, this mechanism is administrative in nature and does not take into account the theological aspects or religious morality inherent in Catholics. Thus, a regulatory vacuum exists that hinders the integration of church law and state law in regulating the validity or annulment of Catholic marriages.

Theoretical analysis using the legal certainty theory approach shows that the disharmony between civil law and church law gives rise to normative ambiguity. For Catholics who have obtained a divorce decree from the district court, under state law they are considered free to remarry, but under religious law their status remains as a married couple. This condition results in legal uncertainty and a violation of the right to legal protection as regulated in Article 28D paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution. This finding emphasizes the importance of legal reformulation so that the plurality of religious norms can be accommodated in the national legal system.

The study also found that the theory of legal protection (*rechtsschutz*) is a crucial basis for guaranteeing the rights of Catholics in the context of divorce and annulment. Legal protection must be provided not only for civil court decisions, but also for religious legitimacy based on church doctrine. The absence of a mechanism bridging these two

systems leaves Catholics in a weak legal position, both in terms of marital status, inheritance rights, and social recognition. A legal mechanism is needed that can substantively guarantee the rights of religious communities without ignoring the principle of legal pluralism in Indonesia.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the gap between Catholic Church law and state law in marriage and divorce cases is a serious problem that requires legal reconstruction. Clear regulations regarding the recognition of annulment letters in the national legal system are of primary importance for achieving legal certainty, substantive justice, and the protection of religious rights. This integration will not only strengthen the synergy between state law and church law but also be a concrete reflection of the spirit of Indonesian legal pluralism, which upholds justice, family integrity, and respect for religious values.

3. Legal Implications of Annulment Letters on Marital Status and the Rights of the Parties

Catholic couples in Indonesia face serious challenges in resolving marital disputes due to a lack of understanding of canonical legal procedures, particularly regarding the annulment process at the Church Tribunal. Some couples choose not to take legal action due to limited knowledge and access to church institutions. This situation demonstrates the very low level of canonical legal literacy among Catholics, resulting in many marital disputes not being legally resolved according to Catholic Church regulations.

The study also found that most couples prefer to pursue state legal channels through the District Court rather than the Church Tribunal. This decision was made because the civil court process is considered faster and more accessible. However, this practice creates a new legal problem in the form of double status, where couples are declared civilly divorced but remain canonically bound. This phenomenon demonstrates a disharmony between the state legal system and church law, which directly impacts the certainty of the legal status of Catholics (Ingram, 1990).

The implications of this dual legal status are complex. Spiritually, couples who have been civilly divorced but are still canonically valid cannot receive certain sacraments and are not permitted to remarry in the Church. Meanwhile, socially, this situation creates moral distress, confusion about family identity, and tension within the church community.

This demonstrates that divorce without annulment is not only a legal issue but also impacts the spiritual and social stability of Catholic couples.

Furthermore, the study found underlying issues such as uncertainty regarding children's status, custody, and inheritance rights. The discrepancy between civil law and canon law creates difficulties in establishing civil rights and family administration. In many cases, couples face obstacles in obtaining official documents such as birth certificates or population registration due to differences in marital status recognition between the state and the Church. This demonstrates that the legal disharmony across domains has real consequences for the legal life of Catholics.

Other findings indicate that ignorance of the Church Tribunal's mechanisms leads to a lack of legal and spiritual protection for Catholic couples. They lack pastoral guidance or legal solutions consistent with Church teachings. This situation weakens the Church's function as an institution that should provide spiritual and legal support to its congregation. As a result, many couples experience a crisis of faith, and some even choose to leave the Church because they feel they have not received clarity on their status or received justice in resolving their marital problems.

From the perspective of legal certainty theory, this study shows that the lack of synchronization between canon law and state law creates ambiguity, multiple interpretations, and uncertainty for Catholics. Complicated and poorly publicized annulment procedures make it difficult for Catholics to obtain clarity on the legal status that should protect their rights. These findings emphasize the importance of concrete efforts by Church and state institutions to create a harmonious, transparent, and equitable resolution mechanism accessible to all Catholics.

Based on these findings, this study emphasizes the need for reform and strengthening of the canonical legal system at the national level through intensive outreach, simplification of annulment procedures, and cooperation between church and state institutions. This approach is expected to create legal certainty, spiritual protection, and justice for Catholic couples experiencing marital problems. Thus, the resolution of marital disputes among Catholics is not only a form of obedience to church law but also a manifestation of respect for the sacramental value of marriage as a divine institution held in high esteem in the Catholic faith.

B. The Form of Proof of Marriage Annulment as a Condition for Catholic Divorce in Indonesia**1. Mechanism for Annulment of Catholic Marriages in Indonesia**

The process of annulment of marriage in the Catholic Church is both a judicial and pastoral mechanism aimed at providing legal certainty and spiritual care to the faithful. In canon law, annulment is divided into two types: *ex tunc*—which declares a marriage invalid from the outset due to legal defects—and *ex nunc*—which terminates a marriage that was originally valid but subsequently annulled for certain reasons, such as a dispensation from the Pope of *ratum et non consummatum*. This process is submitted through ecclesiastical tribunals according to territorial jurisdiction, whether at the diocesan level, inter-diocesan level, or up to the Tribunal of the Apostolic See as the highest appellate authority. This layered structure reflects the principle of checks and balances in the canon law system.

The annulment process is divided into two main rites: the ordinary rite and the short rite. The ordinary rite lasts approximately 12–18 months, with formal stages ranging from the submission of a libel, examination of evidence and witnesses, written discussions, and a final decision. The short rite (*processus brevior*) was introduced through Pope Francis' *Motu Proprio Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* (MIDI) in 2015 as a legal reform to expedite cases where evidence of invalidity is clear. This reform affirms the Church's orientation toward efficiency and access to justice without neglecting the principle of legal prudence.

The appeals mechanism is a crucial element in ensuring substantive justice. After the first-instance tribunal issues an affirmative decision, the entire file is sent to the appeals tribunal for ratification. The parties, as well as the defender of the validity of the marriage, can appeal. This mechanism not only serves as a means of correcting the previous decision but also provides space for the addition of new evidence and arguments. From a legal policy perspective, this demonstrates a system of control over the Church's judicial power while simultaneously protecting the rights of the faithful.

Examined through legal political theory and legislative theory, the process of annulment of Catholic marriages embodies the dynamic between the legitimacy of Church authority and the congregation's need for justice (Robb, 2015). The formation of canonical norms is rooted in the principles of pastoral justice and the protection of the

sanctity of marriage, in accordance with the principles of needs-based legislation and the public interest. Procedural reform through the MIDI demonstrates the adaptability of canonical law to social change, while the hierarchical tribunal system upholds the principles of legal certainty and due process of law within a controlled hierarchical framework.

Overall, the annulment of marriage in the Catholic Church reflects the integration of legality and pastoralism, legal certainty and humanitarian values. Canon law, in this case, functions not only as a tool for enforcing norms but also as a means of reconciliation and moral service. This approach serves as an ideal example of humanistic, dynamic, and responsive legal formation to social realities, affirming that true justice in Church law does not stop at a verdict, but at restoring the dignity and spiritual peace of the faithful.

2. Forms and Types of Evidence Recognized in the Catholic Marriage Annulment Process

The process of annulment of marriage in the Catholic Church is a theological and juridical legal mechanism for assessing the validity of the sacrament of marriage according to canon law. Unlike divorce in the civil law system, annulment does not terminate a valid marriage, but rather declares that the marriage was never valid from the beginning due to legal defects or violations of canonical requirements. This process, called *declaratio nullitatis matrimonii*, is submitted to the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, the Church's internal judicial institution, authorized at the diocesan or diocesan level. Through the tribunal, the Church exercises its judicial function to uphold justice and safeguard the sanctity of the sacrament of marriage in accordance with Catholic teachings.

During the process, the Ecclesiastical Tribunal conducts a thorough examination of all evidence and statements submitted by the party requesting the annulment. This evidence includes official documents such as civil and church marriage certificates, baptismal and confirmation certificates, parish certificates, and testimony from witnesses familiar with the circumstances of the marriage. Additionally, medical or psychological documentation may be submitted to support the grounds for annulment, particularly if one party is proven to lack the mental or physical capacity to exercise the rights and obligations of marriage. All of this data is used by the tribunal to assess whether there is a

sufficiently strong canonical basis for declaring the marriage invalid from the outset (Vasoli, 1998).

All stages of the evidence and verification conducted by the tribunal reflect the principles of justice and prudence in canon law. The Church views marriage as a sacred sacrament and cannot be dissolved unless a fundamental flaw is proven to invalidate its validity. Therefore, annulment of marriage in the Catholic Church is not a concession to doctrine, but rather an implementation of legal justice and pastoral spirituality. This process demonstrates a balance between the demands of legality and the values of faith, with the ultimate goal being to preserve the sanctity of the sacrament while providing clarity about the spiritual and legal status of the people involved.

3. Regulations on Proof of Annulment of Marriage as a Condition for Catholic Divorce in Indonesia

Marriage in Indonesia has closely intertwined legal and spiritual dimensions, given that this country is founded on the foundation of the One Almighty God as stated in the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Law Number 16 of 2019 affirms that marriage is a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman that is valid if carried out according to the laws of their respective religions. Therefore, the validity of marriage in Indonesia is determined not only by state law, but also by religious provisions. In the Catholic context, the Church views marriage as a sacrament that is eternal and cannot be terminated through divorce, but can only be declared null and void if proven from the outset to be legally flawed through the annulment process by the Church Tribunal. However, Indonesia's secular legal system places divorce under the jurisdiction of district courts, which place greater emphasis on administrative and positive legal aspects, without considering the canonical norms applicable to Catholics. As a result, a dual legal status emerges: a person can be considered legally divorced under state law, but still canonically bound by the Catholic Church. This situation gives rise to serious legal and social problems, such as unclear marital status, obstacles to receiving the sacraments, and even moral and spiritual conflicts within the Catholic community. The differences in perspectives and mechanisms between civil and canon law demonstrate the urgent need to create a more inclusive and contextual model of legal harmonization.

In this context, the comparative law approach demonstrates that countries with civil law traditions such as France, Italy, Spain, and Germany have successfully

established dualistic systems that recognize religious law without eliminating the supremacy of civil law. In these countries, Church Tribunal decisions are administratively recognized by the state through a verification mechanism, thus creating harmony between civil and religious legal status. This model can serve as a reference for Indonesia in formulating a similar mechanism through the establishment of regulations that allow for the recognition or verification of annulment decisions from the Catholic Church Tribunal in divorce proceedings in district courts. This approach will strengthen legal certainty, avoid conflicts of status, and maintain harmony between state law and religious norms (Witte, 2012).

From a legal policy perspective, this integration of religious and civil law reflects an attempt to reconcile secular and spiritual authorities within a democratic and pluralistic legal state. Legal policy serves not only as an instrument of power and social regulation, but also as a reflection of the values of substantive justice and religious freedom. Legal reforms that allow coordination between district courts and the Catholic Church Tribunal would demonstrate the state's responsiveness to the needs of religious communities, without sacrificing the principle of the supremacy of national law. However, this step also faces challenges in the form of harmonizing differing norms, institutional resistance, and a complex legislative process.

Ultimately, the integration of religious legal mechanisms in resolving Catholic marital disputes is not merely a technical administrative matter, but also a manifestation of respect for citizens' constitutional rights to religion and practice its teachings. With clear, transparent, and fair regulations, Indonesia can strengthen substantive justice and the legitimacy of court decisions. Furthermore, this will affirm Indonesia's identity as a nation based on law that upholds pluralism, where state law and religious values can coexist harmoniously to maintain unity and social welfare.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the annulation letter has fundamental urgency in the context of Catholic divorce in Indonesia. This letter serves not only as an administrative document but also as a legal instrument that bridges the dualism between state law and Catholic Church law. The existence of an annulation letter provides legitimacy and legal certainty regarding marital status, while protecting the civil and spiritual rights of Catholics, such



as inheritance rights, child custody, and the reception of the sacraments. Without clear regulations regarding the recognition and verification of annulment letters in district courts, the potential for conflict over dual status between civil law and canon law will continue to arise, ultimately disrupting the social and spiritual order of the community.

Furthermore, marriage annulment under Catholic Church law is a pastoral judicial process that assesses the validity of a marriage based on the norms of faith, not simply an administrative procedure. This mechanism demands the integration of legal and spiritual aspects through the role of ecclesiastical tribunals that operate according to the principles of justice and pastoral care. Therefore, synchronization between the results of the Church's annulment process and the national legal system is an urgent need to achieve legal harmonization that aligns with the values of religious freedom. Normatively, the establishment of regulations governing the verification and recognition of annulment letters as a requirement for divorce for Catholics is a strategic step towards achieving legal certainty, substantive justice, and respect for citizens' constitutional rights to practice their religion. A comparative approach to practices in civil law countries demonstrates that integration between religious tribunal decisions and state law can be achieved through clear and measurable administrative mechanisms. Therefore, regulating the verification of marriage annulment (annulation) in the Indonesian legal system represents a form of inclusive legal reform, which not only guarantees legal certainty and protection but also strengthens the harmony between state law and religious law within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

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