



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
*of*  
PENSACOLA-TALLAHASSEE



# CANONIST

October 3, 2025

CATHOLIC RECRUITER ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE SEARCH • MANAGEMENT CONSULTING



## BACKGROUND

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Founded in 1975 but rooted in Catholic heritage dating back to 1559, the **Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee** serves 18 northwestern counties in Florida. The diocese enjoys the distinction of being a "dual see" diocese. It has two centers from which the bishop governs – Pensacola and Tallahassee. Each see has a cathedral, the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Pensacola and the Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Tallahassee.

The diocese brings the presence of the Church to coastal and inland communities through vibrant parishes, schools, and ministries and is committed to caring for the faithful at all stages of life, grounded in the hope of the Resurrection.

## Position Summary:

Under the supervision of the Judicial Vicar, the Canonist exercises ecclesiastical offices and functions as a member of the Tribunal staff, primarily in the adjudication of annulment cases and the assistance in processing marriage preparation files going in and out of the diocese. In addition, the Canonist provides canonical advice and consultation to the Bishop, diocesan staff, clergy and lay persons in response to needs as they arise.

**Position Title:** Canonist

**Reports To:** Judicial Vicar

## Essential Duties & Responsibilities:

- Assists with matrimonial causes in the Tribunal and is able to draft judicial decrees according to canon law and diocesan protocols.
- In conjunction with the Judicial Vicar and other staff, manages the progress of annulment cases, both formal and documentary, in accordance with the norms of law.
- VISUM EST/NIHIL OBSTAT
  - Reviews prenuptial files submitted by clergy of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee in regard to marriages occurring in other (arch)dioceses.
  - Reviews prenuptial files submitted by other chanceries/tribunals in regard to out-of diocese couples marrying in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.
- Provides canonical consultation for the members of the Christian Faithful (lay or clergy) in the diocese, provided there is no conflict of interests.

## Other Duties:

- Oversees training and evaluation of canonical Advocates for the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.
- May serve as Defender of the Bond:
  - In formal cases, produces proofs and arguments in favor of the validity of the marriage.
  - In documentary cases, verifies that the documents in question demonstrate with certainty the invalidity of the marriage.
- Drafts supplemental questionnaires to further the investigation of the invalidity of the marriage.
- Able to make rogatory depositions and audits for parties and witnesses as needed.
- Travels throughout the diocese, when necessary, to educate the Christian Faithful on marriage tribunal processes or Advocate training.
- Responds to consultation requests from local ordinaries of other dioceses in regard to Dispensations from Form for weddings occurring in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.
- As requested, drafts and/or reviews documents to be published by the Bishop or chancery officials.
- If a cleric:
  - Grants matrimonial dispensations and permissions.
  - Serves as sole judge (ponens) with Assessors over formal matrimonial causes.
  - Serves as judge for documentary process for declarations of nullity (Lack of Form or Ligamen).

## Qualifications:

- Must possess a licentiate (J.C.L.) or doctorate (J.C.D.) in canon law.
- Minimum of five (5) years Tribunal/Chancery experience.
- Detailed knowledge of canonical processes.
- Detailed knowledge of matrimonial jurisprudence.
- Ready to be appointed (where applicable) by the Bishop as:
  - Judge (c. 1421)
  - Defender of the Bond (c. 1432)
  - Procurator-Advocate (c. 1490)
  - Delegate to grant matrimonial dispensations and permissions
- Skill in operating computer programs including Windows, Microsoft Word, and the current tribunal Software (CaseMaster).
- Demonstrated communication skills, including:
  - speaking and written communication in English (required)
  - written competence in Latin (required)
  - speaking and written communication in Spanish (preferred)
- Must be an active practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.
- Must successfully pass an FBI Level II Background Screening, complete Safe Environment Training, and agree to the Tribunal Confidentiality Agreement upon hiring.
- Demonstrated ease in dealing with people, problems and crises, including excellent interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated emotional stability and self-confidence.
- Recognized as organized, conscientious, hard-working, responsible, and careful.
- Experiences with people must demonstrate cooperation, compassion, and caring.
- Demonstrated commitment to ongoing formation, education, personal, and professional growth.
- Membership in the Canon Law Society of America (CLSA) preferred.
- Physical Requirements: Office-based work with occasional travel to meet with clergy and visit parishes.

**Travel:** Occasional travel to meet with clergy and visit parishes.

**Salary:** Commensurate with background and experience. Comprehensive benefit program (details will be furnished to finalist candidates).

**Application Deadline:** November 15, 2025

*(We reserve the right to shorten the deadline for applications if we have sufficient interest. Please apply early to ensure your background will be considered.)*

**For consideration, please email resume to:**

Brent Morton  
Senior Vice President of Recruiting  
Catholic Recruiter Associates  
[\*\*Brent@CatholicRecruiter.com\*\*](mailto:Brent@CatholicRecruiter.com)

**Note:** Only those selected for an interview with the search committee will be contacted.

Search managed by:

**CATHOLIC RECRUITER ASSOCIATES**

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