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STATEMENT

**Archbishop John C. Wester's Statement
On Pope Francis' Reform of Canonical Procedure for
the Annulment of Marriage**

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ALBUQUERQUE – Wednesday, September 9, 2015–IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Archbishop John C. Wester has issued the following statement on the Holy Father's reform of the Canonical procedure for the annulment of the sacrament of marriage:

Pope Francis has once again shown that the theme of mercy is going to be the hallmark of his pontificate. Without changing the Church's teaching on the sanctity and beauty of the Sacrament of Marriage, the Holy Father has directed that certain changes be made to the judicial process that seeks to determine if a given marriage is indeed null. These pastoral provisions will help couples to more quickly find healing and, when appropriate, avail themselves of the Sacrament of Marriage when a declaration of nullity can be made in the case of a prior wedding. In addition, these reforms will create cohesiveness in families that already exist without the Sacrament of Marriage.

Yesterday, Cardinal Coccopalmerio, president of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, gave a clear and helpful summary of Pope Francis' reforms to the annulment process. I look forward to working with Very Rev. Oscar Coelho, our Judicial Vicar, as well as our archdiocesan tribunal staff, as we study the complete text of Pope Francis' reforms and prepare to implement them throughout the Archdiocese of Santa Fe on their effective date of December 8, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is a splendid opportunity to affirm the beauty of the gift of marriage in our Church as well as to assist those who are seeking to grow in their own personal path of holiness through the sacrament of marriage.--END