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To the participants in the Roman Rota formation course: the Church reaches out to many of her children to meet their legitimate desire for justice

Vatican City, 12 March 2016 – This morning in the Paul VI Hall Pope Francis received in audience the seven hundred participants in the formation course held by the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, whose dean is Msgr. Vito Pinto. In his address, he mentioned that in the recent synod path on the family there were high hopes for making the procedures for the declaration of marriage nullity faster and more efficient, since many faithful suffer as a result of the end of their marriage and at times feel oppressed by uncertainty as to whether it was valid or otherwise. "That is, they ask if there was also something in the intentions or facts that may have impeded the effective realisation of the sacrament. But in many cases they encounter difficulties in obtaining access to the ecclesial legal structures".

"Charity and mercy, as well as reflection on experience, have led the Church to draw increasingly close to these children of hers, to meet their legitimate desire for justice", continued the Holy Father, noting in this regard the promulgation last August of the documents *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* and *Mitis et Misericors Iesus*, whose objective, eminently pastoral, was to show the Church's care for those faithful who await a rapid confirmation of their matrimonial situation. "In particular, the double conforming judgement was abolished and the so-called streamlined process has been created, restoring the figure and the role of the diocesan bishop, or the eparch in the case of the oriental Churches, to the centre as judge of the cases. Thus the role of the bishop or the eparch in matrimonial matters is further enhanced; indeed, beyond the assessment by administrative means – ratified and not consummated – he has now been restored responsibility by judicial means in terms of the ascertainment of the validity of the bond".

"It is important that the new regulations are applied and furthered, in merit and in spirit, especially by the workers in ecclesiastical tribunals, to provide a service of justice and charity to families. For many people, who have had an unhappy experience of marriage, the confirmation of the validity or otherwise of the marriage represents an important opportunity; and these people must be helped to proceed as easily as possible along this road. ... The Church is a mother and wishes to show to all the face of God, faithful to His love, mercy and always able to restore strength and hope. What we have most at heart regarding separated couples who are in another union is their participation in the ecclesial community".

"However, while we care for the wounds of those who seek ascertainment of the truth on their failed marriage,

we look with admiration also to those who, even in difficult conditions, remain faithful to the sacramental bond. These witnesses to matrimonial fidelity must be encouraged and held up as examples to emulate" said the Pope at the end of his address to the participants in the course held by the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, whom he thanked for their efforts in the cause of justice, inviting them at the same time not to live it "as an office, or worse still, as as power, but rather as a service to souls, especially the most wounded".
