

Procedure for an Ecclesiastical Divorce

After a Civil Divorce has been granted

1. A member meets with the parish priest to discuss his/her life in Christ, and to review the marriage and discuss why it broke down and whether there is any remaining possibility of reconciliation.
2. Priest contacts the other spouse to hear his/her side of the story.
3. If reconciliation is still not possible, the member completes a file, through his parish priest, with the Archdiocese to petition for an ecclesiastical divorce. This includes:
 - a. Letter to the Archbishop by the petitioner, indicating why s/he wishes to receive a church divorce and including relevant information.
 - b. Separate letter from the parish priest, indicating his perspective on the marriage, its breakdown, and why he supports the petition.
 - c. Ecclesiastical Marriage Certificate, or, if this is no longer available, an official transcript from the church where the wedding took place.
 - d. Final Decree of Civil Divorce (full copy of all pages, including seal).
 - e. Filing Fee - \$250 money order or certified check, payable to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.
4. Sacrament of Confession for both parties – the parish priest guides each person about the importance of this for healing and reconciliation with Christ, and how to prepare.
5. Spiritual Court Hearing at a place and time specified by the Archdiocese in the presence of 3 clergy. Both spouses are notified; if both are present, the hearing takes place with each person separately.
6. Spiritual Court submits all documents together with their recommendation to Archbishop Demetrios for a final decision.
7. If the petition is accepted, the Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree is issued.