

Section 3

Administrative Guidelines for Petitioning an Ecclesiastical Divorce

TOPIC INDEX

Introduction:	3-1
General Administrative Regulations:.....	3-1
I. Authority	3-1
II. General	3-2
III. Jurisdiction over Marriages Celebrated in Greece or Cyprus	3-2
IV. Relationship between an Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition and a Final Civil Divorce Decree.....	3-2
V. Responsibility for Submitting the Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition	3-2
VI. The Spiritual Tribunal as an Extension of the Mystery of Repentance	3-3
VII. Procedure for Petitioning an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree	3-3
VIII. Requirement to Contact the Respondent	3-5
IX. The Spiritual Tribunal.....	3-6
X. Delivery of the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce to the Petitioner	3-6
XI. Procedure for Requesting Respondent's Copy of the Ecclesiastical Divorce	3-6
XII. Delivery of the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce to the Respondent.....	3-7
XIII. Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition Fees.....	3-7
XIV. Plans for a Church Marriage Subsequent to an Ecclesiastical Divorce.....	3-6

INTRODUCTION

In principle there is no true "divorce" from the Orthodox Mystery of Holy Marriage, but applying the concept of Oikonomia the Church may grant an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree under certain circumstances.

An Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree is normally sought when a second or third marriage is contemplated, but it may also be requested by those wishing to formalize their reconciliation with the Church following the breakdown of their marriage and subsequent civil divorce.

The Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree is required for any previously married individual seeking to contract a second or third ecclesiastical marriage at a parish within the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Not all Orthodox jurisdictions in this country provide an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree, however, but may simply permit second and third marriages if recommended by the spiritual father(s) of the individuals concerned. The Ecclesiastical Divorce process ensures that no impediment to remarriage exists, and provides documented evidence that an individual is free to engage in a subsequent marriage if he or she so desires.

The Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree may not be required for a divorced person to be reinstated to the sacramental life of the Church; this, however, is a decision that must be made by that person's spiritual father. Nevertheless, an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree is recommended, and should be desirable, since it assures the individual that there are no apparent impediments to full participation in the life of the Church.

An Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree is granted by the Metropolis Hierarch upon the recommendation of a Spiritual Tribunal. The procedures specified in these guidelines shall therefore be rigorously and exactly followed to ensure correct and timely processing of the Decree.

Moreover, the Ecclesiastical Divorce process is considered to be an extension of the Mystery of repentance, and thus all procedures and discussions with the individual involved should be conducted with dignity and pastoral sensitivity.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

I. Authority

1. All authority to grant an Ecclesiastical Divorce issues from the Metropolis Hierarch. The Hierarch will normally grant an Ecclesiastical Divorce in response to a recommendation from a Spiritual Tribunal appointed by him.

II. General

1. An Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition is submitted to the Metropolis Hierarch in which a Petitioner resides, regardless of the Metropolis or jurisdiction in which the party or parties were previously married.

III. Jurisdiction over Marriages Celebrated in Greece or Cyprus or Any Other Country

1. The Metropolis has no jurisdiction to dissolve marriages that were celebrated in Greece or Cyprus, or any other country, unless at least one of the spouses is a permanent resident of the United States.

IV. Relationship between an Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition and a Final Civil Divorce Decree

1. An Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition shall not be submitted until a final civil divorce decree has been issued.

V. Responsibility for Submitting the Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition

1. An Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition shall be submitted only by priests in parish ministry, specifically by the Proistamenos.

2. The Proistamenos is personally responsible for gathering all required documentation and for submitting a complete Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition package to the Metropolis for consideration by the Spiritual Tribunal.

3. The Priest shall view divorce as a pastoral opportunity to help the spiritual life of the Petitioner, as well as the Respondent, and shall therefore thoroughly examine every Petitioner and hear his/her confession in the Mystery of Repentance. The Priest must be satisfied that the Petitioner has examined his/her conscience and the reasons for the deterioration and dissolution

of the marriage, and that he/she sincerely desires to be restored to the sacramental life of the Church.

4. The Priest shall not submit an Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition unless he has counseled with the Petitioner and tried to contact the respondent spouse to determine if there is any possibility of reconciliation, in keeping with the counsel of Saint Paul in chapter seven of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. The Priest shall also explain that both the Petitioner and the Respondent will be invited to attend a hearing before the Spiritual Tribunal, although their attendance is not mandatory.

5. The reasons for submitting and granting an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree are specified in Archdiocesan Protocol 56 dated 12 February 1996 (Attachment A).

6. If there is a question about the status of an Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition, the Priest submitting the Petition shall contact the Metropolis on behalf of the Petitioner; the Petitioner shall be discouraged from personally calling the Metropolis Office.

VI. The Spiritual Tribunal as an Extension of the Mystery of Repentance

1. The Spiritual Tribunal is considered to be an extension of the Mystery of Confession. Its purpose is neither to justify nor to condemn anyone, but rather to facilitate the healing process and to effect reconciliation with the Body of Christ. The Priest shall counsel the Petitioner, and the Respondent where appropriate, that this process is a healing ministry rather than a legalistic formality.

VII. Procedure for Petitioning an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree

1. The petitioning spouse (the "petitioner") shall contact his/her parish Priest.

2. The Priest shall make every reasonable attempt to reconcile the spouses if at all possible.

3. Failing to effect a reconciliation, and after ascertaining that the petitioner has valid reason for filing a petition for an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree, the parish Priest shall submit the following documents to the Metropolis Hierarchy for the Spiritual Tribunal:

a. "Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition Data Sheet and Checklist" (see Attachment B).

(1) The purpose of the Divorce Data Sheet and Checklist is to provide the priest with a checklist to ensure that all required documentation is submitted to the Metropolis Office for processing, spiritual tribunal action, episcopal review, and issuance of the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce.

(2) The Divorce Data Sheet and Checklist shall be filled out completely by the Priest, including:

(a) Full street, city, and state addresses.

(b) Full Month, day, and year dates.

b. "Statement by the Priest for an Ecclesiastical Divorce" (see Attachment C for the format of this letter).

(1) This is not a form letter, or a "fill in the blank" form; it is a letter from the Proistamenos to the Metropolis Hierarch.

(2) This letter shall be prepared on parish stationery (letterhead).

(3) This letter must include the reason for which the Priest is recommending the Ecclesiastical Divorce; the only acceptable reasons are contained in Archdiocesan Protocol 56 dated 12 February 1996 (Attachment A).

Note

The only reasons that can be used are those ten that are specified in Protocol 56; no other reasons shall be used. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the return of the entire package to the priest with no action taken by the Metropolis.

(4) The Priest shall affix the parish seal to this letter.

c. "Petitioner's Formal Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition" (see Attachment D for the format of this letter).

(1) This is not a form letter, or a "fill in the blank" form; it is an original letter from the petitioner to the Spiritual Tribunal.

(2) This letter shall not be prepared on parish letterhead.

(3) The Petitioner shall explain why the marriage deteriorated in his/her own words.

(4) The Petitioner shall include all requested information (especially important are the birthplace, phone number and postal Zip Code for both the Petitioner and Respondent) in the format indicated on Attachment D).

d. The original Ecclesiastical Marriage Certificate

(1) Since the couple has obtained a civil divorce, their ecclesiastical marriage certificate is no longer necessary; if they wish, they may obtain a photocopy.

(a) Every effort must be made by the petitioner to locate and submit their Ecclesiastical Marriage Certificate.

(2) If these efforts are unsuccessful, and the original ecclesiastical marriage certificate has been lost, an official transcript shall be issued from the parish in which the marriage was celebrated.

(a) If an ecclesiastical transcript of marriage is submitted, the Priest shall attach a letter explaining what efforts were made to obtain the original Ecclesiastical Marriage Certificate, and why these failed.

e. The Decree of Dissolution of Marriage issued by the civil court.

(1) An original certified copy of the Decree is preferred.

(2) Since this document will be retained by the Metropolis Office, a photocopy is acceptable; the Priest, however, shall:

(a) Examine the original.

(b) Ensure that the original is a the Final Divorce Decree and not some other document

(c) Ensure the original is official (look for the judge's signature and/or a stamp with the Civil Court "date entered").

(d) Submit a letter on parish stationery stating that the photocopy is a true copy of the original Decree of Dissolution of Marriage issued by the Civil Court, and shall affix the parish seal to this letter.

f. A \$150 money order or cashier's check.

(1) A personal check will not be accepted.

4. The Priest shall inform the petitioner that the process can be expected to take no less than sixty (60) days, and that no plans for a subsequent wedding may be made until after the Decree is issued.

VIII. Requirement to Contact the Respondent

1. Once these five basic items are received at the Metropolis Office, the Metropolis Hierarchy will contact the respondent spouse by certified mail informing them that their former spouse has requested an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree and affording them an opportunity to attend the Spiritual Tribunal if they so desire.

2. An accurate mailing address for the respondent spouse is absolutely necessary; the Spiritual Tribunal cannot take place until an effort has been made to contact the respondent spouse.

3. In the event that the current mailing address of the respondent spouse is not obtainable, the petitioner is responsible for publishing the following notice in the personal advertisement section of a major newspaper in the city where the spouse was last known to be located:

"(Name of spouse) or anyone knowing his/her whereabouts, please contact (name of petitioning Priest, address, and phone number) about a personal matter."

- a. This advertisement should run for three days, and the entire newspaper page containing the advertisement for each of the three days shall be submitted to the Metropolis Hierarchy together with the priest's report of its results whether positive or negative.

IX. The Spiritual Tribunal

1. The Spiritual Tribunal shall convene on the date scheduled by the Metropolis Hierarchy to consider any petitions for Decrees of Ecclesiastical Divorce.
2. Pursuant to the conclusions of the Spiritual Tribunal, a Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce may be granted to the Petitioner.
3. If granted, the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce will be sent to the Priest submitting the petition.
4. After the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce has been issued, the respondent spouse will be notified of the fact in writing by the Metropolis Hierarchy, and informed that he/she may obtain their copy by submitting a request through his/her parish Priest

X. Delivery of the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce to the Petitioner

1. The Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce will be issued to the petitioning Priest who shall thereafter contact the petitioner to come and personally receive the original Decree from the Priest. This requirement to personally meet with the Priest affords an opportunity for the Priest to comfort and instruct the individual as well as to hear the individual's confession if necessary. For these reasons, the Priest shall not send the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce to any petitioner by mail.
2. The Priest shall advise the petitioner that the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce should be kept in a safe place since it CANNOT BE REPLACED. This original Decree will be required should the petitioner wish to remarry.

XI. Procedure for Requesting Respondent's Copy of the Ecclesiastical Divorce

1. After being notified that the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce has been issued, the respondent spouse (the "respondent") shall contact his/her parish Priest.
2. The parish Priest shall submit the following documents to the Metropolis Hierarchy to obtain the respondent's copy of the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce:
 - a. "Statement by the Priest for Respondent's Copy of an Ecclesiastical Divorce" (see Attachment E for the format of this letter), which is to be typed as an original letter on parish letterhead.
 - b. "Respondent's Request for Copy of an Ecclesiastical Divorce" (see Attachment F for the format of this letter), which is to be typed as an original letter but is not to be typed on parish letterhead.

c. A \$200 money order or cashier's check.

(1) A personal check is not acceptable.

XII. Delivery of the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce to the Respondent

1. The Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce will be issued to the petitioning Priest who shall thereafter call the respondent to come and personally receive the copy of the Decree from the Priest. This requirement affords an opportunity for the Priest to comfort and instruct the individual as well as to hear the individual's confession if necessary. For these reasons, the Priest shall not send the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce to any respondent by mail.

2. The Priest shall advise the respondent that the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce should be kept in a safe place since it CANNOT BE REPLACED. This original Decree will be required should the respondent wish to remarry.

XIII. Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition Fees

1. The parish Priest shall explain to the petitioner that there is a fee of \$150.00 to cover the administrative costs of processing the necessary documents. This must be submitted in the form of a cashier's check or money order.

2. The parish Priest shall explain to the respondent that there is a fee of \$200.00 to cover the administrative costs of processing the necessary documents. This must be submitted in the form of a cashier's check or money order.

a. These fees may be waived in the case of financial necessity; if so, the priest shall submit a letter to the Metropolis explaining the reasons and requesting a waiver.

XIV. Plans for a Church Marriage Subsequent to an Ecclesiastical Divorce

1. If a subsequent Church marriage is contemplated, no plans shall be made or confirmed until the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce is in hand. In cases where a wedding has already been wrongly scheduled great anxiety and unnecessary pressure may be created for the couple who hope to wed, as well as for the Priest and the members of the Spiritual Tribunal. Ideally any marriage, but especially a second or third marriage, should not be a rushed or urgent undertaking but rather it should be carefully considered and should be discussed with the spiritual father(s) of both parties.

2. Because of the many variable factors involved in the Ecclesiastical Divorce process, it is not possible to guarantee a date for issuance of the Decree. In any event it should be assumed that the process will not take less than sixty (60) days.

XV. Transcript of Certificate of Marriage

1. If a Transcript of Certificate of Marriage is required, the Priest shall provide the data recorded in the Parish Register of Marriages using the format shown on Attachment G.

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA
UNDER THE SPIRITUAL JURISDICTION OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

Protocol Number 56

February 12, 1996

The Reverend Clergy of the
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of
North and South America

Dearly Fellow-Clergymen,

In studying petitions submitted to the Archdiocese for divorce, it has been noted that causes, or reasons, for the divorce are not being sufficiently investigated and reported. All Priests of the Archdiocese are hereby directed, when stating the grounds for divorce, to do so with appropriate thoroughness and in the fullness of their priestly conscience, evaluating these matters with spiritual criteria as clergy, independent of the civil findings.

As you prepare each case, be sure to answer the following:

1. When did you learn that the couple seeking divorce was seriously estranged?
2. What specific steps were taken by you to alert them to the potential harm affecting themselves, their children, the Church, and society in general, that ensues with the dissolution of the family unit which is the cornerstone of all of the above.
3. How did you verify the veracity of the reasons given for the civil and the ecclesiastical divorce?

We ask that these items be attended with greater detail and diligence in the future.

In accordance with prevailing practice of the Church, prescribed by the very words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "...Anyone who divorces his wife, must give her a written notice of divorce. But now I tell you: if a man divorces his wife for any cause other than her unfaithfulness, then he is guilty of making her commit adultery if she marries again; and the man who marries her commits adultery also." (Matt. 5:31-32) An ecclesiastical divorce can be granted in principle only in the case of adultery, and only to the wronged party, not the unfaithful party. St. Paul the Apostle writes, "If a woman should separate from her husband for reason of adultery, let her remain single." (Corinth. 7:11) The same holds true for the husband who is guilty of adultery.

While the Church for reasons of "oikonomia" will tolerate a second marriage in certain cases, after an ecclesiastical divorce has been granted, there remain instances when a second marriage is never permitted, particularly when a marriage will lead to the derision and complete defilement of the sanctity of the Sacrament.

Ecclesiastical divorces are granted also in the instance where a civil divorce has been issued and a party desires to partake in the sacraments.

In cases of mixed marriage, when the non-Orthodox party is uncooperative with the Ecclesiastical Divorce process, the divorce is granted to the Orthodox party.

For your reminder – the instances in which our Church, with great sorrow and pain, may dissolve a legal canonical marriage are the following:

1. When an individual is forced into marriage by coercion or blackmail, or, when the marriage was entered into for ulterior and false reasons.
2. Adultery – in which case the divorce is granted to the innocent party.
3. When either party of a marriage is proven insane, or, suffers from a social (venereal) disease which he or she kept secret until after the wedding.
4. When either party of a marriage is proven to have conspired against the life of the other party.
5. When one of the spouses is lawfully convicted or imprisoned for more than seven years.
6. If one of the spouses should abandon the other for a period of more than three years without the latter's approval.
7. When one of the spouses should be absent from home without the other's approval, except in instances when the latter is assured that such absence is due to psycho-neurotic disturbances or illness.
8. When the husband, exploits his wife's honor and dignity, by forcing her to have illicit affairs with other men.
9. When marital obligations are not being fulfilled, or, when impotency is medically proven so that one of the parties is unable to fulfill these obligations, or, when such are precluded by a socially transmitted disease.
10. When one of the spouses due to alcoholism, or a gambling habit squanders his or her income, thereby creating hardship and burdens for the family.

Anticipating your full and conscientious cooperation in all of the above matters, I remain,

With paternal love and blessings,

(Signature on original)

+I A K O V O S
Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox
Church of North and South America

Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition Data Sheet and Checklist

1. Husband:

- a. Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
- b. Date of Birth: _____ c. Place of Birth: _____
- d. Citizenship: (e.g., U.S., Greek) _____ e. Religion: _____
- f. Petitioner Respondent (check one)
- g. For this husband, this was his _____ ecclesiastical marriage.

2. Wife:

- a. Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
- b. Date of Birth: _____ c. Place of Birth: _____
- d. Citizenship: (e.g., U.S., Greek) _____ e. Religion: _____
- f. Petitioner Respondent (check one)
- g. For this wife, this was her _____ ecclesiastical marriage.

3. Date of Marriage: _____ Place of Marriage: _____

4. Marriage performed by (e.g., Priest, Justice of the Peace): _____

5. Children:

<i>Name(s)</i>	<i>Age(s)</i>	<i>Name(s)</i>	<i>Age(s)</i>
a. _____		e. _____	
b. _____		f. _____	
c. _____		g. _____	
d. _____		h. _____	

6. Date of Civil Divorce: _____ Place of Civil Divorce: _____

7. How many years did the marriage last? _____

8. Reason(s) number(s) for granting Ecclesiastical Divorce: _____ (From Archdiocesan Protocol 56)

9. Are the following items attached?

	Yes	Not Required
a. Statement by the Priest for an Ecclesiastical Divorce.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Petitioners Formal Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. ORIGINAL Ecclesiastical Marriage Certificate (or transcript)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d. Decree of Dissolution of Marriage Issued by the Civil Court	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e. \$150.00 Money Order or Cashier's Check.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Entire newspaper page containing the advertisement for the Respondent.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DO NOT SUBMIT OR MAIL TO THE METROPOLIS OFFICE UNLESS ALL INFORMATION IS COMPLETE
*** OTHERWISE THIS PACKAGE WILL BE RETURNED WITH NO ACTION TAKEN BY THE METROPOLIS ***

This letter must be printed on PARISH LETTERHEAD

RECOMMENDATION BY THE PRIEST FOR AN ECCLESIASTICAL DIVORCE

NOTE: This is NOT a form letter; it MUST be written to reflect the specifics in each individual divorce case. The following letter is a sample for reference only.

(Date)

His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver
4550 East Alameda Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80246-1208

Your Eminence,

As the parish priest of *(name of parish)* Greek Orthodox Church in *(city and state)*, I respectfully verify that I attempted to facilitate a reconciliation and re-establishment of the marriage between the legally separated spouses *(husband's name)* and *(wife's name)*. My attempts were as follows: *(detailed explanation)*.

To the best of my ability, I have examined the grounds for the granting of the Decree of Ecclesiastical Divorce in this case. On the basis of this examination and the Petitioner's request for an ecclesiastical divorce, together with related information, I submit this Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition responsibly and with a deep sense of conscience.

Based on Archdiocesan Protocol 56 dated 12 February 1996, in which our Church with pain and sorrow is forced to dissolve a canonically valid marriage, I recommend that this divorce be granted according to reason number¹ *(reason number(s))* based on *(detailed explanation)*.

For the husband, this was his *(specify "first," "second," or "third")* Ecclesiastical Marriage, and for the wife, this was her *(specify "first," "second," or "third")* Ecclesiastical Marriage.

I also verify that the Petitioner, *(petitioner's name)*, is a member of this parish and of our Holy Archdiocese.

With Respect,

(Parish Seal)

(Signature of Parish Priest)

Parish Priest

(Date signed)

Date

Enclosures: Petitioner's Formal Ecclesiastical Divorce Petition
Original Church Marriage Certificate
Decree of Dissolution of Marriage Issued by the Civil Court
\$150.00 Money Order or Cashier's Check
Newspaper page with advertisement (if required)

¹Only the ten reasons that are specified in Archdiocese Protocol 56 can be used; no other reasons are appropriate.

*Note: This letter is **not** to be printed on parish stationery*

PETITIONER'S FORMAL ECCLESIASTICAL DIVORCE PETITION

*NOTE: This is **NOT** a form letter; it **MUST** be written by the petitioner, stating in detailed the reasons for making an application for an Ecclesiastical Divorce. The following letter is a sample for reference only.*

(Date)

His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver
4550 East Alameda Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80246-1208

Your Eminence,

I, the undersigned Petitioner, *(name of petitioner)* request that Your Eminence and the Venerable Spiritual Tribunal ecclesiastically dissolve the marriage between me and *(name of respondent spouse)* which took place at *(name of parish)* Greek Orthodox Church in *(city and state)*, on *(date of marriage)* by the Reverend *(name of Priest)*, and which has already been legally dissolved by Civil Court on *(date of civil divorce decree)*.

It is not possible for this marriage to continue because *(detailed explanation)*.

Awaiting the decision of the Spiritual Tribunal, I remain

With Deep Respect,

(Signature of Petitioner)

Petitioner

(Date signed)

Date

This letter must be printed on PARISH LETTERHEAD

RECOMMENDATION BY THE PRIEST FOR
RESPONDENT'S COPY OF AN ECCLESIASTICAL DIVORCE DECREE

(Date)

His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver
4550 East Alameda Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80246-1208

Your Eminence,

As the parish priest of *(name of parish)* Greek Orthodox Church in *(city and state)*, I have received a request from *(respondent's name)* for *his/her* Copy of the Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree granted to *his/her* former spouse *(petitioner's name)* on *(date of Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree)*.

I also verify that the Petitioner, *(petitioner's name)*, is a member of this parish and of our Holy Archdiocese.

With Respect,

(Parish Seal)

(Signature of Parish Priest)

Parish Priest

(Date signed)

Date

Enclosures: Respondent's Request for Copy of an Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree
\$200.00 Money Order or Cashier's Check

*Note: This letter is **not** to be printed on parish stationery*

RESPONDENT'S FORMAL REQUEST FOR A COPY OF AN
ECCLESIASTICAL DIVORCE PETITION

(Date)

His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver
4550 East Alameda Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80246-1208

Your Eminence,

I, the undersigned respondent, *(name of respondent)*, request that Your Eminence send me a copy of the Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree dated *(date of Ecclesiastical Divorce Decree)* issued by the Venerable Spiritual Tribunal which ecclesiastically dissolved the marriage between me and *(name of petitioner spouse)*.

With Deep Respect,

(Signature of Respondent)

Parish Priest

(Date signed)

Date