



HANDBOOK FOR SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

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Chancellor

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FOREWORD

by
Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk

Sacramental records are the footprints of our sacramental journey with Christ. They trace the powerful presence of God's grace in our lives as individuals and communities.

The Christian faithful have the right to expect accurate, well preserved sacramental records. Thus, all those who have responsibility for creating and maintaining sacramental records, especially the pastors of parishes, should exercise great care in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The *Handbook for Sacramental Records* is intended to help parish personnel satisfy this serious obligation. It is also designed to assure consistent record keeping throughout the Archdiocese. While it is not being promulgated as particular law, I do expect that its provisions will be observed. (Of course, the dictates of universal law always apply.)

The *Handbook* does not cover every complexity of sacramental record keeping, nor does it address liturgical issues. Sometimes the answer to a question will require looking in more than one place in the *Handbook*. Sometimes doubtful situations will require consultation with the Chancery.

I am grateful to those who prepared this *Handbook* and to those who will use it wisely in the service of God's people.

GENERAL NORMS

CAN. 535 - §1. EACH PARISH IS TO POSSESS A SET OF PARISH BOOKS INCLUDING BAPTISMAL, MARRIAGE AND DEATH REGISTERS AS WELL AS OTHER REGISTERS PRESCRIBED BY THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS OR THE DIOCESAN BISHOP; THE PASTOR IS TO SEE TO IT THAT THESE REGISTERS ARE ACCURATE.

- §2. IN THE BAPTISMAL REGISTER ARE ALSO TO BE NOTED THE PERSON'S CONFIRMATION AND WHATEVER AFFECTS THE CANONICAL STATUS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL BY REASON OF MARRIAGE, WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRESCRIPTION OF CAN. 1133, ADOPTION, RECEPTION OF SACRED ORDERS, PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE, AND CHANGE OF RITE; THESE NOTATIONS ARE ALWAYS TO BE NOTED ON A DOCUMENT WHICH CERTIFIES THE RECEPTION OF BAPTISM.

- §3. EACH PARISH IS TO POSSESS ITS OWN SEAL; DOCUMENTS WHICH ARE ISSUED TO CERTIFY THE CANONICAL STATUS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL AS WELL AS ALL ACTS WHICH CAN HAVE JURIDIC IMPORTANCE ARE TO BE SIGNED BY THE PASTOR OR HIS DELEGATE AND SEALED WITH THE PARISH SEAL.

- §5. THE OLDER PARISH BOOKS ARE ALSO TO BE CAREFULLY PRESERVED IN ACCORD WITH THE PRESCRIPTIONS OF PARTICULAR LAW.

CAN. 876 - IF IT IS NOT PREJUDICIAL TO ANYONE, TO PROVE THE CONFERRAL OF BAPTISM, THE DECLARATION OF A SINGLE WITNESS WHO IS ABOVE SUSPICION SUFFICES OR THE OATH OF THE BAPTIZED PERSON, IF THE BAPTISM WAS RECEIVED AT AN ADULT AGE.

CAN. 894 - THE PRESCRIPTIONS OF CAN. 876 ARE TO BE OBSERVED FOR THE PROOF OF THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION.

REGISTERS

- Required Records** Each parish is required to maintain records of baptisms, confirmations, receptions into full communion, marriages and deaths.¹ Maintaining records of first communions is optional.
- Parishes, Other Institutions** Generally only parishes are to maintain sacramental records and registers. Non-parochial institutions must obtain the express approval of the Archbishop to maintain sacramental records and registers.²
- Format** Special registers, which are available from private vendors, are required. A parish may retain separate Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death registers or combined registers, depending on the needs of the parish.
- Acid-Free Paper** The pages of the registers should be made of acid-free paper.

- Computer Reproductions*** Sacramental records may be duplicated on computers. But a complete record must be maintained in the registers, and the registers themselves are never to be destroyed or discarded. The registers are considered the only authentic copy of sacramental records.
- Repair of Old Registers*** As registers become worn, they are to be rebound by a professional binder. Only if a register is beyond repair may the records be transferred to a new register. The original register is to be retained in as safe a condition as possible.
- Safe Storage*** The sacramental registers are to be stored together in a locked place, preferably one which is fire-proof or fire-resistant. They may be removed only by authorized personnel and only for legitimate purposes. The registers may never be taken off the parish premises except for microfilming by the Archdiocese.
- Reporting Loss or Destruction*** The loss or destruction of any sacramental register should be reported immediately to the Chancery.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Nature of Information*** Care must be taken to protect people's privacy. Although sacramental registers contain information about public events and other facts readily known to any interested party, they also contain information which is very personal and confidential.
- Access to Registers*** The sacramental registers belong to the individual parish. They are maintained for the good of the Christian faithful, but they are private documents, not public ones. No one other than the pastor can claim a right to direct access to the registers.
- Authorized Personnel*** The pastor is always and ultimately responsible for the care and confidentiality of the sacramental registers themselves as well as any reproductions. He may designate other persons to make entries in the registers and to prepare certificates. These may be employees or volunteers, but their number should be very small. These designated persons must be known well to the pastor, must be capable of careful work and protecting confidentiality, and must be adequately trained to work with the registers. Their work with the registers is not to exceed their mandate from the pastor.
- Genealogical Research*** Sacramental registers should never be made available to genealogical researchers. The pastor or other regularly designated person may research information as requested and as time permits and make the information available on separate paper. A reasonable hourly rate may be charged for this service. Care must be taken not to disclose confidential information.

ENTRIES

- Type of Data** All and only that data required by canon law and otherwise necessary for the complete and accurate maintenance of sacramental records is to be entered in the sacramental registers.
- Timeliness** Entries should be made as soon possible after the event to be recorded.
- Place of Entry** As a general rule, the proper parish for the recording of sacraments and deaths is the parish in whose territory the sacraments or rites of Christian burial were celebrated. For exceptions, see the individual register sections below.
- Chronological Order** Entries should be made in chronological order. If the chronological order cannot be kept in some particular case, a small note should be made in the proper chronological location in the register cross-referencing the actual entry, e.g., "See JONES, page 37".
- Specific Columns** Each page of the register has several columns, and each column is titled. It is important to enter the data in the proper columns. At least the Baptism Register will have a column titled "Remarks", "Notations", or something similar. There are many references to this column throughout this handbook.³
- Index** Every entry is to be listed in the register's index, according to the person's last name.
- Excess Data** If there is inadequate space for all the data to be entered, the excess data may be entered elsewhere on the same page or even on a different page of the register. Clear cross-referencing is essential, e.g., "See SMITH, bottom of page".
- "Sacramental Records" File** Discursive material should not be written in sacramental registers. Such material or related documents (e.g., civil records, correspondence) should be retained securely in a file in the parish archives. However, discretion must be exercised in deciding which material to place in this file; not everything has to be retained. This file should be marked "Sacramental Records", and the words "See Sacramental Records File" should be printed in the "Notations" column of the sacramental register.
- Printing/Ink** Neat printing is preferred to script. Entries should be made in fade-proof/water-proof ink.
- Style for Names and Dates** The last name of the entry's subject should be printed in upper case, e.g., "JONES". Printing the name of the month is preferred to using the month's number (e.g., "Aug." rather than "8").

- Confidential Data** Data which is confidential and which is not to be included on certificates is to be so marked when entered in the register, e.g., “Confidential-do not include on certificate”. However, the provisions of Canon 535 §2 are to be observed.
- Minister of Sacrament** The actual minister of a sacrament does not need to sign the register, if the person making the entry personally witnessed the event or has available a document (e.g., Sacristy Record of Baptism) signed by the minister which certifies the conferral of the sacrament. In these cases the name of the minister is printed in the register.

CERTIFICATES

- Definition** A certificate is an official document certifying that a particular individual has received a sacrament. It is an exact duplicate of data already entered in a sacramental register.
- Church Use Only** Certificates of sacraments are intended primarily for internal church use, not for civil purposes.⁴
- Authorized Source of Records** Only the parish or other location holding the original sacramental record may issue a certificate.⁵ Only the actual register, rather than a microfilm reproduction, should be used in preparing certificates. A computer copy of the record may be used for a certificate, so long as there is assurance that the computer copy corresponds identically to the original register.
- Authorized Requests** Any member of the Christian faithful has a right to obtain a certificate of a sacrament he or she has received and which was recorded in a sacramental register. But only that person, the parents of a minor, someone with legal guardianship of another and a bona fide pastoral minister at another Catholic parish have this right. When the parents of a child are separated or divorced, both parents, regardless of legal custody, are presumed to have the right to a certificate.
- Procedure for Requests** Requests for certificates should be submitted in writing, although telephone requests from a Catholic parish or agency are acceptable. The written requests and a log of telephone requests should be kept on file for one year. No information from sacramental registers should be provided by telephone or other electronic means except to another Catholic parish or other Catholic agency. Even then care for the privacy of persons is to be exercised.
- Format** Certificates should have an official appearance and should be issued in a consistent format. Parishes may obtain blank certificates from commercial vendors or may have them printed locally. All certificates must bear the name and address of the parish.

Authentication Certificates must be typed, printed by computer or hand-printed in ink. They are to be signed by the pastor or pastoral administrator and impressed with the parish seal. Photostatic and facsimile copies of certificates are not considered authentic documents.

Required Data Certificates are to include all data contained in the sacramental register, except that which is marked confidential or which is extraneous to the person's canonical status. Data in the "Notations" column are to be included. If there is no data in the "Notations" column, the words "No Notations" should be printed on the certificate.

Missing Record Sometimes when a certificate is requested, the record in question cannot be found. If there is any possibility that the sacrament may have been conferred in some other parish, a sincere effort should be made to check the sacramental records of that other parish or parishes.⁶ If such a search is unwarranted or fails, Canon 876 can be applied. Only that data which can be vouched for with certainty should be entered in the register, even though this may leave an incomplete entry. The name of the witness, the date of his or her testimony and the words "Based on the testimony of" should be printed in the "Notations" column of the register.

CHANGES TO ENTRIES

Caution About Changes Once entered into a sacramental register, data is considered official and permanent. It may not be modified except under special conditions, as detailed below. Original data should never be scratched out, erased, "whited out" or otherwise destroyed or obliterated.

Style for Minor Changes Minor changes (e.g., correcting a misspelling) may be made directly to the original entry. Such changes are to be made by drawing a straight, simple line through the word, number or letter to be changed and printing the change immediately above or below it.

Style for Major Changes Major changes (e.g., to record an adoption after baptism) may require that a new entry be created. In these cases, the original entry is to be preserved without change; a new entry, with all the data from the original entry reproduced (except the relevant change or changes), is to be made in the same register as close to the original entry as possible; both entries, as well as listings in the index, are to be cross-referenced; "Do Not Issue Certificate from This Record" is to be printed carefully across the face of the original entry.

Authorization for Insubstantial Changes An insubstantial error (e.g., misspelling) may be corrected upon request of those persons who have a right to a certificate, as mentioned in the CERTIFICATES section above.

***Authorization
for Substantial
Changes***

More significant errors and other changes require authentic supporting documentation. Such documentation will ordinarily consist of an original, "raised seal" certificate from a civil or ecclesiastical office, court, agency, etc. The issuing agency, date of the certificate and any protocol number should be printed in the "Notations" column of the register. When an error involves data pertaining directly to the celebration of a sacrament or rite of Christian burial (e.g., date, identity of godparent) such that no external verifying documentation exists, the written or oral testimony of a reputable witness will suffice.

***Permitted
Changes***

Some *permitted* changes — correct name
— correct date
— correct spelling
— new legal name
— adoptive parent(s)

***Non-Permitted
Changes***

Some *non-permitted* changes — new godparents or sponsors⁷
— non-adopting stepparents
— customary name or nickname

***Data on
Certificates
After Changes***

Once specific data has been changed in the sacramental register, the original data is not transcribed onto certificates (e.g., the natural parent's name after adoption).

BAPTISM REGISTER

CAN. 877 - §1. THE PASTOR OF THE PLACE WHERE THE BAPTISM IS CELEBRATED MUST CAREFULLY AND WITHOUT DELAY RECORD IN THE BAPTISMAL BOOK THE NAMES OF THOSE BAPTIZED MAKING MENTION OF THE MINISTER, PARENTS, SPONSORS, WITNESSES IF ANY AND THE PLACE AND DATE OF THE CONFERRED BAPTISM, TOGETHER WITH AN INDICATION OF THE DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH.

CAN 878 - IF BAPTISM WAS ADMINISTERED NEITHER BY THE PASTOR NOR IN HIS PRESENCE, THE MINISTER OF BAPTISM, WHOEVER IT IS, MUST INFORM THE PASTOR OF THE PARISH IN WHICH THE BAPTISM WAS ADMINISTERED, SO THAT HE MAY RECORD IT IN ACCORD WITH CAN. 877, §1.

CAN. 296 - §2. (*Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*) IN THE BAPTISMAL REGISTER ARE ALSO TO BE NOTED THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BAPTIZED INTO A DETERMINED CHURCH *SUI IURIS*; THESE NOTATIONS ARE ALWAYS TO BE NOTED ON THE CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM.

ENTRIES

Source of Data Ordinarily, the data used to create a record of baptism (as required by Canon 877.1) originates on a "Sacristy Record", a small form from a pre-printed pad, sold by commercial vendors. The Sacristy Record is filled out either by someone in the parish office at the time the baptism is scheduled, by a member of the baptism preparation team during the catechetical program, or by the minister of baptism at the time of the actual baptism. Before the data is transferred to the Baptism Register, a parent, guardian or adult candidate should verify the data written on the Sacristy Record (usually at the time of baptism), and the minister must sign the Sacristy Record verifying that the sacrament was conferred. There should be a clear procedure in place for assuring that the data is transferred from the Sacristy Record to the Baptism Register as quickly as possible.

Recipients From More Than One Parish When persons from more than one parish are baptized or received into full communion with the Catholic Church at a single ceremony, it is preferred that the record for all the persons be retained at the parish where the rites are celebrated.

Emergency and Other Baptisms Outside Parish Church In the exceptionally rare situation when baptism is conferred solemnly (that is, with a priest or deacon celebrating the full rite of baptism) in a chapel, hospital or home, the minister is to see to it that the requisite data is transmitted in writing to the local pastor for recording in the Baptism Register. In the equally rare situation when emergency baptism is conferred (that is, with any person celebrating the bare matter and form of baptism when the recipient is in danger of death), the minister (or some other witness) is to notify the pastor of the recipient. No record of the emergency baptism is to be made in the Baptism Register; instead the pastor of the recipient should celebrate the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church (properly adapted in the case of an adult recipient) and create a record of that event, with a notation of the

date, place and minister of the emergency baptism in the “Notations” column. The same procedure should be followed when a person is baptized “privately” by a lay person, even though there is no danger of death.

- Conditional Baptism** When conditional baptism is conferred, “Baptized conditionally” is to be written in the “Notations” column. Otherwise the entry is the same as for any baptism.
- Reception Into Full Communion** When persons are received into full communion with the Catholic Church, after having been baptized previously in another Christian communion, an entry must be made in the Baptism Register as well as in the Confirmation Register. The data concerning the Rite of Reception should be entered in the spaces provided for baptism, and the data concerning the original baptism should be entered in the “Notations” column, especially the date and place. Special care must be taken to follow this procedure when young children are received into full communion along with their parents, even though there may be no ritual involving the children.
- Unmarried and Adopting Parents** It is important that the provisions of Canon 877 concerning unmarried parents, adopting parents and natural parents be followed. It is unjust to enter unauthorized names of parents in the Baptism Register. The expression “Pater ignotus” (Father unknown) is not to be used in the register or on any certificates.
- Adoption Before Baptism** When a child is adopted before baptism, ordinarily no reference to the adoption or the natural parents is to be made in the Baptism Register. Any such data which has been recorded is to be treated as confidential and is not to be included on any certificate.
- Number of Godparents** No more than two names may be entered in the “Godparents” or “Sponsors” column.
- Proxy Godparent** When a godparent or sponsor appoints a proxy to participate in the rite of baptism, both names should be entered in the register, with “Proxy” written after that person’s name.
- Christian Witness** When someone serves as a witness to baptism rather than as a godparent, in accord with Canon 874.2, the words “Christian Witness” should be placed after the witness’s name in the register.
- Ascription to Proper Church Sui Iuris** Ascription to a uniate church *sui iuris* (e.g., Byzantine, Maronite) is determined by the rite of the parents, not the rite of the minister or parish of baptism, unless the person is 14 years of age or older. Thus, when a Latin priest or deacon baptizes someone who by law is ascribed to an Eastern Catholic church, a notation should be made in the “Notations” column.⁸

*Registers
for
Ritual Use*

A register used as part of the Church's ritual (e.g., Book of the Elect) should be completely distinct from the regular sacramental registers. The data from the ritual register should be transferred to the Baptism and Confirmation Registers as soon as possible after the conferral of sacraments or the reception into full communion.

CHANGES TO ENTRIES

*Most Changes
Occur in Baptism
Registers*

The baptismal record is the primary sacramental record for Catholics. It serves as a log for all the significant, public developments in one's relationship with the Church. As a result, most changes to entries in the sacramental registers will be made in the Baptism Register.

*Changes to
Original
Data*

Some of these changes are actual modifications of the original data entered for baptism, for example, change of name or change of parent. Directions for making such changes can be found in the GENERAL NORMS section of this handbook.

*Additions to
"Notations"
Column*

Some of the changes are additions to the "Notations" column. For example, when a Catholic is confirmed, married or ordained, the churches where these sacraments are celebrated notify the church of baptism, so that the new sacraments can be noted in the Baptism Register.⁹ Also, when a marriage is declared null by an ecclesiastical tribunal, the tribunal will notify the church of baptism, so that a notation can be made in the person's baptismal record.

*Defection
from Church*

Occasionally, a parish will receive a notice from an individual or a church indicating that the person is no longer a Catholic and even asking that his or her name be removed from Catholic church records. While it is appropriate to remove the person's name from the parish membership roles, no changes are to be made to the sacramental records, except for a notation in the "Notations" column of the Baptism Register: "Formal defection from Catholic Church, [date]".¹⁰ Reunion with the Church should also be noted, if the parish of baptism is made aware of the reunion.

*Style for
Notations*

The notations mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs should be made neatly and succinctly in the "Notations" column. Names, dates, places and protocol numbers are usually the only information needed. These notations are not confidential and should ordinarily be included on certificates.

CONFIRMATION REGISTER

CAN. 894 - THE PRESCRIPTIONS OF CAN. 876 ARE TO BE OBSERVED FOR THE PROOF OF THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION.

CAN. 895 - THE NAMES OF THE CONFIRMED WITH MENTION OF THE MINISTER, THE PARENTS AND THE SPONSORS, THE PLACE AND THE DATE OF THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION ARE TO BE NOTED IN THE CONFIRMATION REGISTER IN THE DIOCESAN CURIA, OR, WHERE THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS OR THE DIOCESAN BISHOP HAS PRESCRIBED IT, IN A BOOK KEPT IN THE PARISH ARCHIVE; THE PASTOR MUST ADVISE THE PASTOR OF THE PLACE OF BAPTISM ABOUT THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION SO THAT NOTATION BE MADE IN THE BAPTISMAL REGISTER, IN ACCORD WITH THE NORM OF CAN. 535, §2.

CAN. 896 - IF THE PASTOR OF THE PLACE WERE NOT PRESENT, THE MINISTER EITHER PERSONALLY OR THROUGH ANOTHER IS TO INFORM HIM OF THE CONFIRMATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

ENTRIES

- Source of Data* When a large number of persons is to be confirmed, it is essential that one person be designated to collect the necessary information and see to it that it is communicated accurately to the parish or parishes of the recipients for proper recording in the Confirmation Register.
- Large Group of Recipients* When several persons are confirmed at the same ceremony by the same minister, the date of conferral and the name of the minister may be written only once in the register, so long as it is clear that the references apply to all the confirmed. If there is more than one minister at a single ceremony, the record should show clearly which ministers confirmed which recipients.
- Recipients From More Than One Parish* When confirmation is conferred upon persons from several parishes at one ceremony, two methods of recording are acceptable: 1) all records are made at the parish where confirmation was celebrated; or 2) records are made at the respective parishes of the recipients. When there is a large representation from more than one parish, method #2 is preferred. When the number of recipients from outside the parish where confirmation is celebrated is small, method #1 is preferred. Note that, when the pastor of some recipient(s) is not present for the conferral of confirmation, and when method #2 is used to record the fact of confirmation, the minister of the sacrament or the pastor where it was conferred are obliged to notify the absent pastor about the fact of confirmation.
- Baptismal Certificate* In order to satisfy the obligation of notifying the parish of baptism about the conferral of confirmation, a baptismal certificate for each candidate for confirmation should be obtained in advance of the celebration of confirmation.¹¹

Baptism Data It is recommended that the place and date of baptism be noted in the Confirmation Register. (This can be especially helpful when a person has difficulty locating a baptismal record later in life.)

Notification of Church of Baptism Notification of the church of baptism about the fact of confirmation should be made as soon as possible by the pastor of the place where the record of confirmation is retained. This notification is to include the name of the recipient and the date of baptism, as well as the place and date of confirmation. The names of the minister, parents and sponsor are not required. When a person previously baptized in another Christian communion is received into full communion and confirmed, the church of baptism is *not* notified.

MARRIAGE REGISTER

CAN. 1121 - §1. AFTER A MARRIAGE HAS BEEN CELEBRATED, THE PASTOR OF THE PLACE OF CELEBRATION OR THE PERSON WHO TAKES HIS PLACE, EVEN IF NEITHER HAS ASSISTED AT THE MARRIAGE, SHOULD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IN THE MARRIAGE REGISTER: THE NAMES OF THE SPOUSES, THE PERSON WHO ASSISTED AND THE WITNESSES, THE PLACE AND DATE OF THE MARRIAGE CELEBRATION; THESE NOTATIONS ARE TO BE MADE IN ACCORD WITH THE METHOD PRESCRIBED BY THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS OR THE DIOCESAN BISHOP.

CAN. 1122 - §1. THE CONTRACTED MARRIAGE IS ALSO TO BE NOTED IN THE BAPTISMAL REGISTER IN WHICH THE BAPTISM OF THE SPOUSES HAS BEEN INSCRIBED.

CAN. 1123 - WHENEVER A MARRIAGE IS CONVALIDATED IN THE EXTERNAL FORUM, IS DECLARED NULL OR IS LEGITIMATELY DISSOLVED OTHER THAN BY DEATH, THE PASTOR OF THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS CELEBRATED MUST BE INFORMED SO THAT A NOTATION MAY BE DULY MADE IN THE MARRIAGE AND BAPTISMAL REGISTERS.

ENTRIES

<i>Source of Data</i>	The priest or deacon who assists at a marriage is responsible for communicating the necessary information to the parish where the marriage was celebrated. The premarital file ordinarily contains all the necessary information. However, the assisting minister should be alert to any last minute changes or corrections to the information contained in the premarital file.
<i>Marriage Outside Parish Church</i>	When a marriage is celebrated in a location other than a parish church (e.g., a chapel), the proper parish for the marriage record is the one in which that location stands. The only exception is with a dispensation from the Catholic form: in that situation, the proper parish for the marriage record is the parish of the Catholic party or the parish where the couple prepared for marriage.
<i>Convalidation</i>	When a marriage is convalidated, the data concerning the convalidation are to be placed in the usual columns. The date, place and official of the original ceremony are to be noted in the "Notations" column.
<i>Sanation</i>	When a marriage is sanated, the data concerning the original ceremony are to be placed in the usual columns. The date, diocese and protocol number of the sanation are to be noted in the "Notations" column.
<i>Previous Civil Marriage</i>	The previous civil marriage of persons who are baptized or received into full communion with the Catholic Church is not to be recorded in the Marriage Register, unless the previous marriage was invalid and is now being convalidated or sanated. A notation concerning the marriage is to be placed in the person's baptismal record, in the "Notations" column.

***Notation of
Dispensations
and Annulments***

When a dispensation is granted prior to marriage, or an annulment is granted after marriage, the date, diocese and protocol number, along with the type of dispensation (e.g., “Dispensation from Disparity of Worship”) or the word “Annulment”, are to be noted in the “Notations” column. Any special recording directions contained in the dispensation or annulment document are to be followed.

***Notification
of Church of
Baptism***

When the marriage of a Catholic is celebrated, convalidated or sanated, the pastor of the parish where the record of marriage is retained must notify the church of baptism as soon as possible. This notification is to include the names of the spouses and the date and place of the wedding, convalidation or sanation; the names of the official and witnesses are not required. Commercial vendors sell marriage notification forms.

PREMARITAL FILES

Contents

Each parish is required to maintain a file of the papers collected during the period of marriage preparation. The file typically will include prenuptial forms, questionnaires, correspondence, notes and dispensation documents. The minister’s portion of the civil license is also retained in this file.

Location

Ordinarily, the premarital file for each couple should be retained by the parish where the marriage is recorded in the Marriage Register.

Filing

The file for each couple is to be kept in its own envelope or folder, clearly marked with the parties’ names and the date of the marriage. The files should be arranged in chronological order and kept together in a locked file cabinet or safe.

Retention

The premarital files are to be retained for sixty years, or until both parties have died. Expired files are to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of so that no one can gain access to them.

***Transmission
of File***

If a legitimate request for the original copy of the file is made by an ecclesiastical tribunal, or if the Chancellor has approved the surrender of the file to a civil authority, the file should be hand delivered and receipted or mailed by registered mail with a receipt. A photostatic copy of the original file, along with the receipt, should replace the original copy in the parish’s archive. If the original file is later returned, the photostatic copy should be destroyed.

DEATH REGISTER

CAN. 1182 - AFTER THE INTERMENT AN ENTRY IS TO BE MADE IN THE DEATH REGISTER IN ACCORD WITH THE NORM OF PARTICULAR LAW.

ENTRIES

Source of Data The data needed for the Death Register is ordinarily provided by the funeral director.

Cremation When the body has been cremated, no reference to the date or place of cremation is made in the Death Register. However, the fact of cremation should be noted as well as the date and place of the ashes' interment.

Notification of Church of Baptism No notice of death needs to be sent to the church of baptism.

ENDNOTES

1. Even when a priest serves as pastor of more than one parish, separate registers are to be maintained for each parish. For security and convenience, however, the registers may all be stored at one of the parishes.
2. If a chapel or pastoral center operates under the authority of the local pastor, its sacramental records should be kept in the parish registers rather than separately.
3. For the sake of convenience this column will be referred to as the “Notations” column throughout the handbook.
4. Since certain data is entered in the sacramental registers based purely on the word of someone else (e.g., the date of birth of a person being baptized), the certificate is simply repeating that data but not certifying it as true.
5. When a parish closes or merges, formal arrangements are made for the transfer and retention of its sacramental registers. Refer to the *Clerus Cincinnatiensis* for a listing of the locations where the sacramental registers of former *parishes* are retained. Contact the Chancery for other former *institutions* which maintained sacramental registers.
6. No central registry for the Archdiocese is available to assist in such a search. The Chancery can, however, publish a records search notice when the number of possible parishes is great.
7. The names of godparents or sponsors are not to be changed because they have died or because parents feel they are no longer suitable. In these situations, parents can ask someone else to serve in this role without making a change in the permanent record or on certificates.
8. Latin priests and deacons do not automatically have the faculty to baptize persons who by law are ascribed to an Eastern Catholic church. If it is determined that one or both of the parents are ascribed to an Eastern Catholic church, contact should be made with the Chancery before the celebration of baptism. Similar requirements apply to Orthodox Christians who are received into full communion with the Catholic Church.
9. Some parishes still give notice of First Communion, although this is no longer required. When a marriage is celebrated at a place other than the place where its record is maintained, both places should be noted in the “Notations” column.
10. Such situations may call for a letter to the individual explaining the parish’s action and inviting the person to return to full communion at any time in the future.
11. There are some additional reasons for obtaining a baptismal certificate: 1) the fact of valid baptism and Catholicity will be established; 2) any previous reception of valid confirmation, especially in the case of Catholics who were baptized in uniate Eastern churches, will be uncovered; 3) any discrepancies between name and parentage provided in the Baptismal Register and given at the time of confirmation will be discovered; 4) the identity of baptismal godparents can be ascertained, pursuant to Canon 893.2.

APPENDIX
(PAGES 18 & 19)

SAMPLE PAGES FROM “HOLY SPIRIT PARISH”
(All Data Are Fictitious)

- 1 Standard Entry
- 8 Excess Data (page 4)
- 3 Minor Change (page 6)
- 9 Major Change, New Entry (page 6)
- 12 Major Change, Termination of the Original Entry (page 6)
- 13 Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church (pages 8-9)
- 14 Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church, Proper Date
- 17 Reception into Full Communion, Notation of Previous Baptism and Marriage (page 9)
- 5 Reception into Full Communion, Proper Date
- 2 Unmarried Parents, No Father Noted (page 9)
- 6,19 Unmarried Parents, Father Attested and Noted (page 9)
- 16 Christian Witness (page 9)
- 7 Proxy Godparent (page 9)
- 15 Ascription to an Eastern Catholic Church (page 9)

43		Baptism			
No.	NAME OF PERSON BAPTIZED	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF BAPTISM	FATHER'S NAME MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME	
1	32 BROCKMAN RICHARD MARK	DAYTON		ROBERT J. BROCKMAN	
		MAR. 4, 1950	MAR. 11, 1950	ANGELA M. TORRINI	
2	33 MARTIN TERESA ANN	DAYTON			
		FEB. 21, 1950	MAR. 18, 1950	MARGARET S. MARTIN	
3	34 THOMPSON LINDA SUSAN SUZANNE	COLUMBUS, OHIO		MICHAEL A. THOMPSON	
		AUG. 8, 1943	APR. 13, 1950	GLORIA N. QUINN	
4	35 FASSOUD DANIEL LOUIS	DAYTON		EMIL FASSOUD (MARONITE)	
		MAR. 22, 1950	APR. 20, 1950	MARCIA L. DUPAGE	
5	36 LISTERMAN ANDREW ASTOR	OMAHA, NE.		QUENTIN A. LISTERMAN	
		JAN. 11, 1925	MAY 3, 1950	RACHEL F. ASTOR	
6	37 POKOWSKI LEONARD JAMES	DAYTON		KARL J. SCHAEFER	
		DEC. 7, 1949	MAY 10, 1950	NANCY POKOWSKI	
7	/	THOMPSON			
8		(CONTINUATION OF #34 ABOVE)			
	/				

45		Baptism			
No.	NAME OF PERSON BAPTIZED	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF BAPTISM	FATHER'S NAME MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME	
9	/	LONERGAN		CHARLES H. LONERGAN	
		TERESA ANN	FEB. 21, 1950	MARGARET S. MARTIN	
	/	X			

Register 43			
SPONSORS	PRIEST	DATE OF CONFIRMATION	Record of Marriage, Religious Profession or Sub-Diaconate. Remarks
PHILIP BROCKMAN AGNES LIPPERT	John J. Farrell	OCT. 23 1961 ST. HELEN DAYTON	MARRIED JANICE KENNEDY JUNE 14, 1973, ST. GABRIEL, GLENDALE
RALPH MARTIN RUTH MARTIN	John J. Farrell		DO NOT ISSUE CERTIFICATE FROM THIS RECORD. SEE LONERGAN, PG. 45
THOMAS QUINN ANDREA QUINN	John J. Farrell	MAY 3, 1955 HOLY SPIRIT	RITE OF BRINGING BAPTIZED CHILD; BAPTIZED AT HOME BY GRANDMOTHER; OCT. 1943; PER GRANDMOTHER'S TESTIMONY (CONT'D. BELOW)
MICHAEL GEORGE FRANCES DUPAGE (CHRISTIAN WITNESS)	JOHN J. FARRELL	NOV. 15, 1960 ST. PATRICK SYRACUSE NY	ASCRIBED AS MARONITE
STEVEN HULT MEYER	JOHN J. FARRELL	MAY 3, 1950 HOLY SPIRIT	RECEIVED INTO FULL COMM.; BAPTIZED SEPT. 30, 1938 LINCOLN STREET NAZARENE, OMAHA; MARRIED JANE CARL WELL, JUNE 17, 1948, OAKWOOD PRESBYTERIAN
ROGER ANTONELLI ARTHUR SPENCE (PROXY)	John J. Farrell		CONFIDENTIAL - DO NOT INCLUDE ON CERT. ; PARENTS UNMARRIED; FATHER ATTESTED TO PATER- NITY AND ASKED FOR NAME ON RECORD
ELIZ. POKOWSKI			(SEE SACRAMENTAL RECORDS FILE FOR AFFIDAVIT). MARRIED RANDY SMITH; SEPT. 28, 1963, O.L. MERCY, DAYTON; DECLARATION OF
			NULLITY, CIN., PROT. NO. 136-84
			MARRIED PETER ULRICH, FEB. 3, 1985, HYDE PARK UNIT. METH. (RECORDS AT NATIVITY, CIN.)

- 14 Testimony of a Witness Verifying the Reception of a Sacrament (pages 6, 8-9)
- 20 Reference to the Sacramental Records File (page 4)
- 18 Confidential Data Not to Be Included on Certificates (pages 5, 6)
- 11 Notation of Confirmation (pages 10, 12)
- 10 Notation of Marriage (pages 10, 14)
- 23 Notation of the Place of Marriage and the Place of Record, When Different (page 16-#9)
- 21 Notation of an Annulment (Declaration of Nullity) (pages 10, 14)
- 25 Notation of Defection from the Church/ Reunion (page 10)

Register 45			
SPONSORS	PRIEST	DATE OF CONFIRMATION	Record of Marriage, Religious Profession or Sub-Diaconate. Remarks
RALPH MARTIN RUTH MARTIN	JOHN J. FARRELL	APR. 19, 1989 ST. PAUL ROANOKE VA.	CF. MARTIN, PG. 43 ADOPTED AND NAME CHANGED NOV. 14, 1952, BUTLER CO., #328-5-52. JOINED BAPTIST CHURCH, 1972;
			REUNITED W. CATH. CH., MAR. 31, 1989; MARRIED RONALD DAVENPORT, JUNE 17, 1974, FIRST BAPTIST CH., COVINGTON, VA.; MARRIAGE CONVALIDATED, APR. 2, 1989, ST. PAUL, ROANOKE, VA.

- 24 Cross-referencing
- 22 Protocol Number