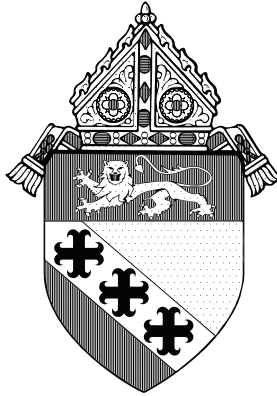




SACRAMENTAL RECORDS HANDBOOK

SECOND EDITION



SACRAMENTAL RECORDS HANDBOOK

Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina
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FOREWORD

by Bishop Robert Guglielmo

It is the policy of this diocese to identify, properly arrange, maintain, and safeguard records required to conduct its spiritual and temporal affairs. Each parish is obligated, under Canon Law, to have parochial registers of baptism, marriages, and deaths, and any other registers prescribed by the conferences of bishops, or the local bishop. It is the obligation of each pastor to see that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved (Canon 535), and it is the responsibility of the diocese, acting through the pastors of the various parishes, to supervise how these records are used, by whom, and for what purpose.

The publication of the Sacramental Records Handbook of the Diocese of Charleston is intended to help parish clergy and personnel satisfy the serious obligation of properly maintaining, recording, and preserving sacramental records. While it is not being promulgated as particular law, its provisions should be observed. Of course, the dictates of Canon Law as well as federal and state law always apply.

We are grateful to those who prepared this Handbook and those who were consulted to review and offer comments as it was being drafted. We are also grateful to the Archdiocese of Atlanta who allowed us to use their handbook which served as a prototype for the first edition of our handbook.

May this handbook provide practical guidance for parishes, and ensure that the faithful will receive well-preserved and accurate sacramental records of their spiritual lives.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Robert E. Guglielmo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo
Bishop of Charleston

REGISTERS IN GENERAL

Relevant Norms of Canon Law

CAN. 491

- §1. A diocesan bishop is to take care that the acts and documents of the archives of cathedral, collegiate, parochial, and other churches in his territory are also diligently preserved and that inventories or catalogs are made in duplicate, one of which is to be preserved in the archive of the church and the other in the diocesan archive.
- §2. A diocesan bishop is also to take care that there is an historical archive in the diocese and that documents having historical value are diligently protected and systematically ordered in it.
- §3. In order to inspect or remove the acts and documents mentioned in §§1 and 2, the norms established by the diocesan bishop are to be observed.

CAN. 535

- §1. Each parish is to have parochial registers; that is, those of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and others as prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop. The pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.
- §2. In the baptismal register are also to be noted confirmation and those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of marriage, without prejudice to the prescript of Can. 1133, of adoption, of the reception of sacred orders, of perpetual profession made in a religious institute, and of change of rite. These notations are always to be noted on a baptismal certificate.

- §3. Each parish is to have its own seal. Documents regarding the canonical status of the Christian faithful and all acts which can have juridic importance are to be signed by the pastor or his delegate and sealed with the parochial seal.
- §4. In each parish there is to be a storage area, or archive, in which the parochial registers are protected along with letters of bishops and other documents which are to be preserved for reason of necessity or advantage. The pastor is to take care that all of these things, which are to be inspected by the diocesan bishop or his delegate at the time of visitation or at some other opportune time, do not come into the hands of outsiders.
- §5. Older parochial registers are also to be carefully protected according to the prescripts of particular law.

CAN. 555

- §1. In addition to the faculties legitimately given to him by particular law, the vicar forane has the duty and right:
 - 3º. Of seeing to it that religious functions are celebrated according to the prescripts of the sacred liturgy, that the beauty and elegance of churches and sacred furnishings are maintained carefully, especially in eucharistic celebration and custody of the Most Blessed Sacrament, that the parochial registers are inscribed correctly and protected appropriately, that ecclesiastical goods are administered carefully, and finally that the rectory is cared for with proper diligence.
- §3. The vicar forane is to take care that the pastors of his district whom he knows to be gravely ill do not lack spiritual and material aids and that the funeral rites of those who have died are celebrated worthily. He is also to make provision so that, on the occasion of illness or death, the registers, documents, sacred furnishings, and other things which belong to the Church are not lost or removed.

Types of Records & Registers

Sacramental records are required by Canon Law to be kept according to a formula that varies with each kind of record. Parishes must keep the

following sacramental registers: baptismal, confirmation, marriage, and death (Canons 535-§1, 895). The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) also calls for three additional books: the Register of Catechumens, Book of the Elect, and a book for recording the names of baptized Christians who have been received into full communion in the Catholic Church. Parishes may also choose to maintain First Communion and sick call registers. The diocese is to maintain registers of secret marriages and ordinations (Canons 1133, 1053).

Ownership & Responsibility

Ownership

The ownership of the registers and the ownership of copyrights of all parish sacramental records and those of agencies or institutions within the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Charleston reside with the Bishop of Charleston, A Corporation Sole. Any decisions or issues related to publishing, microfilming, scanning, replacement, rebinding, repair, or disposal of registers is determined by the chancellor.

Required Registers

Each parish and mission is required to maintain paper registers in bound book format of baptisms, marriages, confirmations, and deaths. 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. Registers in paper format are considered the original, essential archival record of sacraments administered in parishes and must be handled, stored, protected, and maintained as such.

Establishments that Maintain Registers

Generally only parishes and missions maintain sacramental records and registers. Other establishments or institutions require explicit permission of the Bishop of Charleston to maintain separate sacramental registers.

Persons assigned as chaplains or clergy with sacramental responsibilities for Catholic or non-Catholic institutions, such as schools, campus ministries, hospitals, etc., that maintain no distinctly Catholic sacramental registers should ensure that the reception of the sacraments are

recorded in the sacramental registers of the territorial parish in which the institution is located. Such sacraments may not be recorded in the parish where the priest is assigned if it is not the territorial parish.

A pastor or other clergy who also have charge of a mission church are obliged to maintain for that church a separate set of sacramental registers. Since many missions eventually become parishes, the complete record of those particular parishioners can be transferred and then easily located and maintained in one place.

Responsibility

The creation, preservation, and use of sacramental records are the responsibility of the pastor or the person assigned to fulfill certain roles of the pastor (e.g., parish administrator, chaplain, etc.). The pastor may choose to delegate the day-to-day administration of sacramental records to another responsible person. That person should be an employee of the parish or mission, not a volunteer, and have knowledge of the parish history and parishioners.

Inspection and Certification of Registers

It is the responsibility of pastors to ensure that entries in registers are complete and accurate. Quality control initiatives that double-check entries on a regular basis will ensure accuracy. The pastor must review all entries in the register and certify their accuracy with his signature, even if he did not administer the sacrament.

At least once during each term of office, vicars forane (i.e., deans) must inspect all sacramental registers within his territory. They certify each register as inspected with their signature and date of inspection. The vicar forane is also to complete an inventory and inspection form provided by the chancellor, which they must be returned to the chancellor in a timely manner.

Inventories of Registers

Canon Law requires that parishes and missions periodically prepare inventories of sacramental registers and send copies of the inventories to the diocesan archives (Canon 491 §1). This task should be conducted before the assignment of a new pastor to a parish.

Non-Transferable

Under no pretext may anyone remove or take any parochial records, including sacramental registers, when leaving the parish or transferring to another assignment. Outside the legitimate access described in **Confidentiality & Access To Sacramental Records** below, neither the originals nor any copies of sacramental registers, nor the data they contain, whether on microfilm or otherwise, can ever be given, loaned, or sold to any person or institution without the written permission of the Bishop of Charleston. Such permission shall specify the conditions for use, duplication, and publication.

Transfer of Older or Distressed Registers to Diocesan Archives

The usual repository for sacramental registers is the parish or mission that created them. Since parishes and missions often do not have the appropriate facilities or the means to preserve their older books, the pastor should contact diocesan archives for a possible transfer of inactive registers and related sacramental files to the archives. All sacramental registers 100 years old and older are to be transferred to the diocesan archives for safekeeping. The chancellor may grant exemptions if a parish can demonstrate that it has proper resources to manage and maintain older registers. One hundred-plus year old registers that also include recent entries may remain in individual church parishes until they are no longer needed, as long as they are properly stored and handled as determined by the chancellor.

Records of Closed/Suppressed Parishes, Missions, or Catholic Institutions

In the event that a parish or mission is closed, diocesan archives staff will survey the registers and all other parochial records to determine appropriate retention and disposition. After noting the parish or missions closing after the last entry in the sacramental registers, the registers are to be transferred to the parish that assumed the territory of the closed parish or mission for future issue of sacramental certificates.

If a Catholic institution closes or combines with another institution in a manner that precludes the maintenance of specifically Catholic sacramental records, the registers must be discontinued and transferred to the territorial parish for future issue of sacramental certificates. All future sacraments performed at that location are to be then recorded in the registers of the territorial parish.

Confidentiality & Access to Sacramental Records

Care must be taken to protect the privacy of the faithful. Although sacramental registers contain information about public events and other facts readily known to any interested party, they also contain information that is very personal and confidential. The pastor is ultimately responsible for the confidentiality of the sacramental registers themselves. However, he may designate other persons to make entries in the registers and to prepare certificates, provided the designated persons are limited in number, should be employees of the parish, and capable of careful work and protecting confidentiality.

Sacramental records are of a mixed nature - private and public. They are private in that they were created in circumstances presumed to be private and confidential. They are public in that they will stand in civil law as valid and authentic evidence when an appropriate civil record does not exist. However, they are not "public" in the sense that they are open to immediate examination and inspection by anyone, such as the records found in a courthouse or public library.

Sacramental records are not only of value to the persons named in the registers. Approved research (whether historical, sociological, demographic, etc.) can be a valid reason for permitting access to parish records, provided that the following rules of access are utilized to protect the legitimate right of privacy of the persons named in the registers. It is the responsibility of the Diocese of Charleston, acting in and through the clergy of the various parishes, to supervise how records are used, by whom, and for what purposes.

The passage of time has a critical effect on the sensitivity of all records. As current events become historical events, the need for withholding access is reduced and may eventually disappear entirely. As a result, older records may be made more broadly available to researchers, whereas recent records shall be restricted from use.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Law for public access to civil vital records of birth (SC Code of Laws, Section 44-63-80), and with the exception of secret marriage and death registers, the Diocese of Charleston allows unrestricted public access to sacramental records 100 years or older in age. Secret marriage registers are permanently restricted from public access. No access restriction applies to death registers. Access does not imply authority to microfilm, scan, or copy the

records for distribution, which only the Bishop of Charleston can grant. Below are guidelines governing access to sacramental records, whether they are originals or copies.

Sacramental Records 100 Years or Older in Age

Access to death registers and other sacramental records 100 years or older in age is unrestricted, with the exception that physical access by researchers to the original registers should not be allowed at the parishes.

Sacramental Records 99 Years or Less in Age

With the exception of death registers, only authorized personnel may examine sacramental records 99 year or less in age. If a person is seeking his own record or has a legitimate reason to request family records (i.e., a parent of a minor child under 18 years of age, or a child seeking records of an infirmed or incapacitated parent with legal proof of guardianship or executor status), the pastor or appointed parish personnel can examine the registers and issue the required information. If a pastor feels that an exception is justified in a particular case, it is important that he first contact the chancellor.

If the inquiring person is not known to parish personnel, a written request with proof of identification (picture ID) is required. The request must be signed and include the name of parents, date of birth, and other pertinent information so that there is no doubt that the person requesting the information is entitled to receive it. Retain the request for what the pastor believes to be a reasonable time period.

Access Authorization to Government or Corporate Agencies

Requests made by government or corporate agencies (e.g., Social Security Administration, Immigration, insurance companies, etc.) should be accompanied by a signed release of the person whose record is requested (or a legally qualified guardian). Subpoenas and other court orders demanding access to sacramental records should be accepted. But no records should be released to the server of the subpoena before contacting and receiving a response from the chancellor.

Access Fees

Parishes should not charge any fees for providing information from

sacramental registers.

Preservation of Registers

Care must be taken in choosing supplies and storage to ensure the long term preservation of sacramental registers. The Office of Archives and Records Management is available to assist with these selections.

Format

Record copies of sacramental information are to be maintained in bound paper format. Register books are required by Canon Law. They are available from private vendors, or a bound volume from an office supply store may be suitable. A parish may maintain separate baptismal, confirmation, marriage, and death registers or combined registers, depending on the needs of the parish.

Acid Free Paper

Since registers are meant for permanent preservation of information, the bindings and paper must be of a quality that is considered permanent and durable. Therefore, the pages of registers must be made of acid-free paper. The best choices for paper are not only acid-free, but alkaline buffered as well.

Ink

Entries should be made in fade-proof, waterproof, acid-free permanent ink, which are qualities that can be found in many contemporary roller-ball pens. The ink must be black. The best types of ink are those made for artwork, such as India inks (usually found in cartridges). Felt-tip pens and pencils are not acceptable. Avoid fine point pens because they often do not leave a line strong enough to be clearly microfilmed or copied. A medium point pen is best. Never use white-out or try to scratch out or erase entries [See **General Additions & Changes to Entries** below for the proper way to make corrections].

Repair and Restoration of Registers

Only a professional bookbinder approved by the diocesan archivist may rebind registers. Rebinding that destroys any data or renders any part of

the records unusable is unacceptable. Only if a register is beyond repair may the records be transferred to a new register. In such a case, contact diocesan archives, where the original register can be retained safely after it is copied.

The adage “do no harm” applies regarding the repair of registers. Do not use tape of any kind (even when the brand states it is “archival”), labels, post-it notes, staples, paper clips, glue, or rubber bands on registers. Since the registers are archival by nature, only a trained conservator or professional bookbinder should attempt repair.

Safe Storage

The sacramental registers and related sacramental files are to be stored in a locked place, one that is fireproof or fire-resistant, such as a fireproof file cabinet or safe. Only authorized personnel may remove registers from storage, and only for legitimate purposes. The active registers may never be taken off the parish premises except for microfilming, scanning, and conservation without explicit permission of the chancellor. Related sacramental files likewise must be preserved. They are never to be glued, stapled, or paper clipped into the actual corresponding register.

Not only must sacramental registers be kept in a secure place, but they are to be stored and handled in an environment that ensures their preservation. Ideally that means a constant, cool temperature (i.e., about 65° F), a low relative humidity (i.e., about 35%), and no prolonged exposure to sunlight or artificial light.

While most parish offices cannot fulfill such precise requirements, steps can always be taken to avoid high temperatures, dampness, and bright light. Never store registers in attics, basements, outside sheds, or storage units without environmental controls.

Copying Sacramental Registers

Sacramental registers can be protected from loss due to fire, age, or heavy use by making duplicate copies in any one of several ways: transcripts, photocopies, microfilm, digital scans, etc. Under no circumstances, however, shall the original registers be discarded. Such a duplication project will be regarded as a means of preservation, not free access or publication. The Office of Archives and Records Management can assist with duplication.

Reporting Loss or Destruction

The loss or destruction of any sacramental register should be reported immediately to the chancellor.

Sacramental Records 100 Years or Older in Age

In order to relieve parish personnel of the responsibility, to preserve the originals in an appropriate archival environment, to protect from wear and neglect, to provide physical and intellectual control over the data, and to ensure that researchers receive proper supervision and equal treatment, 100-plus year old registers are to be transferred to diocesan archives. The chancellor may grant exceptions if a parish can demonstrate that it has the proper resources to manage and maintain the older registers.

Data Entries in Registers

On the first page of each register enter the name of the parish, city, date-span of the register, the sacrament(s), and book number if there is one (e.g., Baptism Book 3, or Baptism Book III).

Types of Data

Only the data required by Canon Law and otherwise necessary for the complete and accurate maintenance of sacramental records is to be entered into the sacramental registers.

Timeliness

Entries should be recorded immediately after the event.

Legibility

Entries must be plainly and legibly printed. Do not use cursive or elaborate scripts.

Chronological Order

Entries should be made in chronological order. If the chronological order cannot be kept for whatever reason, then a small note should be made

in the proper chronological location in the register, cross-referencing the actual entry.

Register 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.

Index

Every entry is to be listed in the register's index, according to the person's last name.

Style for Names & Dates

In registers, use the name as verified on the birth certificate, even if it includes a hyphenated last name. Although verification with a birth certificate should be standard practice, inability to provide a birth certificate or other document that verifies names, birth date, and place of birth should not be cause for denial or delay of baptism. The last name of the entry should be printed in upper case (e.g., "JONES"). When it comes to dates, print the name or abbreviation of the month rather than using the numeric (e.g., "August" instead of "8"). Use the YYYY format for the year (e.g., "2010")

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.") The provisions of Canon 535-§2 are to be observed.

Entry of Minister's Name, Delegation, & Authentication of Event

The name of the clergy who ministered the sacrament is to be clearly printed in the register entry. If a pastor delegates the ministry of a sacrament to other clergy (e.g., a deacon or a visiting priest), then that delegation must be noted in the register. The pastor must sign each entry as certification.

Celebrations Outside a Parish Church Building

When sacraments are administered in places other than a parish church building (e.g., campus chapel, a private home), it is important that the record not be “lost” and is retrievable for future reference:

Baptism. Baptism shall be recorded at the parish whose territory encompasses the location at which the sacrament was celebrated, unless the place of baptism is a Catholic institution which has received permission from the bishop to maintain its own sacramental records.

Marriage. When the wedding takes place according to canonical form, the sacramental records are entered and kept at the territorial parish within the boundaries of which the wedding was celebrated, unless the place of marriage is a Catholic institution which has received permission from the Bishop to maintain its own sacramental records. In the case of a wedding celebrated with a dispensation from canonical form, the marriage shall be recorded in two places: (1) in the parish of the Catholic party whose clergy prepared the couple for marriage and requested the dispensation (or at least gave permission for another priest to do so); and (2) in the chancery of the diocese which granted the dispensation from canonical form. The pre-nuptial files are to be kept in the first location. The clergy member or the pastor’s delegate who requested the dispensation is responsible for sending the usual notification of marriage to the parish of baptism of the Catholic party or parties. He is also responsible for notifying the chancery that granted the dispensation from canonical form if the marriage was not celebrated.

Death. The appropriate entry is to be made in the register of the territorial parish from which the person is buried, not necessarily in the register of his own parish church. However, the pastor of the deceased should be notified of the death and burial.

General Changes & Additions to Entries

Once entered into a sacramental register, data is considered official and permanent. It may not be modified, except under special conditions, as detailed below.

Making Corrections

One of the tests for the validity of a record as legal proof is whether it has been officially kept and whether there have been any alterations. The proper way to correct a factual error is to add a notation and not to erase or obliterate what someone claims is incorrect. The notation must be based on some written proof-of-error (the proof should be identified in the notation).

In case of a technical or incidental error (i.e., spelling, date out of sequence, etc.) that is obvious to the “person in charge,” a change in the original entry may be made without the need for the notation or proof. Permitted changes include correcting dates, names, and spellings. In cases of doubt, the chancellor shall be consulted.

Original data should never be scratched out, erased, “whited-out”, covered over, or otherwise destroyed or obliterated. All changes to a record must be visible and initialed by the pastor.

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 line through the word, number, or letter to be changed and printing the change immediately above or below the error. See example in **Appendix A**.

Style for Major Changes

Major changes (e.g., to record an adoption after baptism) may require creation of a new entry. 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(s)), is to be made in the same register. 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 immediately adjacent to or carefully across the face of the original entry, in a manner that does not obliterate or conceal 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 below.

Authorization for Substantial Changes

More significant errors and other changes require authentic supporting documentation. Such documentation will ordinarily consist of an original, embossed/sealed 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. Supporting documents are maintained in a sacramental records file.

Non-Permitted Changes

Some non-permitted changes include:

1. New godparents or sponsors – 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 the role without making a change in the permanent record or on certificates.
2. Non-adoptive stepparents.
3. Customary name or nickname.

Certificates

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 for internal church use, not for civil or legal purposes. 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 sacramental certificate is simply repeating that data but not certifying it as true.

Accuracy Required

As an authenticated (i.e., signed and sealed) transcript of the original record, every certificate must be accurate, legible (preferably typewritten), and complete, including all notations, except in cases of adoption [See the **Adoption & Baptism** section below].

Absence of Information

The absence of information to fill an item on a certificate shall be indicated by a line or the words “none” or “not given” rather than by leaving the space blank.

Authorized Source of Records

Only the parish or other authorized institutions holding original sacramental records may issue a certificate. Only the actual paper register, rather than a microfilm reproduction or a computer record, should be used in verifying information needed in preparing certificates.

Authorized Requests

Every recipient has the right to obtain a certificate of a sacrament he or she has received. Only that person, the parents of a minor, someone with legal guardianship of another, and a pastor at another Catholic parish have the right to request certificates. 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. No information from active 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. Retain the original request for a certificate for a time period that the pastor believes reasonable.

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 his delegate and impressed with the parish seal. Photocopies 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 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.

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 parents' names after adoption).

Missing Records

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, the inquirer should be encouraged to check the sacramental records of that other parish or parishes or consult the diocesan archives. If such a search is unwarranted or fails, Canons 876 and 1573 can be applied.

Only that data for which a witness can vouch with certainty should be entered in the register, even though doing so may leave an entry incomplete. The name of the witness(es), the date of testimony, and the words, "creation of a missing record based on the testimony of [witness(es) name(s)]" should be printed in the notations column of the register.

BAPTISMAL REGISTERS

Relevant Norms of Canon Law

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.

CAN. 535

- §1. Each parish is to have parochial registers; that is, those of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and others as prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop. The pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.
- §2. In the baptismal register are also to be noted confirmation and those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of marriage, without prejudice to the prescript of Can. 1133, of adoption, of the reception of sacred orders, of perpetual profession made in a religious institute, and of change of rite. These notations are always to be noted on a baptismal certificate.

CAN. 852

- §1. The prescripts of the canons on adult baptism are to be applied to all those who, no longer infants, have attained the use of reason [presumed at age seven (7)].

CAN. 869

- §2. Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community must not be baptized conditionally unless, after an examination of the matter and the form of the words used in the conferral of baptism and a consideration of the intention of the baptized adult and the minister of the baptism, a serious reason exists to doubt the validity of the baptism.

CAN. 870

An abandoned infant or a foundling is to be baptized unless after diligent investigation the baptism of the infant is established.

CAN. 873

There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.

CAN. 874

- §2. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.

CAN. 876

To prove the conferral of baptism, if prejudicial to no one, the declaration of one witness beyond all exception is sufficient or the oath of the one baptized if the person received baptism as an adult.

CAN. 877

- §1. The pastor of the place where the baptism is celebrated must carefully and without delay record in the baptismal register the names of the baptized, with mention made of the minister, parents, sponsors, witnesses, if any, the place and date of the conferral of the baptism, and the date and place of birth.
- §2. If it concerns a child born to an unmarried mother, the name of the mother must be inserted, if her maternity is established publicly or if she seeks it willingly in writing or before two witnesses. Moreover,

the name of the father must be inscribed if a public document or his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses proves his paternity; in other cases, the name of the baptized is inscribed with no mention of the name of the father or the parents.

CAN. 878

If the baptism was not administered by the pastor or in his presence, the minister of baptism, whoever it is, must inform the pastor of the parish in which it was administered of the conferral of the baptism, so that he records the baptism according to the norm of Can. 877- §1.

CAN. 1685

As soon as the sentence is executed, the judicial vicar must notify the local ordinary of the place in which the marriage was celebrated. The local ordinary must take care that the declaration of nullity of the marriage and any possible prohibitions are noted as soon as possible in the marriage and baptismal registers

Baptismal Entries

The baptismal register serves as the “master record” for a person’s membership or “incardination” in the Church. Therefore, notations concerning other sacraments received later in life are also recorded within.

Types of Data

For baptism celebrated under normal circumstances, the following information is to be entered in the baptismal register [See sample entry in **Appendix A**]:

1. The Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the parent(s)/ adoptive parent(s) or the legal name of the adult (always including maiden name of women)
2. The names of the parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name), or the names of adoptive parent(s) (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The date and place (city and state) of birth

4. The name(s) of the sponsor(s), godparent(s), or witness(es)
5. The date and place of the baptism
6. The name of the minister who performed the baptism

Source of Data

A government-issued birth certificate, or another document that would appear valid to a reasonable person, should be used to verify the baptized's name, date of birth, and place of birth. However, inability to provide a birth certificate or other verifying document should not be cause for denial or delay of baptism.

Outside Clergy or People

When a priest or deacon baptizes in a parish church to which he is not assigned, he is responsible for the filing of the necessary records. The baptism shall be recorded in the parish where the baptism took place.

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 rite is celebrated.

Godparents

No more than two names may be entered in the "Godparents" or "Sponsors" column. Canon 873 stipulates one and no more than two sponsors (one female and one male) of baptism. Canon 874-§2 allows a baptized person, who is not a member of the Catholic Church, to serve as "a Christian witness." That person should be noted in the register as a Christian witness rather than a godparent. Church law holds that someone who is baptized Eastern Orthodox is properly a godparent and not a Christian witness. 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. The names of godparents or sponsors are not to be changed later in the baptismal register because they have died or because parents feel they are no longer suitable. In these situations, parents can ask someone else to serve in the role without making a change in the permanent record or on certificates.

Illegitimacy and Children of Unknown Parents

It is important that the provisions of Canon 877 concerning unmarried parents be followed. It is unjust to enter unauthorized names of parents in the baptismal register.

If a child is born of an unmarried mother, the name of the mother is to be inserted in the baptismal register. Likewise, the name of the father shall be inserted in the register if his paternity has been proved either by some public document or by his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses. If these conditions are not met, the field or column for the child's unknown father or mother should be filled by a line or the words "not given" rather than leaving the space blank. It is not permitted to make an annotation that states "Illegitimate."

For children whose parentage cannot be known (Canon 870) or is unknown (Canon 877-§2), the following information is to be entered in the baptismal register:

1. The Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the guardian(s)
2. The date and place (city and state) of birth, if known, or of being found or placed under guardianship
3. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) selected by the guardian(s)
4. The date and place of the baptism
5. The name of the minister who performed the baptism

Ascription to Proper Church Sui iuris

If the baptized is less than 14 years of age, ascription to an Eastern Catholic Church (e.g., Melkite-Greek, Maronite, etc.) is determined by the rite of the father, not by the rite of the minister or parish of baptism. At 14 years of age or older, the baptized may choose his/her particular Catholic Church. 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 of the register [See sample entry in **Appendix A**].

Baptismal Certificates

The issuance of a baptismal certificate should reflect what is recorded in

the baptismal register. Its purpose is to prove the fact of baptism and the reception of any subsequent sacrament or Church action that affects that person's status in the Church. Once specific data has been changed in the sacramental register, the original data is not transcribed onto certificates (e.g., the natural parents' names after adoption). See the **Registers in General** section for more information regarding certificates.

Changes & Additions to Baptismal Entries

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 are to be made in the baptismal register.

Changes to Original Data

Some changes are actual modifications of the original data entered for baptism. For example, change of name or change of parent. Baptismal records can be recognized as legal documents so it is not up to pastors or staff to alter them to suit a person's preference later in life. Directions for making such changes can be found in the **Registers in General** section above.

Notifications Entered in Notations Column

Changes are often additions to the notations column. For example, when a Catholic is confirmed, married, or ordained, the churches where the sacraments are celebrated notify the church of baptism so the new sacraments can be noted in the baptismal register [See samples of entries in **Appendix A**]. Also, when a marriage is declared invalid or when an individual is returned to the lay state, the tribunal will notify the church of baptism so that a notation can be made in the person's baptismal record.

Types of notification include confirmation, marriage(s) (including convalidations), reception of Holy Orders, perpetual profession in religious institute, and change of rite. Notations of annulment (and prohibitions on future marriages), laicization, and dispensation from vows shall also be entered when requested officially by the appropriate authorities. Notification documents should include a return receipt to verify notations have been recorded.

Defection or Withdrawal from the Catholic Church

A parish occasionally will receive a notification from an individual or a church indicating that the person is no longer a Catholic and even asking that her/his name be removed from Catholic Church records. While it may be appropriate to remove the person's name from parish membership rolls, no changes are to be made to the sacramental records.

Extraordinary Types of Baptism

Emergency Baptism

When a baptism is conferred in an emergency situation, ceremonies may be supplied at a later date. The baptism, if it is a Catholic baptism, is recorded properly in the territorial parish where the emergency occurred. If the ceremonies are supplied at a later date [cf. 1973 Rite of Baptism for Children No.31.3], a notation should be made in the margin indicating the date and place the ceremonies were supplied.

Conditional Baptism

When conditional baptism is conferred, "Baptized conditionally" is to be written in the notations column [see sample in **Appendix A**]. Otherwise the entry is the same as for any other baptism.

By virtue of Canon 869-§2, baptisms in other Christian faiths are presumed valid until the contrary is demonstrated [Consult the chancellor with any question as to whether or not a faith community is Christian]. Therefore, only after careful investigation and with a positive doubt remaining as to the fact of a baptism or its valid celebration, a person is conditionally baptized. This conditional baptism is done privately with only the essential participants and a simple, discrete ceremony. If the original attempt at baptism was celebrated in a Catholic Church, then the conditional baptism should also be noted in the margin of the entry that recorded the original baptism.

Adoption & Baptism

On October 20, 2000, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued norms for the purpose of assisting those with the responsibility

of recording the baptism of children who had been adopted or who later are adopted (Can. 877-§3).

Baptism before Adoption

For children baptized before adoption, the following information shall be added in the original baptismal register entry after the adoption is finalized:

1. Parentheses () shall be placed around the names of the natural parents
2. The name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The child's former surname shall also be parenthesized () and the new surname added
4. A notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.

A new entry should be made, cross-referenced to the old entry, with the following information:

1. The new, legal, Christian name of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s)
2. The names of the adoptive parent(s) (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The date and place of birth (city and state)
4. The date and place of the baptism
5. The name of the minister who performed the baptism

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals should give the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of birth, the date and place of baptism, and the name of clergy who administered the sacrament. The name(s) of the natural parents and the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate. The certificate is issued from the record created after the adoption. No certificate ever should be issued from the record created before adoption.

Baptism after Adoption

Baptism shall be postponed until after the child has been placed with the adopting parent(s), except in extraordinary circumstances, such as a serious threat of imminent death. Such postponement should be made with the understanding that it would be for a relatively short time only.

For children baptized after adoption, no reference to the adoption or the natural parents is to be made in the baptismal register. Any such data which has been recorded is to be treated as confidential and is not to be included on any certificate. Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

The following information shall be entered in the register:

1. The Christian name(s) of the child
2. The name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The date and place of birth (city and state)
4. The names of the sponsor(s)
5. The place and date of the baptism
6. The name of the minister who performed the baptism

Same Sex Couples Presenting an Adopted Child for Baptism

For instances in which a same sex couple present an adopted child for baptism, the parish should follow the above norms. Only the parent name(s) listed on the child's post-adoption, amended birth certificate shall be entered into the register. If both adoptive parents are listed on the birth certificate, the entry will only indicate the word "parent," rather than "mother" or "father."

Surgical Gender Change

The Vatican Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith holds that no changes should be made to a baptismal record to reflect the "new" sex of an

individual who has undergone what is commonly referred to as a sex change operation. An October 15, 2002, letter from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops further clarifies:

“Therefore, even in cases of such [sex reassignment] operations the records are not to be altered. Specifically, the altered condition of the faithful under civil law does not change one’s canonical condition which is male or female as determined at the moment of birth. However, should a situation arise in which some sort of notation is determined to be necessary, it is possible, in the margin of the entry for baptism, to note the altered status of the person under civil law. In such cases, the date and relevant protocol number of the civil juridic act or document should be included along with, where possible, a copy of the document itself at that page of the baptismal registry.”

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Definition of Terms

RCIA

Outside of emergency situations, non-baptized adults and children over seven years of age seeking communion with the Catholic Church are required by Canon Law to participate in a process of formation governed by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). RCIA culminates in the celebration of all three sacraments of initiation – baptism, confirmation, and first reception of the Eucharist – in the same ceremony. Information concerning those who receive the sacraments of initiation shall be recorded in the baptismal and confirmation registers. Recording their information in a First Communion register is optional.

Catechumens

A catechumen is a person not yet baptized who has celebrated the “Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens” as part of the RCIA. The name of a catechumen, along with the names of the sponsor, officiating minister, and date and place of the celebration, is entered into a special register of catechumens at the parish in which the rite was celebrated. Note that already-baptized candidates for full communion and confirmation technically are not catechumens and that their names are not placed in the catechumenal register.

Elect

An “elect” person is a catechumen who has celebrated the “Rite of Election or Enrollment of names” as part of the RCIA, and so has been chosen by the Church to receive the sacraments of initiation. The name

of an elect catechumen, along with the names of the sponsor, officiating minister, and date and place of the celebration, is entered into a special “Book of the Elect” at the parish in which the rite was celebrated. Note that already-baptized candidates for full communion and confirmation technically are not catechumens and do not become members of the Elect, and that these persons’ names are not placed in the “Book of the Elect.”

Sacraments of Initiation Entries

Once the elect receive the Sacraments of Initiation, their names shall be recorded in the baptismal register and confirmation register (First Communion register optional) of the parish in which the sacraments were celebrated. Note that, since 1983, confirmation is ordinarily administered at the time of the profession of faith. The “sponsor” for a person joining the Church typically serves also as the sponsor for confirmation.

For the baptism of the elect, the following information is to be entered in the baptismal register [see sample in **Appendix A**]:

1. The given or Christian name(s) of the person (use the maiden name of a woman).
2. The names of the parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The date and place of birth (city and state)
4. The name(s) of the sponsor(s)
5. The date and place of the baptism (including city and state)
6. The name of the minister who performed the baptism
7. Marginal notation of reception of Eucharist and confirmation and marital status (either current valid marriage or the convalidation of the current civil marriage). Any declaration of invalidity (including where granted and protocol number) should also be noted.

For the confirmation of the elect, the following information is to be entered in the confirmation register:

1. The legal and Christian names of the person (use the maiden name of a woman)

2. The names of the parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The date and place of baptism (including city and state)
4. The name of the sponsor
5. The place and date of the confirmation
6. The name of the minister who performed the confirmation

BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS RECEIVED INTO FULL COMMUNION

Because those received into full communion were not baptized in the Catholic Church, a register must be established as their permanent record in the Church, equivalent to the baptismal register for those baptized Catholic (RCIA, 486).

The rite states that the book for recording the names of baptized Christians who have been received into full communion in the Catholic Church is to be a special book, that is, one different from other registers. When such a book is lacking, however, the intent of the law would be satisfied if the specified information were to be recorded in a designated part of the baptismal register.

Register Entries

This register should have the following information:

1. The given or Christian name(s) of the person (including maiden)
2. The names of the parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The date and place of birth (city and state)
4. The name(s) of the sponsor(s)
5. The date and place ceremonies were supplied to effect formal reception into the Church
6. The name of the minister who supplied the ceremonies
7. In the notations column enter data concerning the original baptism, especially the date and place (church, city, and state); any data on the reception of First Communion, confirmation; marital status

(either current valid marriage or the convalidation of the current marriage); and any declaration of invalidity (including where granted and protocol number).

If the parish chooses not to maintain a separate register for the newly professed, then the same information must be entered in the baptismal register of the parish in which the person is formally received [See sample in **Appendix A**].

COMMUNION REGISTERS (OPTIONAL)

First Communion Entries

Types of Data

Some parishes still give notice of First Communion, although this is no longer required. When First Communions are performed in a parish where registers are maintained, the following information is to be entered into the Communion register:

1. The legal and Christian names of the child
2. The parents named on the baptismal certificate
3. The date, church, and place of baptism
4. The church and date of the First Communion
5. The name of the main celebrant of the Mass.

First Communion records are not required to be retained or reported. They may be shown on the baptismal record. Because they are a non-canonical record, First Communion records cannot be required for the administration of other sacraments, including marriage.

CONFIRMATION REGISTERS

Relevant Norms of Canon Law

CAN. 894

To prove the conferral of confirmation the prescripts of Can. 876 are to be observed.

CAN. 895

The names of those confirmed with mention made of the minister, the parents and sponsors, and the place and date of the conferral of confirmation are to be recorded in the confirmation register of the diocesan curia or, where the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a register kept in the parish archives. The pastor must inform the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of confirmation so that notation is made in the baptismal register according to the norm of Can. 535-§2.

CAN. 896

If the pastor of the place was not present, the minister either personally or through another is to inform him as soon as possible of the conferral of confirmation.

Confirmation Entries

Regarding Can. 895, the Bishop of Charleston requires parishes to maintain confirmation registers.

Types of Data

The following information is to be entered in the confirmation register of the parish in which the sacrament was celebrated, not the parish in which the confirmandi were prepared:

1. The legal and Christian names of the child or adult (use maiden name of a woman)
2. The names of the parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The date and church (including city and state) of baptism
4. The name of the sponsor selected by the person
5. The place and date of the confirmation
6. The name of the minister who performed the confirmation

Notification of Church of Baptism

Notification of the church of baptism about the fact of confirmation should be made as soon as possible. This notification is to include the name of the recipient and the date of baptism, as well as the church (including city and state) 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. In the case of a baptized person who was brought “into full communion in the Church,” the place of reception (“Profession of Faith”) is to be notified instead of the place of baptism. Notification documents should include a return receipt document to verify notations have been recorded.

Emergency Confirmation

As in the case of emergency baptism, the record of an emergency confirmation is to be kept in the territorial parish in which the confirmation occurred.

Large Group of Recipients

When several people 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 people from several parishes at one ceremony, all records are made at the parish where confirmation was celebrated with notification sent to the parish of baptism.

Requirement for 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.

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 Eastern Catholic 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

Baptismal Data Entry

It is recommended that the church (including city and state) and date of baptism be noted in the confirmation register, which can be especially helpful when a person has difficulty locating a baptismal record later in life.

MARRIAGE REGISTERS

Relevant Norms of Canon Law

CAN. 1081

The pastor or the priest or deacon mentioned in Can. 1079-§2 is to notify the local ordinary immediately about a dispensation granted for the external forum. It is also to be noted in the marriage register.

CAN. 1121

§1. After a marriage has been celebrated, the pastor of the place of the celebration or the person who takes his place, even if neither assisted at the marriage, is to note as soon as possible in the marriage register the names of the spouses, the person who assisted, and the witnesses, and the place and date of the celebration of the marriage according to the method prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop.

CAN. 1122

§1. The contracted marriage is to be noted also in the baptismal registers in which the baptism of the spouses has been recorded.

CAN. 1123

Whenever a marriage is either convalidated in the external forum, declared null, or legitimately dissolved other than by death, the pastor of the place of celebration of the marriage must be informed so that a notation is properly made in the marriage and baptismal registers.

CAN. 1685

As soon as the sentence is executed, the judicial vicar must notify the local ordinary of the place in which the marriage was celebrated. The local ordinary must take care that the declaration of the nullity of the marriage and any possible prohibitions are noted as soon as possible in the marriage and baptismal registers.

Marriage Entries

Types of Data

All marriages are to be entered in the marriage register. For weddings celebrated with recognition by the Catholic Church, the following information is to be entered into the marriage register:

1. The legal names of the groom
2. The names of the groom's parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
3. The legal names of the bride (always use the maiden name)
4. The names of the bride's parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
5. The date and church (including city and state) of baptism of each party
6. The date and place (church and/or city and state) of the actual wedding celebration
7. The names of the witnesses
8. The name of the priest or deacon asking for and receiving the couple's vows
9. Notation of any permissions, dispensations, and delegations obtained for the valid celebration of the wedding (including protocol number).

The information in the prenuptial file is the source for the marriage register. The marginal notation column is for the purpose of noting any permission or dispensation and other significant factors (e.g., delegation for the minister or sanation).

Marriage Outside the Parish Church

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 territorial church in which that location stands. The only exception is with a dispensation from canonical form. In that situation, the proper parish for the marriage record is the parish of the Catholic party.

Validation of a Previously Civil Marriage (Convalidation)

When a previously civil marriage is validated, the data concerning the validation 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.

Sanation

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.

Marriages of persons who are baptized or received into full communion in the Catholic Church are not to be recorded in the marriage register, unless the marriage now is being validated, 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 Marriages Declared Invalid

When a dispensation is granted prior to marriage, or when a declaration of nullity or decree of nullity (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 words "Marriage declared invalid" are to be noted in the notations column. Also to be included are any permission received from impediments, the delegation given to assist at marriage, and any restrictions on future marriages. Any special recording directions contained in the dispensation or decree of invalidity are to be followed.

Whenever a rescript is involved (meaning a legally binding command or decision entered on the court record), the name of the diocese, congregation, or tribunal, etc., which issued the rescript should be noted, together with the date and the protocol number if one is provided. For

dispensations from canonical form, see Canon 1127.

Notification of Church of Baptism

When the marriage of a Catholic is celebrated, 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. The names of the official and witnesses are not required.

Premarital Files

Contents

Each parish and mission is required to maintain a file of the papers and documents collected during the period of marriage preparation. The file typically will include prenuptial forms, questionnaires, correspondence, sacramental notifications, relevant notes, dispensation documents, and affidavits. A copy of the civil license is also retained in the file.

Location

Ordinarily, the premarital file for each couple should be retained by the parish or mission where the marriage is recorded in the marriage register.

Filing & Retention

The file for each couple is to be kept in its own acid-free envelope or folder, clearly marked with the parties' names and the date of the marriage. The files should be arranged in alphabetical order and kept together once they become inactive. Noncurrent pre-marital files can be weeded down to essential documents and transferred to the parish archives. Essential documents include Diocese of Charleston Prenuptial Information pages 1, 3, 3a, 4, 4a, and a copy of the civil license. Retain prenuptial files in a secure location for sixty (60) years.

Transmission of File

If a legitimate request for the copy of the file is made by an ecclesiastical tribunal, a photocopy/scan of the file should be made, explicitly marked as a copy, and sent to the requesting party. The original file should

remain in the parish's archives. If the photocopy of the original file is later returned, then it should be destroyed.

SECRET MARRIAGE REGISTERS

Relevant Norms of Canon Law

CAN. 1133

A marriage celebrated secretly is to be noted only in a special register to be kept in the secret archive of the curia.

Secret Marriage Entries

The bishop's delegate is to enter all secret marriages into the secret marriage register, which is to be kept in diocesan archives. Register entries for secret marriages shall be the same as for a public marriage, with the exception that no notifications of the marriage are to be made. The Bishop of Charleston shall counter-sign all entries.

ORDINATION REGISTERS

Relevant Norms of Canon Law

CAN. 1053

- §1. After an ordination has taken place, the names of those ordained and of the ordaining minister and the place and date of ordination are to be noted in a special register to be kept carefully in the curia of the place of ordination; all the documents of individual ordination are to be preserved carefully.

Ordination Entries

The bishop's delegate shall enter all ordinations (diaconate, presbyteral, and episcopal) within the Diocese of Charleston in the diocesan ordination register, which is to be kept in diocesan archives. The entries shall be counter-signed by the Bishop of Charleston.

Types of Data

The following information is to be entered into the ordination register:

1. The legal and Christian names of the person ordained
2. The date and church (including city and state) of baptism
3. The date and church (including city) of ordination
4. The name of the ordaining minister
5. The type of ordination

Notification of Church of Baptism

The bishop's delegate must notify the church of baptism as soon as possible. This notification is to include the name of the ordained, the date and place of the ordination, and the primary ordaining minister.

DEATH REGISTERS

Relevant Norms of Canon Law

CAN. 1182

When the burial has been completed, a record is to be made in the register of deaths according to the norm of particular law.

Death Entries

All Catholic funeral liturgies shall be entered in the death records of the parish from which the person was buried.

Types of Data

Death registers are required to be kept by all parishes. All Catholic funeral liturgies, even if celebrated outside the church building, should be entered in the parish/mission death register. The following information is to be entered:

1. The legal and Christian names of the person
2. The residential address of the deceased person
3. The place and date of death
4. The place and date of funeral rites
5. The place of burial
6. Cremation should be noted in the notations column. Additional information may include the name of the funeral home, next of kin, the cause of death if known (should only be taken from an official

certificate of death), vigil place, celebrant of rites.

Source of Data

The data needed for the death register is ordinarily provided by the funeral director.

Notification to Church of Baptism

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

Burial Permits

Burial permit books do not satisfy the conditions of a permanent death register.

Cemetery Records

For those parishes with cemeteries, civil law requires additional records to be maintained. Contact the diocesan Department of Cemeteries for advice. Basic information for burial records should include:

1. Burial date (may be the same as the funeral date). Note whether interred, entombed, or cremated.
2. The cemetery name.
3. Grave location, including section, block, lot, and grave.
4. Grave purchase date and cost.
5. Deed issue date.
6. Deed owner.

Appendix A

EXAMPLES OF BAPTISMAL REGISTER ENTRIES

Standard Entries

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Birmingham	
KENT, William Joseph	Temple, KS 13 June 1938	4 July 1987	Jonathan Kent Martha Clark	Mary Lane James Olsen	Rev. Charles Knight	

Conditional Baptism

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Birmingham	Baptized conditionally

Unmarried Parents - No father noted

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	_____ Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	

Unmarried Parents - Father attested and noted

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	

Christian Witness

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell (Christian Witness)	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	

Proxy Godparent

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell (Mary Raffin as proxy)	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	

Bringing Baptized Child into the Church

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Rites furnished for child baptized 19 May 1978 by mother at home, Wilmer, GA, per mother's testimony, 12 June 1978

Baptism of an Unbaptized Adult

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
BROCKMAN, Kent	Phoenix, AZ 12 Aug 1963	16 Oct 1991	Charles Brockman Sarah Fickle	Stephanie Bells Montgomery Burns	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Baptized, confirmed, and received First Communion 16 Oct 1991

Reception into Full Communion

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	Profession of Faith, 18 Nov 2009	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Received into Full Communion, 18 Nov 2009; baptized 29 May 1987, First Presbyterian Church, Dallas, TX; Married Janice Nimkovich, 14 June 2007, First Baptist Church, San Antonio, TX

Ascription to Eastern Catholic Church

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Ascribed as Maronite

Testimony of Witness Verifying Reception of Sacrament

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Confirmed 16 Oct 1999 at St. Mary CC, Houston, TX, attested to by mother and sister

Notation of Confirmation and Marriage

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Confirmed 12 June 1999, St. Benedict CC, Savannah, GA. Married Shannon Kelly 21 May 2007, St. Stanislaus CC, Rincon, GA.

Notation of Ordination to Priesthood

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Confirmed 12 June 1999, St. Benedict CC, Savannah, GA. Ordained transitional deacon 21 May 2007, St. Stanislaus CC, Rincon, GA. Ordained priest 29 May 2008, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Savannah, GA.

Notation of Ordination to Permanent Diaconate

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Confirmed 12 June 1999, St. Benedict CC, Savannah, GA. Married Janice Kennedy 14 June 2007, Christ the King CC, Savannah, GA. Ordained permanent deacon 21 May 2007, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Savannah, GA.

Notation of Perpetual Vows

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Birmingham	Confirmed 12 June 1999, St. Benedict CC, Savannah, GA. Perpetual vows, 21 May 2007, Order of St. Benedict, St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA
BARTON, Sarah	Aiken, AR 3 Feb 1988	18 March 1988	John Barton Mary Smythe	Jerome Link Cheryl McGuinness	Rev. John Thomas	Confirmed 13 Dec 2000, St. Michael CC, Erie, PA Perpetual vows, 17 Nov 2008, Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, Nashville, TN.

Notation of Place of Marriage and Site of Record if Different

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Married Janice Kennedy 14 June 2007 at Perkins Chapel, Smallville University, KS; records at Christ the King CC, Savannah, GA.

Notation of Declaration of Nullity (Annulment)

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Married Janice Kennedy 14 June 2007, Christ the King CC, Savannah, GA. Decl. of Nullity, Savannah protocol no. 336-24-05, 3 March 2005.

Notation of Marriage after Annulment

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Birmingham	Married Janice Kennedy 14 June 2007, Christ the King CC, Savannah, GA. Decl. of Nullity, Savannah protocol no. 336-24-05. Married Anne Jones, 1 Jan 2009, St. Pius CC, Dallas, TX.

Minor Change - Name Correction

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Marge Bouvier Elizabeth	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Birmingham	

Major Change - Termination of Original Entry - Adoption

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
(SIMPSON), Michael James RUTAN	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	(Mark Simpson) (Elizabeth Bouvier)	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Adopted and name changed, 23 Mar 1992. Springfield Co., IL, case # 328-S-52
Do not issue certificate from this record - see Rutan, page 31 TL						

Major Change - Replacement of Original Entry - Adoption

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
RUTAN, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Burt Rutan Tanya Smith		Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Original record at (SIMPSON) RUTAN, page 20

Additional Space Required for Notations

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Confirmed 12 June 1999, St. Benedict CC, Savannah, GA. Ordained transitional deacon 21 May 2007, St. Stanislaus CC, Rincon, GA. (see pg. 31)

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Continued from page 20					Ordained priest 29 May 2008, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Savannah, GA

Creating a Missing Record

Name of Baptized	Place & Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father name/ Mother's maiden name	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SIMPSON, Michael James	Springfield, IL 19 April 1987	29 May 1987	Mark Simpson Elizabeth Bouvier	Linda Bouvier Herbert Powell	Rev. Timothy Bermingham	Creation of a missing baptismal record based on the testimony of Linda Bouvier, 4 April 2010.

Appendix B

SACRAMENTAL RECORDS INVENTORY FORM

<<< TO BE RETURNED TO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES >>>

Use one form for each bound volume

Parish (or mission, chapel, etc): _____

Current custodian for register: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Book number and/or title: _____

Type of book (circle one): _____

Baptism / First Communion / Confirmation / Marriage / Death / Combination

No. of pages _____ No. of pages used: _____ Inclusive dates: _____

Book dimensions: _____ in. X _____ in. X _____ in.

Index in (circle one): *front / back / none / separate from register*

Color of binding: _____

Book publisher: _____

Additional description: _____

Condition issues (e.g. loose pages, use of adhesive tape (aka, Scotch tape), torn pages, faded ink, etc): _____

Current location of book: _____

Does your parish maintain a separate index to this book? (circle one): *Yes / No*

If yes, where is the separate index kept and in what format (e.g., printed index, Excel spreadsheet, etc.) _____

Has this book been microfilmed or digitally scanned? (circle one): *Yes / No*

If yes, when was the film or scan made, and where is it kept? _____

Name of person completing this form: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Appendix C

AFFIDAVIT FOR WITNESS TO BAPTISM OF CHILD

I, _____, attest
that _____ was baptized into
the Roman Catholic Church on the _____ day of _____ in the year _____ at the
Church of _____
in (city and state) _____. The minister of
baptism was _____.

I know this because I am:

_____ a parent

_____ a godparent

_____ a person present at the ceremony

_____ a minister of baptism

Signature and date: _____

Witness and date: _____

Appendix D

AFFIDAVIT FOR PERSON BAPTIZED AS AN ADULT

I, _____, was baptized
into the Roman Catholic Church on the _____ day of _____ in the year _____ at the
Church of _____
in (city and state) _____. The minister of
baptism was _____.

Signature and date: _____

Witness and date: _____

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