



# **GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING SACRAMENTAL RECORDS**

**Catholic Pastoral Center**


**December 9, 2022**

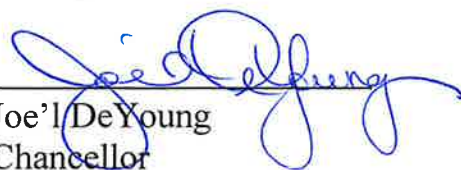
## DECREE OF PROMULGATION

In accord with Canon 535 of the Code of Canon Law, I hereby promulgate the Guidelines for Sacramental Records. This document abrogates all previous policies regarding sacramental records and must be followed by all persons accessing any sacramental records within the Diocese of Pueblo.

In accord with Canons 8§2 and 455§3, this law will take effect 30 working days from the date of promulgation.

Given at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, Pueblo Colorado on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of December in the year of Our Lord 2022.

  
+ Bishop Stephen J. Berg  
Bishop of Pueblo

  
Joe'l DeYoung  
Chancellor

December 9, 2022

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	.....4
<b>GENERAL PRINCIPLES</b>	
Pastor/Delegated Responsibilities	.....5
Access to Records	.....5
Requests for records	.....5
Fees	.....6
Care and Storage of Sacramental Registers	.....6
Non-portability	.....7
Missions and Chapels	.....7
Closed and Combined Parishes	.....7
Binding	.....7
Ink	.....7
Accuracy and Legibility	.....7
Promptness in completing entries	.....7
Corrections, Additions, Deletions	.....8
Missing Records	.....8
Annual Submission to the Catholic Pastoral Center	.....9
<b>SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS</b>	
Baptism	.....10
First Communion	.....15
Confirmation	.....15
Reconciliation	.....16
Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA)	.....16
Marriage	.....17
Holy Orders	.....19
Religious Profession/Religious Orders	.....19
Death	.....20
Institutions	.....20
Eastern Catholic Churches	.....20
Appendix A- Sacramental Record(s) Request Form	.....21
Appendix B- Registry Examples & Resources	.....22
Appendix C- Caring for Sacramental Records	.....24
Appendix D- Latin Terms	.....25

# INTRODUCTION

Sacramental records document an individual's journey and spiritual growth. In particular, the baptismal register serves as the primary record of one's Canonical status in the Church. Sacramental records also have importance as legal documents. The records may be used as legal documents when civil documents do not exist.

Those responsible for sacramental registers are legally and Canonically bound to ensure that the information placed in the register is accurate, reliable, protected, and that any certificates issued reflect the public record. Canon law requires parishes to maintain and preserve their sacramental records. An entry in the sacramental register is a legal record verifying the facts as they existed at the time of the celebration of the sacrament; those facts cannot be selectively altered.

This guide provides the pastor, and those with delegated responsibilities on the proper management of these irreplaceable documents. These guidelines establish a uniform protocol for the creation, maintenance, and preservation of sacramental records.

## **Canon 535 of the Code of Canon Law notes:**

**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.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The Christian faithful have the right to expect reliable, accurate, well-preserved sacramental records. Thus, all those who have responsibility for sacramental records and certificates should take care in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Each parish is to maintain the following sacramental registers:

1. Baptismal Register
2. Confirmation Register
3. First Communion Register
4. Marriage Register
5. Death Register

### **Pastor/Delegated Responsibilities**

The pastor is Canonically responsible for the proper creation, maintenance, and preservation of the sacramental registers (Canon 535, § 1). Even when he delegates the day-to-day administration of the records to a parish staff member, the pastor is responsible for the accurate and timely recording of sacramental celebrations (Canon 877).

### **Access to Records**

Sacramental records are confidential information and have to be protected. 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.

They are maintained for the good of the Christian faithful; but they are private documents, not public ones. The sacramental registers belong to the individual parish. No one other than the pastor or his delegate can claim a right to direct access to the registers. The registers themselves are not open to examination by outside parties.

### **Requests for records**

In order to protect the privacy of the individual involved, certificates are only issued to the person to whom the records is referring, or a person who provides proof of parental authority, guardianship, power of attorney, executor/personal representative, or other legal status on behalf of the person whose record is requested.

1. A person requesting his or her own sacramental record(s):
  - a) request it in person or in writing via a signed Sacramental Records Request form (example provided Appendix A).
  - b) with proof of identity (photo ID)
  - c) provide substantiating information so that legitimacy of the request can be ascertained. (e.g. name of parents, mother's maiden name, date of birth)
2. A person requesting a family member's sacramental record or certificate must:

- a) provide proof of guardianship, power of attorney or executor status along with the signed record request. (e.g., the parent of a minor child requesting that child's sacramental information or an adult child of an infirm or deceased parent).
3. Requests made by government or corporate agencies (i.e., Social Security Administration, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, insurance companies, etc.) should be accompanied by a release form or power of attorney signed by the person whose record is requested (or signed by a legally qualified guardian of that person) authorizing the release of the information to the agency).
4. Subpoenas and other court orders (e.g., law enforcement, court official, lawyer, etc.), requesting sacramental records should be accepted, but no records released before consulting with the Diocesan General Counsel.
5. Routine requests for records between parishes and other dioceses, and from chancery offices (e.g., the Tribunal) for Canonical purposes can be completed without permission of the individual.
  - a. Certificates issued directly to a parish or other church authority for Canonical purposes (e.g. for inclusion in a Prenuptial File or in a Tribunal proceeding) should be clearly marked "For Canonical Purposes Only".

*NOTE: The incorrect release of sacramental records may put the parish and/or the diocese in legal or financial jeopardy.*

## **Fees**

- Every individual has the right to an official certificate of his/her own sacramental record.
- There is no charge for certificates issued at the time of the reception of the sacrament.
- A minimal handling charge is reasonable and permitted to cover the cost
  - of research,
  - for preparation
  - for additional certificates
  - for postage.
  - \$5.00-\$10.00 is customary
- Fees must be waived in cases of financial hardship.

## **Care and Storage of Sacramental Registers**

- As records intended for perpetuity, sacramental registers must receive special handling and care. Registers should be kept in a protected place such as a safe, vault, or a locking, fireproof filing cabinet in the parish. For tips to ensure long-term service and preservation, please see "Caring for Sacramental Records" in Appendix C.
- Although computerized storage may supplement the registers for reference or statistical purposes, these are never to be considered an acceptable substitute for the original handwritten registers. The original handwritten sacramental registers are to be kept permanently and are considered the only authentic copy. They are never to be destroyed.

### **Non-portability**

- Under no circumstance is a sacramental register to be kept off-site or removed from the parish. When the sacramental register is not in use for reference or inscription (e.g. at night when the parish office closes), it is to be returned to its secure location in the fireproof vault, safe or locked file.

### **Missions and Chapels**

- If sacraments are performed at a mission or a chapel, they are to be recorded in the parish in whose territory they reside. If a parish is responsible for missions and chapels, separate registers are to be kept and maintained for each mission or chapel. These registers are to be clearly marked and kept at the parish office. This is useful when a mission or chapel is raised to the status of parish or when care of a mission or chapel is transferred to a different parish.

### **Closed and Combined Parishes**

- If a parish closes or is merged with another, the records shall be maintained by the territorial parish that Canonically assumes parochial responsibility.
- *Exception: St. Anthony Parish, Pueblo, Colorado, records are housed in the Diocesan archives.*

### **Binding**

Sacramental registers are meant for permanent preservation of the records noted, the bindings and paper must be of a quality that is considered permanent, durable, and acid-free and non-yellowing.

### **Ink**

Only permanent black ink should be used. A black ball-point or roller-ball pen is acceptable. Felt-tip pens and pencils are not a good choice, due to their tendency to fade over time.

### **Accuracy and Legibility**

It is necessary that the entries be made accurately and legibly. This will be a good help to those who in future years will need to reference your written records. An inaccurate or illegible record is a great disservice to the person(s) involved and to their families.

- Entries are to be printed, except for signatures.
- If a signature is used in an entry of a sacrament (e.g., by the minister of the sacrament), the name of the minister is to be printed beneath the signature.
- Registers are to be clearly marked. The front of the register is to include the type of register, the name of the parish or mission, the city, and the range of dates in the register.
- Use of the alphabetized index at the beginning of each register is strongly encouraged.

### **Promptness in completing entries**

All the data necessary for the entry (place of birth, sponsor's name, etc.) should be collected prior to the celebration of the sacrament. This aids in a prompt entry of information in the

register. Prompt entries prevent the loss or misplacement of important information and prevents omissions of the sacrament from being entered in the register.

### **Corrections, Additions, Deletions**

The proper way to correct a factual error (name, date, etc.) in a sacramental register is as follows:

- Obvious errors such as evident misspellings or transposed dates may be corrected without additional information.
  - Errors are corrected by drawing a single or double line through the incorrect entry and clearly noting the correction adjacent to the incorrect entry.
  - Do not use correction fluid or type of tape as these can flake and deteriorate over time.
  - In the notation column, list the name of the person authorizing the correction as well as and the date of the correction.
- Changes of a substantial nature (e.g. legal name change resulting from adoption) are only made with authenticating evidence:
  - A certified court decree; the court record/protocol number must be listed,
  - Corrections should be annotated with explanatory remarks, and documentation received as verification should be kept in a separate, secure file.
- Illegible entries: Create a completely new entry on another page in the sacramental register.
  - The original entry in its entirety should be crossed out with a single or double line.
  - In the notation column, make reference to the page and number of the location of the corrected entry.
  - The register's index must also be cross-referenced accordingly.
  - Names of sponsors or godparents cannot be changed once the sacrament is celebrated.

The entry in the sacramental register is a legal record verifying the facts as they existed at the time of the celebration of the sacrament; those facts cannot be selectively altered.

### **Missing Records**

If an individual has received a sacrament but the event was not recorded, the record can be recreated with appropriate proof. Only information that can be verified with certainty is entered into the register, even though this may leave an incomplete entry. (Indicate as such by using the words "not given" or with a dash rather than by leaving the space blank.)

Appropriate proof includes:

1. Copies of the civil and/or Canonical certificate;
2. Completed (notarized) affidavits from the individual and at least two witnesses;
3. An affidavit or letter from the presiding cleric;
4. Photographs or videos may be used as valid evidence when other evidence is not available or sufficient; and
5. In the case of the baptism of an adult, the oath of the baptized individual or the declaration of a single witness is all the evidence required (Canon 876).



To create the entry:

1. The omitted entry is added in the nearest available space in the register.
2. A notation is made that the entry serves to correct an omission.
3. Notations also include the date and signature of the person authorizing the newly created entry.
4. Supporting documentation is to be kept in a permanent file in the parish archives and a cross-reference included in the notations of the entry and on the file.

### **Annual Submission to the Catholic Pastoral Center**

Each parish is to submit a copy of the baptism and confirmation registries to the Chancellor for storage in the Diocesan archives.

**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.

# SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

## **BAPTISM**

The baptismal register serves as the primary record of one's Canonical status in the Church.

1. The sacrament is recorded in the register at the church in which the sacrament is celebrated.
2. The parish of the individual's baptism **is always notified** of that person's reception of other sacraments received to that the required notation may be made to update the individuals' baptism records (Canon 877 §1).

The baptismal record is to include (Canon 877 §1, §2, and §3 and Canon 878):

- Full name as found on birth certificate;
- Date and place of birth as found on birth certificate.
- Full name of father;
- Full birth or "maiden" name of mother;
- Full name of Minister who conferred the sacrament;
- Full names of the sponsors/godparents or Christian witness
- Date and place of the baptism
- Names of proxies if applicable.

## **Notations of other Sacraments**

- Notations of the reception of other sacraments are also to be included in the baptismal register. Even if these sacraments are conferred at the same parish, the notations are to be recorded in the baptismal register.
- Additional notations to the register include those regarding religious profession, conditional baptisms, rites supplied, annulments, and dispensations from vows.

## **Certificates**

- Certificates are to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.
- A baptismal certificate is to include all information of a public nature, but may not include any confidential notations, such as references made to adoption. An official baptismal certificate is to be signed by the minister, dated, and sealed.
- A notation at the bottom of the certificate regarding the entry number of the record in the register is optional. The reverse side of the baptismal certificate is to be completed as the notations indicate. If there are no notations, the reverse of the certificate is to be completed with the phrase "no notations."
- A government issued birth certificate is to be used as supporting documentation for the baptismal record. If the government issued birth certificate is not possible to obtain, the hospital record or record of a home birth can be used to verify the date of birth and parents' names.
- Entering information into the baptismal register based on verbal statements alone is not allowed.

### **Sponsors/God Parents**

- The baptized individual may have two sponsors (godparents), one of which must be Catholic.
  - One sponsor/godparent is a completely initiated Catholic (Canon 874, § 1) may be one male or one female or one of each (Canon 873). A baptized non-Catholic is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism. (Canon 874§ 2).
- The parents of the baptized are to choose the sponsors that are to be listed in the register, keeping in mind that at least one sponsor must be a completely initiated Catholic (Canon 874).
  - The role of the sponsor is to help the baptized person to lead a Christian life (Canon 872)
  - The role of the Christian Witness is to provide testimony that a person was baptized.
- If more than two sponsors are present, it is important to inform the minister of baptism which two sponsors/godparents will be officially recorded in the baptismal record. (Appendix B)

One's godparents can **never be changed** since they are historical witnesses to the baptism. The entry in the sacramental register is a legal record verifying the facts as they existed at the time of the celebration of the sacrament; those facts cannot be selectively altered.

### **BAPTISM: Profession of Faith**

The names of persons who are baptized Christians and who enter into full communion with the Catholic Church by means of a profession of faith shall be recorded in the parish baptismal register

- Date of profession,
- Church/denomination and
- Place of (the non-Catholic) baptism of the party, and
- All other information as required (see Baptism section).
- Notations: "Profession of Faith" or "Received into Full Communion" and its date should clearly be indicated

### **BAPTISM: Unwed Parents.**

- The name of the mother is to be entered in the register if there is public proof of her maternity (e.g., the birth certificate) or if she states this in writing or before two witnesses (Canon 877 §2).
- The name of the father is to be inserted only if there is public proof (e.g., the birth certificate) or by his own sworn declaration before the pastor and two witnesses.
- If no public proof is available, the name of the father or the mother is not recorded.
  - The phrase "pater ignotus" (father unknown) or "mater ignota" (mother unknown) must be used.
  - The word "illegitimate" is not to be used.
- The certificate issued from this entry will record the appropriate phrase.

- Supporting documentation is to be kept in the permanent files of the parish archives and include the appropriate cross-references.

### **BAPTISM: Adoption**

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

The following information shall be entered in the register for children baptized after their adoption is finalized:

- Full name of the child as designated by the adopting parent(s);
- Full name(s) of the adoptive parent(s);
- Date and place of birth;
- Names of the sponsors;
- The place and date of baptism
- Name of the minister performing the baptism
- The fact of adoption, but not the names of natural parent(s)
- Notation made stating simply that the child is adopted.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish will be no different from other baptismal certificates. issued for children of natural parents.

### **BAPTISM: Prior to Adoption**

For children baptized before their adoption is finalized, the following notations shall be added to the baptismal register, but only after the adoption has been finalized and with due regard for the civil law of the jurisdiction Canon 877§3:

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
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

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals shall give only the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

For future ease in reference, and to afford what may often be the only possibility of reference after the adoption has been finalized, a baptismal entry for the adopted child can be made in the baptismal register of the adoptive parents' parish, citing the date and location of the original baptismal record, and listing only the name of the adoptive parents, and the date and place of birth.

Parish personnel having access to parish registers have an obligation not to disclose to any

person any information which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted.

<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/canon-law/complementary-norms/canon-877-3-recording-the-baptism-of-adopted-children>

### **BAPTISM: Emergencies**

When baptism occurs in an emergency situation, either at home or in an institution, such as a hospital or prison, notification is to be sent to, and the register is to be completed at the territorial parish in which the home or institution is located.

The register is to be completed as outlined for ordinary baptisms. The date of baptism to be listed in the register is the date the "emergency" baptism took place. The words "rites supplied" are to be listed in the "remark's" column.

### **BAPTISM: Same-Sex Couples, Transgender, Simulation Parents Presenting a Child for Baptism**

In the spirit of Canon 877, the parish priest must record in the baptismal register the name of the natural or adoptive mother and father (woman and man) or that of the unmarried mother (woman) as well as that of the father (man) if his paternity is proven by a public document.

The annotation of "same-sex partners" or "transgender persons" as parents would be contrary to the teaching of Our Lord and of the Church on marriage as desired by God to be a union between a man and a woman.

1. It is not possible to annotate in the baptismal register two mothers (women) or two fathers (men) or a "transgender mother" or "transgender father", whose real nature is a woman or a man (Pontifical Council for Legislative texts, Prot. N. 15986/2017).
2. If one of the parents of a child are of the same-sex or a transgender person only one name is listed under mother (woman) or father (man).
3. If one of the parents of a child are of the same-sex or a transgender person and is the child's natural mother (woman) or father (man), she or he must be mentioned in the register. The other partner is not listed in the register and cannot be annotated.
  - The other parent not listed is not eligible to be a sponsor or Christian Witness and cannot be entered in the register in that column.
4. The parent listed must present a government-issued birth certificate or legal adoption record as supporting documentation for the baptismal record. The information provided in the government-issued birth certificate or legal adoption record regarding the birth and adopted parents is to be recorded in the notations.

### **BAPTISM: Gender Reassignment**

In cases of gender reassignment, of a baptized person after baptism, the original entry shall not be changed. A notation is made in the remark's column.

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 gender reassignment surgery. 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 rise 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.*

As time goes by... Additional information and notations will be added to the baptismal register indicating changes in the person's ecclesial status. In particular, regarding Confirmation, Marriage and Holy Orders or Religious profession. This information comes to you from the parish or diocese where these rites or processes take place and is entered into the baptismal record.

## **FIRST COMMUNION**

In the First Communion register the entry is to include:

- Full name of the First Communicant as found on his/her baptismal certificate
  - Date and place of baptism, as verified from baptismal certificate
  - Full name of parents as found on communicant's baptismal certificate
  - Date and place of the reception of First Communion
1. An original copy of the baptismal certificate is required as supporting documentation.
  2. A certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.
  3. Notification of the reception of this sacrament is to be sent to the place of baptism.
  4. The date and place of the reception of this sacrament is to be noted in the baptismal register, even if the sacrament took place in the same parish or faith community.

## **CONFIRMATION**

The Confirmation register is to include:

- Full name of the confirmed as found on his/her baptismal certificate
  - Date and place of baptism, as verified from baptismal certificate
  - Confirmation Saint name (OCIA, no203)
  - Full names of parents
  - Full name of sponsor (Canon 893§ 2)
  - Date and place of the event
  - Full name of minister who conferred the sacrament (Canon 895)
1. An original copy of the baptismal certificate is required as supporting documentation. An exception is the case where the confirmation is to take place at the same parish or faith community where the baptism occurred. In this instance the baptismal record must be verified prior to confirmation.
  2. A confirmation certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.
  3. In cases of joint celebrations, each parish or faith community that sends candidates is responsible for the completion of its own register, which is to include the name of the parish in which the celebration took place.
  4. Notification of the reception of this sacrament is to be sent to the place of baptism.
  5. The date and place of the reception of this sacrament is to be noted in the baptismal register even if the sacrament took place in the same parish or faith community.

One's sponsor can **never be changed** since they are a historical witness to the Confirmation. Those facts cannot be selectively altered.

## **RECONCILIATION**

The sacrament of reconciliation pertains exclusively to the internal forum, and therefore registers for these records are never created nor are certificates issued.

## **ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS (Formerly Rite of Election RCIA)**

With the promulgation of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults in the United States, the creation and maintenance of new registers relating to catechumens is required. These are Register of Catechumens, the Book of the Elect and the Reception into Full Communion registers.

### **Register of Catechumens:**

A register of Catechumens is kept at the parish and is required for those who have gone through the Rite of Acceptance. The Register of Catechumens should maintain an accurate list of who has participated in the Rite of Acceptance:

- Full name of the individual
- Name of the sponsor(s)
- Name of the minister of the Rite
- Date and place of the Rite

An official bound Register of Catechumens is not necessary but the list of those who are accepted as Catechumens should be maintained and accessible by the Pastor or his delegate until the Catechumens have been baptized.

### **Book of Elect:**

The Book of the Elect register lists the names of the catechumens who have gone through the Rite of Election. The diocesan Book of the Elect is the register that is signed by the catechumens during the Rite of Election. This is considered the official register.

If for serious pastoral reasons a catechumen is unable to attend the Rite of Election, such as sudden illness, military transfer, or a death in the family and permission was received to hold a separate Rite of Election at the parish, then the record of the catechumen is entered into the official diocesan Book of the Elect by the parish OCIA Coordinator at the Diocesan Rite of Election.

Each parish must maintain an official bound Book of Elect, in which those Catechumens who will be admitted to the Sacraments of Initiation duly enroll their names prior to the Rite of Election. The Book of Elect may be signed during the Rite of Sending, or another appropriate time prior to the Rite of Election.

### **Sacraments of Initiation:**

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion received by Catechumen and Candidates prepared in the OCIA are recorded in the appropriate registry in the required way.



### **Register Profession of Faith/ Reception into Full Communion:**

When someone is received into full communion with the Church, after having been baptized in another Christian faith, an entry must be recorded in the baptismal register, with a notation indicating "profession of faith".

- Date of profession,
- Date,
- Church/denomination and
- Place of (the non-Catholic) baptism of the party, and
- All other information as required (see Baptism section)

Documentation of the baptism should be kept by the parish in a separate file.

### **Catechumens and Marriage**

- Catechumens have a right to celebrate marriage according to the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Marriages involving catechumens are recorded in the marriage register.
- To ensure that proper permission and dispensations have been granted, the register should clearly indicate which party(ies) are catechumens.
- For those whose names appear in the Register of Catechumens a suitable cross-reference should be made.

### **Catechumens and Death**

- Catechumens have a right to full ecclesial funeral rites (Canon 1183, §1).
- A record of death for the catechumen is recorded in the death register.

## **MARRIAGE**

Marriages are to be recorded in the register of the parish at which the ceremony takes place. In cases where the ceremony occurs in the chapel of an institution, the marriage is to be recorded at the territorial parish in which the institution is located.

**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 the

celebration of the marriage must be informed so that a notation is properly made in the marriage and baptismal registers.

The marriage register is to include:

- Full names of both individuals (the woman's name as found on her baptismal certificate, or if not baptized, her birth or "maiden" name)
- Date and place of baptism of bride and groom, as verified from baptismal certificates
- Full names of witnesses
- Name of officiant
- Date and place of the marriage celebration (Canon 1121, §1)
- Notation regarding dispensation, permission, nullity, etc., as it applies

The index of the marriage register is to be arranged alphabetically by the last names of both spouses. The required format is "male surname/female surname." The name to be used for the bride's surname is that which is found on her baptismal certificate or, if not baptized, her birth or "maiden" name.

Notification of the reception of this sacrament is to be sent to the place of baptism.

#### **Same-sex, Transgender persons Marriage**

Same-sex or transgender persons, simulated marriages are never to be celebrated. Hence are not recorded in the marriage registry.

#### **Marriage Notations**

There are several notations that may be used in the marriage register. The most common of these include: dispensation from impediments, permissions, decrees of dissolution or nullity, convalidations, and sanations.

The required format for the notations is as follows:

- Dispensation from disparity of cult granted by the Judicial Vicar, date
- Permissions for a mixed marriage granted by the Judicial Vicar, date
- Dispensation from Canonical form granted by the Judicial Vicar, date
- Dissolution granted, date of dissolution, protocol number, diocese of tribunal
- Decree of nullity granted, date of decision, protocol number, diocese of tribunal
- Notation of convalidation
- Radical sanation (sanatio in radice) issued by the Bishop, date.

#### **Prenuptial File**

The prenuptial file created for the marriage is to be retained in the permanent files of the parish archives where the marriage took place. The outside of the envelope may indicate the correlating register entry number. Supporting documentation in the prenuptial file must include:

- Current (dated less than six months prior to request) baptismal certificates for baptized parties;
- Completed prenuptial forms,
- Copy of signed civil marriage license (to be retained in file following Church wedding),

- Civil marriage certificate;
- Death certificate (when necessary);
- Documentation providing necessary dispensations, permissions, or delegations;
- A copy of any necessary rescripts;
- Certificates from the required marriage preparation courses; (e.g., marriage preparation certificate, Natural Family Planning certificate)
- Additional prenuptial forms or documentation required by the diocese

## **HOLY ORDERS**

The Ordination register is kept and maintained at the Chancery. The Chancery is to maintain all pertinent documents regarding a cleric's status.

- Certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded, and notification of ordination is to be sent to the place of baptism.
- The date and place of the ordination and the name of the Bishop conferring the sacrament are to be noted in the baptismal register.
- A departure from the clerical state (e.g. laicization) is also noted; such notification will also be sent to the place of baptism.

**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 the 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 ordinations are to be preserved carefully.

**§2.** The ordaining bishop is to give to each of the ordained an authentic testimonial of the reception of ordination; if a bishop other than their own promoted them with dimissorial letters, they are to show the testimonial to their own ordinary for notation of the ordination in a special register to be kept in the archive.

**Can. 1054** The local ordinary if it concerns seculars, or the competent major superior if it concerns his own subjects, is to send notice of each ordination celebrated to the pastor of the place of baptism, who is to record it in his baptismal register according to the norm of can. 535, §2.

## **RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONS/RELIGIOUS ORDERS**

- Records relating to the profession of perpetual vows are maintained by individual Religious Orders (Canon 535).
- Notification of the profession of perpetual vows is to be sent to the place of baptism. The date and place of profession and the name of the witness to the vows are to be noted in the baptismal register.
- The name of the Religious Institute or Society of Apostolic Life are to be noted in the baptismal register.

## **DEATH**

When the burial has been completed, a record is to be made in the register of deaths according to the norm of particular law. (Canon 1182). Although death is not a sacrament, a register is kept, and includes:

- Full name of the deceased
  - Date of death
  - Name of the presider
  - Date and place of burial/disposition of remains
  - Cremation should be noted in the notations column.
  - If the deceased was a Catechumen Cremation, it should be noted in the notations column that they had not completed the Rites of Initiation.
    - For those whose names appear in the Register of Catechumens a suitable cross reference should be made.
  - Additional information may include name of funeral home, and next of kin.
1. If an individual is buried from a parish other than his own, an effort should be made to notify the person's pastor of his death and burial. (Canon 1177 §2)
  2. In the event that the funeral rites do not include a Mass at the parish but only a service at the funeral home, an entry is made in the death register.
  3. All Catholic funeral liturgies, even if celebrated outside the church building, shall be entered in the parish death records.
  4. The register should be chronologically arranged by date of parishioner death.
  5. In the event the parish priest is attending a funeral service as a representative member of the clergy, but the individual does not have a connection to the parish, no entry is made.

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

## **INSTITUTIONS**

Persons assigned as chaplains or parish priests with sacramental responsibilities for Catholic or non-Catholic institutions – hospitals, jails, prisons, care facilities, etc. shall see to it that the reception of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and marriage be recorded in the sacramental registers of the territorial parish in which institution is located (not the home parish of the person receiving the sacrament, nor the parish of the priest or minister who administered the sacrament).

## **EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES**

Special attention must be given to sacramental situations involving Catholics of an Eastern Rite Church (e.g. Byzantine, Chaldean, Maronite, Melkite, Syro-Malabar, Ukrainian, etc.) as these Catholics are subject to the 1990 Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.

1. Whenever Roman Catholic (Latin Rite) ministers lawfully celebrate a sacrament involving a member of an Eastern Rite Catholic Church, the sacrament is entered into the register of the Roman Catholic parish.
2. The name of the Eastern Rite (Byzantine, Chaldean, Maronite, etc.) is to be noted in the notation column.

## APPENDIX A



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF PUEBLO  
DIOFUEBLO.ORG

### Sacrament Record(s) Request

In order to protect the privacy of the individual involved, certificates are only issued to the person to whom the records is referring or a person who provides proof of parental authority, guardianship, power of attorney, executor/personal representative, or other legal status on behalf of the person whose record is requested. No official records are issued for genealogical purposes. A Photo ID must be presented. A nominal fee may be charged.

Indicate sacramental record(s) requested: Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, other. If requesting marriage certificate, provide name of spouse.

Name of parish where sacrament was performed:

Approximate date of sacrament:

Name of person who received the sacrament (first and last name):

Date of birth:

Name of father (first and last name):

Name of mother (first and maiden name):

Name of sponsor(s), if known:

Name of minister of the sacrament, if known:

Name of requestor:

Purpose of request:

Address (city, state, and zip code):

Phone number:

Email Address:

I hereby authorize the release of records indicated above and confirm that I have the legal authority to authorize such release.

(Signature of named recipient or authorized recipient)

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Entries

#### Baptismal Register

##### Standard

Name of Baptized	Place and Date of Birth	Place and date of Baptism	Father Name Mother Name (maiden)	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SMITH, James Patrick	Durango, CO  April 3, 1986	Sacred Heart Durango, CO  May 10, 1986	SMITH, Richard  MOORE, Mary	MARTINEZ, Jacob  MARTINEZ, Marie	Rev. Thomas O'BRIEN	

##### Christian Witness

Name of Baptized	Place and Date of Birth	Place and date of Baptism	Father Name Mother Name (maiden)	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
BROWN, Alan Martin	Pueblo, CO  July 7, 2006	St. Joseph Pueblo, CO  September 30, 1989	BROWN, Jacob  CLARK, Kay	WILKINSON, Todd  SIMPSON, Kelly (Christian Witness)	Rev. Gabriel RAMIREZ	

##### Conditional Baptism

Name of Baptized	Place and Date of Birth	Place and date of Baptism	Father Name Mother Name (maiden)	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
MILLER, Christina Marie	Gunnison, CO  January 5, 1942	St. Peter Gunnison, CO  March 18, 1942	MILLER, Brian  JONES, Kimberly	YORK, Russell  ELLIS, Katherine	Rev. Sam DAVIS	Baptized Conditionally

##### Adopted Child

Name of Baptized	Place and Date of Birth	Place and date of Baptism	Father Name Mother Name (maiden)	Sponsors	Officiating Clergy	Notations
(SPENCER), MILLER Emily Anne	San Diego, CA  October 2, 1994	St. Pius X Pueblo, CO March 8, 2004	(Spencer, Richard) (Shaw, Elizabeth)  MILLER, Isaac VIGIL, Isabelle	BOND, Robert  BOND, Carissa	Rev. James SOTO	Adopted

## FIRST COMMUNION REGISTER

Name of Baptized	Date and place of Baptism	Father Name Mother Name (maiden)	Date and Place of First Communion	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SMITH, James Patrick	Sacred Heart Durango, CO May 10, 1986	SMITH, Richard  FOX, Rose	May 15, 2004 Sacred Heart Durango, CO	Rev. Thomas RILEY	

## MARRIAGE REGISTER

Name of Groom	Father Name Mother Name (maiden)	Place and date of Baptism	Date and Place of Wedding	Witnesses	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SMITH, James Patrick	SMITH, Richard  JOHNSON, Miranda	Sacred Heart Durango, CO  May 10, 1986	July 17, 2019  Sacred Heart Durango, CO	COVER, Matthew  FRAZIER, Carol	Rev. Thomas O'BRIEN	Perm. Mixed Religions 2009-0125C
Name of Bride (maiden)	ATWOOD, David  WALKER Lindsay	Trinity Lutheran Laredo, TX				
ATWOOD, Lisa Marie						

## RECORD of ORDINATION in BAPTISMAL REGISTRY

Name of Baptized	Date and place of Baptism	Father Name Mother Name (maiden)	Date and Place of First Communion	Officiating Clergy	Notations
SMITH, James Patrick	Sacred Heart Durango, CO  May 10, 1986	SMITH, Richard  HAYES, Diane	May 15, 2004  Sacred Heart Durango, CO	Rev. Thomas O'BRIEN	Ordained Transitional Deacon, Diocese of Pueblo, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, May 1, 2014

# APPENDIX C

## Caring for Sacramental Records

Sacramental records are the most valuable records in the diocese and must be preserved permanently. Sacramental records document an individual's journey and spiritual growth. In particular, the baptismal register serves as the primary record of one's Canonical status in the Church. Sacramental records also have importance as legal documents. The records may be used as legal documents when civil documents do not exist.

### Best Practices in Caring for Sacramental Records

- Avoid the use of paper clips, rubber bands, adhesive tape, and Post-it® notes. Metallic clips can leave rust marks on the paper surface. Post-it® notes and sticky tape tend to leave a damaging adhesive residue.
- Do not laminate pages of the registry. The process is irreversible and damaging.
- Do not photocopy pages of the registry. Pressing on the registry to make a copy weakens the binding.
- Do not expose the registries to light (sunlight or artificial light) as they emit UV light which over time is damaging to paper.
- Wash hands before handling materials to avoid oils and perspiration being transferred to surfaces.

### Where to keep additional documents that arrive and have an effect on the records?

It is a best practice to create a suitable cross-referenced index. An example would be to store the documents in a supplemental binder, which would be stored with the records books or store the documents in a locking, fireproof filing cabinet.

### What causes damage?

- Poor quality materials used. The pages of the registry should be made of acid-free paper.
- Unstable storage environment – fluctuating temperature and relative humidity, pollution
- Inappropriate shelving and enclosures
- Long term light exposure
- Pests and mold
- Careless handling



## APPENDIX D

### Latin Terms

Adnotatio: Notation or remark  
Adoptio: Adoption  
Confirmatio recepta: Confirmation received  
Convalidatio matrimonii: Convalidation of marriage  
Declaratio nullitatis concessa: Declaration of nullity granted  
Defunctus: Deceased  
Delegatus: Delegate/Delegated  
Dioconatus: Deacon  
Dispensatio a tribus bannis: Dispensation from three banns  
Dispensatio consanguinitatis: Dispensation from consanguinity  
Dispensatio affinitatis: Dispensation from affinity  
Impedimentum: Impediment  
Umbrum infirmorum: Book of the sick  
Matrimonio contraxit cum: Contracted marriage with  
Mater Ignota: Mother unknown  
Pater Ignotus: Father unknown  
Patrini: Sponsors  
Patrinus: Sponsor  
Presbyteratus: Priest  
Procurator: Proxy  
Professio Sloemnis: Solemn profession (in a religious order of men or women)  
Prohibitio: Prohibition  
Proles: Offspring  
Sacerdos: Priest  
Sacrum ordinem Presbyteratus receptum: Sacred Order of Priesthood received  
Sacrum ordinem Subdiaconatus receptum: Sacred Order of the Subdiaconate received  
Sanatio in radice: Radical Sanation, "healing in the root" is obtained in cases where there are no existing impediment such as a previous marriage that would require an annulment.  
Testes: Witnesses  
Testis: Witness  
Validatio matdmoni: Convalidation of marriage  
Visum et approbatum: Seen and approved  
Ritus Suppleti: Rites Supplied