SACRAMENTAL RECORDS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

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Sacramental Records Policy and Procedures

The Sacramental Records Policy and Procedures establishes a uniform protocol for the creation, maintenance, storage and preservation of permanent records pertaining to the sacramental life of the faithful of the Diocese of Phoenix. The importance of maintaining accurate, legible and up-to-date sacramental records, as well as the prompt notification and recording of notations to sacramental records, cannot be overstated – from the standpoint of both canon and civil law. In particular, the baptismal register serves as the primary record of one’s canonical status in the Church. The sacrament (whether Confirmation, First Eucharist, Marriage or Holy Orders) is recorded in the register at the church in which the sacrament is celebrated; the parish of the individual’s baptism is always notified of that person’s reception of the sacraments of Confirmation, Marriage or Holy Orders so that the required notation may be made to update the individual’s baptismal record. Justice to the individual and to the greater Church community demands that all sacramental records be kept with diligence and care.

Canon 535 §1 of the Code of Canon Law notes: “Each parish is to possess a set of parish books including baptismal, marriage and death registers as well as other registers prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop; the pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.”

4-7.1 SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS • General Principles

In the Diocese of Phoenix, each parish and quasi-parish is to maintain the following sacramental registers:

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

Each sacramental register shall include the name of the parish, the dates and shall be indexed. Although computer storage may supplement the registers for reference or statistical purposes, it is not an acceptable replacement for the books themselves.

4-7.1.1 Responsibility/Delegated Responsibility. In the spirit of Canon 535 §1, accountability for the creation, maintenance, preservation and use of all sacramental records rests with the person canonically responsible for the parish or quasi-parish, whether pastor, canonical pastor, chaplain or administrator. The person in charge may choose to delegate the day-to-day administration (e.g. routine inscription entries) of the sacramental registers to a parish
Sacramental Records Policy & Guidelines

March 2010, Revised October 2010

secretary or another responsible person. All information contained in the sacramental registers is to be handled with discretion and confidentiality.

4-7.1.2 Eastern Rite Catholics. 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 appropriate register of the Roman Catholic parish.

2. The name of the particular Eastern Rite (Byzantine, Chaldean, Maronite, etc.) is to be noted in the remarks/notations column or the sacramental register. A notation as to the Rite may also be made in the index of the register.

3. The Diocesan Tribunal should be consulted regarding questions concerning the valid and licit celebration of a Latin Rite sacrament for an Eastern Rite Catholic.

4-7.1.3 Caring for Sacramental Registers. As records intended for perpetuity, sacramental registers must receive special handling and care. For tips to ensure long-term service and preservation, please see “Caring for Sacramental Records” in Appendix E.

4-7.1.4 Permanent Bindings, Paper, Ink and Storage. Since 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 (i.e., non-yellowing). The ink that is used must also be of a permanent quality. Only black ink should be used. The best types of inks are those made for art work or India inks (usually found in cartridges). A black ball-point or roller-ball pen is acceptable. Felt-tip pens and pencils are not acceptable, due to their tendency to fade over time. Sacramental registers are to be kept in a locked and fireproof vault, safe or file at the parish site.

4-7.1.5 Accuracy and Legibility. Since the registers are kept for future reference as legal proof (canonical and civil) of church events, age, genealogy and/or nationality status, it is necessary that the entries be made accurately and legibly. For this reason entries, except for signatures, shall be printed rather than written out longhand. 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 carefully beneath the signature. An inaccurate or illegible record is a great future disservice to the persons involved and to their families.

4-7.1.6 Promptness in making complete entries in sacramental registers. Ideally, entries of sacraments should be made in the appropriate register(s) within seven days of the celebration of the sacrament. All the data necessary for the entry (place of birth, sponsor’s name, etc.) should be collected prior to the celebration of the sacrament so that the inscription of the complete sacramental information in the register will not be delayed. Prompt entries prevent the inadvertent loss/misplacement of important data or the serious possibility that the reception of the sacrament will not be entered in the register at all.

4-7.1.7 Non-portability of sacramental registers. Under no circumstance is a sacramental register to be kept off-site or removed from the parish site.* 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. Should a sacramental register require repair or rebinding, the Chancellor must be consulted as to appropriate steps to be taken. [*in some situations, older registers that are seldom accessed and could be in danger of deteriorating may be transferred to Diocesan Archives for safekeeping. A
transfer of a parish’s sacramental registers from the parish site to the Diocesan Archives requires the written consent of the Board of Directors of the Parish Corporation.

4-7.1.8 Corrections, Additions, Deletions. The proper way to correct a factual error (name, date, etc.) in a sacramental register is as follows:

1. A simple error, such as a spelling mistake, is corrected by drawing a single or double line through the incorrect entry and clearly noting the correction adjacent to the incorrect entry. Under no circumstance is correction fluid or any type of tape to be used (as these can flake and deteriorate over time).

2. In the notation column, list the name of the person authorizing the correction as well as and the date of the correction.

3. Changes of a substantial nature (e.g. legal name change resulting from adoption) are only made with authenticating evidence – e.g., certified court decree. In such a case, the court record/protocol number must be listed in the notations column.

4. For the sake of legibility, it may be necessary to create a completely new entry on another page in the sacramental register. In such a case, the original entry in its entirety should be crossed out with a single or double line and, in the notation column, reference made to the page and number of the location of the corrected entry. The register’s index must also be cross-referenced accordingly.

5. 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 at a later date.

4-7.1.9 Retrospective entries in sacramental registers. If an individual has received a sacrament but the event was not recorded, the record can be recreated with appropriate proof. Appropriate proof includes:

1. Copies of the civil and/or canonical certificate

2. Completed (notarized) affidavits from the individual and at least two witnesses (see sample form in Appendix D)

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.

5. In the case of the baptism of an adult, the oath of the individual or the declaration of a single witness is all the evidence required (Canon 876).

Notations are to be made along with the date and signature of the person authorizing the newly-created entry. 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.

4-7.1.10 Recording sacraments celebrated in institutions or outside the parish. Ordinarily, a sacrament taking place in an institution (e.g. an emergency baptism celebrated in a hospital or care facility) is recorded in the register of the parish or quasi-parish in whose territory the institution is located. These sacraments shall not be recorded in the parish to which the priest is assigned if it is not the territorial parish in which the institution is located.
4-7.1.11 Quasi-Parishes and Missions. A pastor who also has charge of a mission church is obliged to maintain for that church a separate set of sacramental registers.

4-7.1.12 Annual Inspection of Registers. Each of the sacramental registers is noted in "A" above is inspected on an annual basis by the Bishop of Phoenix, the local Dean or another of the Bishop’s Vicars. Each register is certified as inspected with the appropriate seal, signature and date of inspection. A Sacramental Records form documenting the inspection is then sent to the Chancellor by the inspecting Dean or Vicar.

4-7.1.13 Ownership of Sacramental Records. All parish sacramental records, both archived and active are property of the respective Parish Corporation and may not be alienated from that corporation except through a resolution of the Board of Directors of said corporation.

4-7.1.14 Closed/Combined Parishes. If a parish or quasi-parish closes or is merged with another, the records shall be maintained by the territorial parish that canonically assumes parochial responsibility.

4-7.1.15 Copies of 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, microfilm and computer. Under no circumstance, however, shall the original register be discarded. Any steps taken on the parish level to duplicate sacramental registers shall be regarded as a means of preservation, not as a means of free access or publication of information therein.

The same restrictions of access apply to copies as to original records. (see Procedures for Access to Sacramental Records, below). As with original records, no copies of sacramental registers or the data they contain, whether on microfilm or otherwise, may ever be given, loaned or sold to any person or institution without the written consent of the Board of Directors of the Parish Corporation. Such permission shall specify the condition for use, duplication and publication.

4-7.1.16 Procedures for Access to Sacramental Records.

1. In keeping with General Principal 4-7.1, access to sacramental registers and records is restricted to authorized parish personnel.

2. A person requesting his or her own sacramental record or certificate may:
   a) make the request in person by providing the pastor or authorized delegate a signed sacramental certificate request form (see Appendix D) along with proof of identity (photo ID) if the person is unknown to the pastor or authorized delegate.
   b) make the request in writing by mail, fax or e-mail. Such a written request must include the signature or the requesting party (e-mail requests must attach a document, e.g. in PDF format, exhibiting a signature). All written requests for sacramental records must also contain substantiating information (e.g. name of parents, date of birth) so that legitimacy of the request can be ascertained.

3. A person requesting a family member’s sacramental record or certificate (e.g., the parent of a minor child requesting that child’s sacramental information or an adult child of an infirm or deceased parent), if unknown to the pastor or authorized delegate, must provide proof of guardianship, power of attorney or executor status along with the signed record request, following procedures described in 2. above.
4. Sacramental records may, in some instances, be used for statistical or quantitative research. Contact the Chancellor for detailed guidelines and to register the research project.

5. Requests for sacramental records 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.

6. Subpoenas and other court orders demanding that sacramental records be submitted should be accepted, but no records released before consulting with the Diocesan General Counsel.

7. 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, preferably with a red ink stamp, "For Canonical Purposes Only"

4-7.1.17 Fees. Every individual has the right to an official certificate of his/her sacramental record.

1. There is no charge for certificates issued at the time of the reception of the sacrament.

2. Fees for additional certificates must be minimal, and must be waived in cases of financial hardship.

3. Parishes should not charge any fee for merely providing information from sacramental registers.

4. A nominal fee may be charged to access sacramental records for genealogical research. No sacramental certificate is issued for genealogical research purposes.

4-7.2 BAPTISM

The baptismal record is the primary record of a person's status within the church (Canon 535, §2). The baptismal record is to include:

- 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 of the Sacrament;
- Full names of the sponsors/godparents or Christian witness
- Date and place of the baptism
- Names of proxies if applicable.

4-7.2.1 Notations of other Sacraments, etc. 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, change of rite, and dispensations from vows.

4-7.2.2 Certificates. Certificates are to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.
A routine 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, 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 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 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.

4-7.2.3 Sponsors. The baptized individual may have two sponsors (godparents), one of which must be Catholic. 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.* 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 Catholic. (Canon 874) [* Due to cultural traditions there is no reason why others may not serve as honorary godparents to be part of the ceremony and an important part of the child’s life. For pastoral sensitivity, a parish might recommend honorary godparents sign their names to the back of the Baptism Certificate.]

One’s godparents can never be changed since they are historical witnesses to the baptism.

4-7.2.4 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 under the date of profession, together with the date, church/denomination and place of (the non-Catholic) baptism of the party, and all other information as required (see Baptism section). “Profession of Faith” or “Received into Full Communion” and its date should clearly be indicated in the notations column of the baptismal register.

4-7.2.5 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 certificate issued from this entry will record the appropriate phrase. The word “illegitimate” is not to be used. Supporting documentation is to be kept in the permanent files of the parish archives and include the appropriate cross-references.

4-7.2.6 BAPTISM: 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. 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 names of the adopting parent(s);
Date and place of birth;
Names of the sponsors;
Name of the minister performing the baptism.

A notation shall also be made in the register stating simply that the child is adopted. Baptismal certificates for adopted children issued by the parish will be no different that the baptismal certificates issued for children of natural (non-adopting) parents. The notation of adoption in the baptismal register shall not be entered on any baptismal certificate.

Should a baptism occur prior to adoption, the notation made in the original entry is to include the statement “Adoption: Do not issue from this record. See entry X, page X.”

The new entry is to list the legal name of the individual, the names of the adopting parents, and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament.

The new entry will not include the names of the witnesses or sponsors of the baptism.

The certificate issued from this record is to include only the names of the adopting parents, the child's legal surname, the date and place of place of baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament.

The names of the sponsors and any notated remarks are not to be entered on the certificate.

Supporting documentation for the new entry would include a copy of the revised birth certificate issued by the government agency and the adoption decree. These documents are to be kept in the permanent files of the parish archives and are to include references to the appropriate register and entry number.

If the original baptismal record was made in a parish other than the adopting parents’ parish, an entry is to be made in the register of the adoptive family's parish citing the location of the original record, the date of baptism, date and place of birth, and list only the names of the adopting parents. The certificate is to be issued from this entry.

4-7.2.7 BAPTISM: Emergencies. When baptism occurs in an emergency situation, either at home or in an institution such as a hospital, 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. In cases when rites are supplied at the proper parish or faith community in the future, the date of baptism to be listed in the register is the date the "emergency" baptism took place. The words "rites supplied" and the date of the completion of the celebration are to be listed in the remarks column.

4-7.2.8 BAPTISM: Other Circumstances. When a same-sex couple presents a child for baptism, the record is to indicate the word “parent” for both parents rather than “mother” and “father”.

The parents 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 or surrogate parents is to be recorded in the notations.
In cases of gender reassignment, of a baptized person after baptism, the original entry shall not be changed. A notation is made in the remarks column.

**4-7.3 FIRST COMMUNION**

The first communion register 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

A copy of the baptismal certificate is required as supporting documentation.

A certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.

First Eucharist information is not sent to the church where Baptism took place. This information need only be recorded at the parish where the celebration takes place.

**4-7.4 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 name, if different than baptismal name
- Full names of parents
- Full name of sponsor
- Date and place of the event
- Name of minister (Canon 895)

A 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.

A confirmation certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.

In cases of joint celebrations, each parish or faith community which 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.

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

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.

**4-7.5 RECONCILIATION**

The sacrament of reconciliation pertains exclusively to the internal forum, and therefore registers for these records are never created nor are certificates issued.
4-7.6 SICK CALLS

The creation and maintenance of parish sick call registers is recommended, but not required by Universal Law.

4-7.7 HOLY ORDERS

A 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. A departure from the clerical state is also to be noted; such notification will also 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.

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

The date of the departure from the clerical state is to be noted in the baptismal register according to the decree changing the status of the cleric.

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

4-7.8 MARRIAGE

4-7.8.1 Marriage Register.

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

4-7.8.2 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; (See Marriage Policy)

Two Affidavits of Free Status for each party (bride and groom), sworn by persons who have known the parties for at least three years. These must be witnessed by a priest, deacon, or delegate and affixed with a parish seal.

**4-7.8.3 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

**4-7.8.4 Marriage: Place of Record.** 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 (e.g. St. Francis Xavier, Brophy Chapel), the marriage is to be recorded at the territorial parish in which the institution is located.

In cases where a wedding is celebrated with dispensation from canonical form, the marriage is recorded in the register at the parish in which marriage preparation took place and dispensation was requested, as well as in the register of the parish in which the venue of the wedding is territorially located and at the Chancery or the Tribunal of the diocese granting the dispensation (Canon 1121, §3). The prenuptial file is to be kept at the parish in which preparation took place.

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.
4-7.9 DEATH

After the burial/disposition of the remains, an entry is to be made in the register of death, in accordance with particular law. (Canon 1182)

The death register is to include:

Full name of the deceased;
Date of death;
Name of the presider;
Date and place of burial/disposition of remains.

1. The notation in the register should clearly indicate if the deceased was a Catechumen.

2. Additional information may include name of funeral home, and next of kin.

3. If a cleric is called upon to preside at a funeral or burial of a non-Catholic, an entry can be made in the parish's death register together with a notation concerning the religion of the deceased and the services which were provided.

4. In cases where the funeral rites are celebrated in another parish or faith community, notification is sent to the pastor of the deceased.

5. All Catholic funeral liturgies, even if celebrated outside the church building, shall be entered in the parish death records.

6. The register should be chronologically arranged by date of parishioner death.

4-7.10 Issues Particular to the CATECHUMENATE (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

1. Records for RCIA

   A) **Register of Catechumens:** RCIA leaders should maintain an accurate list of who has participated in the Rite of Acceptance (RCIA 46). Including:

      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.*

   B) **Book of Elect:** 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 celebrated at the Cathedral the 1st Sunday of Lent (RCIA 118). The Book of Elect may be signed during the Rite of Sending (cf. RCIA 106), or another appropriate time prior to the Rite of Election

   C) **Sacraments of Initiation:** The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion received by Catechumen and Candidates prepared in the RCIA are recorded in the appropriate registry in the required way.
D) **Profession of Faith:** Those previously baptized in another ecclesial Community who are received into Full Communion of the Catholic Church should be recorded in the parish baptismal register under the date of profession, together with the date, church/denomination and place of (the non-Catholic) baptism of the party, and all other information as required (see Baptism section). “Profession of Faith” or “Received into Full Communion” and its date should clearly be indicated in the notations column of the baptismal register; sponsor(s) for the Profession of Faith should be noted in the sponsor column.

Some parishes may also possess a Reception into Full Communion Register or Profession of Faith Register in which place the record of the Profession of Faith may also be recorded. This option is in addition to recording the record in the Baptismal Registry.

2. **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 in the usual way.

To ensure that proper permission and dispensations have been granted, the register should clearly indicate which parties are catechumens.

3. **Death**

Catechumens have a right to full ecclesial funeral rites. (Canon 1183, §1)

A record of death for the catechumens are recorded in the death register in the usual way.

**4-7.11 RELIGIOUS PROFESSION/RELIGIOUS ORDERS**

Records relating to the profession of perpetual vows are maintained by individual Orders. (cf. Canon 535)

1. Notification of the profession of perpetual vows is to be sent to the place of baptism.

2. The date and place of profession and the name of the witness to the vows are to be noted in the baptismal register.

Approved by Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted 3/31/10
Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix  
SACRAMENTAL RECORDS RELEASE REQUEST

| Request Date: __________________ |

| NAME OF PARISH (AND CITY, IF KNOWN) IN WHICH SACRAMENT WAS PERFORMED: |

| NAME OF SACRAMENT:  BAPTISM  MARRIAGE  COMMUNION  CONFIRMATION  OTHER |

| NAME AT THE TIME OF SACRAMENT: |

| APPROXIMATE DATE OF SACRAMENT: | DATE OF BIRTH: |

| NAME OF FATHER: |

| MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER: |

| REQUESTOR: |

| ADDRESS: |

| CITY, STATE, ZIP: |

| DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER: |

| SEND TO: |

| ADDRESS: |

| CITY, STATE, ZIP: |

| ATTENTION: |

| SIGNATURE: _______________________________________________________________________________________
(SIGNATURE OF NAMED RECIPIENT OF SACRAMENT OR AUTHORIZED RECIPIENT OF DOCUMENT) |

For Office Use Only

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In order to protect the privacy of the individual involved, certificates are only issued to the parent of the child, or to the person to whom the records is referring. NO certificates are issued for genealogical purposes. Photo ID must be presented. (A nominal fee may be charged)
APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

Publications


*Catechumenate and the Law*, John Huels, Liturgical Press, 1994. This book offers a thorough discussion of the rights of the catechumenate and church law. In addition, he proposes alternate methods of recordkeeping for the catechumenate. As these proposals are relatively new, recordkeeping for the catechumenate will continue to be problematic.

*The Rites of the Catholic Church (Volumes I, IA, and II)*, Pueblo Publishing Co., 1991. This is the English translation of all rituals of the Catholic Church, particularly the sacraments. The general instructions often include references to recordkeeping.

*Entering New Waters of Baptism*: Diocese of Phoenix Infant Baptism Policy and Guidelines. 2005. Available online (English) (Español)

*Gift from on High*: Diocese of Phoenix Confirmation & First Eucharist Policy and Guidelines. 2005. Available online (English) (Español)

*Covenant of Love*: Diocese of Phoenix Marriage Policy and Guidelines. 2009. Available online (English)

Binding

In most cases, rebinding sacramental registers is not recommended. If you wish to preserve these kinds of registers, it is recommended that you contact a professional book binder who is able to repair the books on your premises.

Roswell Bookbinding (866) 789-2753 Address: 2614 N 29 Av, Phoenix, AZ 85009

It is important however, to ensure that the new binding not interfere with the information in the entries. For further information, please contact the Diocesan Archivist @ 602-354-2475.

Registers

The registers are permanent records, and must be created using acid-free or permanent paper. The following companies provide registers that utilize acid free paper:

F. J. Remey Co. McKay Church Goods
www.fjremey.com www.mckaychurchgoods.com
800-645-6062 or 516-741-5112 1-800-749-2340
APPENDIX B: DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Adult:** An adult of legal age, or a child who has attained the use of reason and is of catechetical age (RCIA 252). Catechetical age is defined as “in or around 7 years of age” (CIC 97).

**Candidate:** 1) Any person in the period pre-catechumenate (RCIA 38). 2) One who is baptized as a Catholic “but did not receive further catechetical formation, nor the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist. (RCIA 400-410). 3) One who is already baptized in another Christian faith and has not received a suitable catechesis and who now is preparing to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. At the time of full reception, he or she will make a profession of faith, be confirmed, and receive Eucharist. (RCIA 409).

**Canonical Form:** The means of celebrating marriage in the Catholic Church by which a man and a woman exchange their consent according to the prescribed ritual, before two witnesses, in the presence of the competent minister of the Catholic Church. (CIC 1108).

**Catechumen:** 1) A non-baptized person who has "manifested a willingness to embrace faith in Christ," and who, therefore, prepares through suitable instruction and liturgical rites to celebrate the sacraments of initiation in the Church (CIC, c. 788). 2) An unbaptized adult who has been accepted in to the Order of Catechumens through the Rite of Acceptance (RCIA 41-47). 3) Special canonical privileges granted to those who exhibited a desire for Baptism or reception into the Church (CIC 206 & 788).

**Catechumenate:** 1) The entire initiation practice is sometimes called the Catechumenal Process, in reference to “one in instruction” Galatians 6. 2) The second period of the Catechumenal Process in which, after the Rite of Acceptance, catechumens enter into “an extended period of time” and are “given a suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life (RCIA 75).

**Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation:** The Third step in the Catechumenal process is the celebration the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). “Through this final step the elect, receiving pardon for their sins, are admitted into the people of God...lead by the Holy Spirit...and share in the Eucharistic sacrifice and meal” (RCIA 206). This most normally coincides, by ancient tradition, to the Easter Vigil (RCIA 207).

**Child/Infant:** Those who have are under 7 years of age or lack proper use of reason (CIC 97).

**Conditional Baptism:** Baptism celebrated "if there is a doubt whether one has been baptized or whether baptism was validly conferred" (CIC, c. 869). Confirmation: One of the sacraments of initiation by means of which the baptized Christian is "enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church." Through it the person is strengthened to witness to Christ" (CIC 879).

**Convalidation:** A legal remedy by which the original consent of a man and a woman, invalid in some way, is subsequenly made valid through observance of canonical form. The two types of convalidation are 1) renewal of consent or 2) radical sanation (CIC 1156-1165).

**Decree of Nullity:** The declaration by a tribunal of the Catholic Church which, after the completion of the prescribed process, affirms that the consent given in the marriage in question was in fact invalid.

**Delegation:** The means by which the power to govern or perform an act is granted to a qualified person by someone who has the power by virtue of his office. In the context of this document
delegation refers to the act by which power to witness a marriage is given to a specific person (CIC, c. 1111-1114).

**Departure from the Clerical State:** The canonical process in which a priest’s or deacon’s faculties are removed whether voluntary and involuntary as approved by Rome.

**Disparity of Cult (or Worship):** An impediment to contracting a valid marriage in the Church, which arises because one of the parties is not baptized (CIC, c. 1086).

**Dissolution:** The means by which a marriage is dissolved for a just cause under the Code of Canon Law in accordance with Scripture and Tradition. There are usually only three causes considered: 1) A marriage never consummated (CIC, 1142), 2) When one of two non-baptized parties to a marriage wishes to be baptized in the Catholic Church and the other party departs (CIC 1143-1147) referred to as the *Pauline Privilege*, or 3) In favor of the faith when, in the marriage of a baptized and a non-baptized person, either becomes a Catholic or wishes to marry a Catholic, referred to as the *Petrine Privilege*.

**Elect:** The name given to catechumens who after completing an apprenticeship “in the Christian life” (RCIA 76-79), celebrate the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent signifying their being chosen for the initiation that upcoming Easter (RCIA 124). According to the Rite children are encouraged but not obligated to attend. In the Diocese of Phoenix, typically only the adults and their sponsors attend the Rite of Election.

**Express Permission:** Required of the competent authority for the licit celebration of marriage between a Catholic and a baptized Christian not in full communion with the Catholic Church (CIC 1124).

**First Communion/First Eucharist:** One of the sacraments of initiation by which a baptized person participates for the first time in the Eucharistic Sacrifice (CIC 897)/ Eucharistic Banquet (CIC 899).

**Godparents:** 1) Those selected by parents to witness infant baptism and serve the canonical role as Godparent. They must be fully initiated members of the Catholic faith, and should be able to perform the responsibilities as outlined in the Policy for Baptism 5. 2) Those who are selected by the Catechumen to “accompany them on the day of election, at the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, and during the period of mystagogy” (RCIA 11). They must be fully initiated members of the Catholic faith, and should be able to perform the responsibilities as outlined in the Rite (RCIA 11, 123).

**Holy Orders/Ordination:** The sacrament by which men are "constituted sacred ministers" in the Church and "deputed to shepherd the people of God" (CIC 1008).

**Lack of Form/Defect of Form:** The term used to describe a marriage which, when so required, failed to follow the prescribed canonical form for its valid celebration. When a petitioner submits documentary proof and other required information, a tribunal can issue a Declaration of Freedom to Marry.

**Laicization:** See “Departure from the Clerical State”

**Marriage:** The sacrament by which a man and a woman "establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life" through consent that is freely given (CIC 1055, 1057).

**Mixed Marriage:** The term employed by the Catholic Church to describe the union established between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic (CIC 1124).
**Neophyte:** One who is initiated at the Easter Vigil. The term comes from the Greek word meaning new plant, as in a new sprout on a limb/branch. (RCIA 245)

**Professed Religious/Vowed Religious:** A man or woman who is incorporated into a religious institute by means of public vows, which oblige the observance of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience (CIC 654).

**Profession of Faith:** See: Reception into Full Communion

**Radical Sanation:** Comes from the Latin “healing at the root”. A means by which competent ecclesiastical authority renders an invalid marriage valid without the renewal of consent. Through this process the marriage consent is made valid from the time it was given, the impediment that had made the consent invalid is dispensed, and all canonical effects of a valid marriage are applied retroactively to the beginning of the union. The presumption is that the consent given from the start is still enduring (CIC 1161).

**Reception into Full Communion:** Usually, the means by which an already baptized person affirms through a creedal formula the truths of the Catholic Church and thereby becomes a member of the Catholic Church. [use for term “profession of faith”]

**RCIA:** (Rite of Christian Initiation of an Adult), the process by which an adult is received into the Catholic Church, usually through reception of the three sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. English title of Ordo initiationis christianae adultorum (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) The latest English translation edition was published in 1985. Mandated for use in the United States in 1988.

**Rescript:** An administrative act issued in writing by competent executive authority by which through its very nature a privilege, dispensation, or other favor is granted in response to someone’s request” (CIC, c. 59). An example of this is permission for a priest to be returned to the lay state.

**Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens:** The First Step in the Catechumenal process, in which the unbaptized are officially accepted into the Order of Catechumens. It is of “the utmost importance. Assembling publicly for the first time, the candidates who have completed the period of the precatechumenate declare their intention to the Church and the Church in turn” accepts them (RCIA 41).

**Rite of Election:** The Second Step in the Catechumenal process, in which the unbaptized after the period of the Catechumenate sign the book of the Elect which is received by the Bishop of the First Sunday of Lent (RCIA 118).

**Rites Supplied:** The completion of the rite of Baptism—usually in a parish church—for infants already baptized when in danger of death.

**Sponsor:** 1) The person selected to assist in the formation and development of a candidate for Confirmation. See Confirmation Policy 1.4. 2) The term used to refer to the person who “accompanies any candidate seeking admission as a catechumen” (RCIA 10). They assist the candidates, stand as witness to their moral character and present them to the Rite of Acceptance. They may also be chosen as a Godparent by the Catechumen (RCIA 10, 80) 3) The term for a fully initiated catholic who will journey with a Candidate (baptized but previously uncatechized adult) through their preparation and be present at their full initiation, or full communion into the church.
APPENDIX C: 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  
Delegate: Delegated  
Diaconatus: Deacon  
Dispensatio a tribus bannis: Dispensation from the three banns  
Dispensatio consanguinitatis: Dispensation from Consanguinity  
Dispensation affinitatis: Dispensation from Affinity  
Impedimentum: Impediment  
Ubrum infirmorum: Book of the Sick  
Matrimonio contraxit cum____________: Contracted marriage with__________  
Mater Ignota: Mother unknown  
Pater Ignotus: Father unknown  
Patrini: Sponsors  
Patrinus: Sponsor  
Presbyteratus: Priesthood  
Presbyter: Priest  
Procurator: Proxy  
Professio Solemnis: 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 Subdiaconate received  
Subdiaconatus: Subdeaconate  
Testes: Witnesses  
Testis: Witness  
Validatio matrimoni: Convalidation of Marriage  
Visum et approbatum: Seen and approved  
Ritus Suppleti: Rites Supplied
APPENDIX D: SAMPLE FORMS

1) **Sacramental Record Release Request:** Suitable for a person to request their own or their child’s sacramental record.

2) **Affidavit of Baptism:** Suitable to determine whether or not a conditional baptism is needed. Sample provided from ACM (Association for Catechumenal Ministry)

3) **Adult Inquirer Information Form:** Suitable for RCIA & Confirmation for Adults. Sample provided from ACM (Association for Catechumenal Ministry)

4) **Current Marital Status Follow-Up:** Suitable for insuring that there is no impediment to reception of sacraments. Sample provided from ACM (Association for Catechumenal Ministry)

5) **Previous Marriage Form:** Suitable for determining what steps are necessary in the event of previous marriage. Sample provided from ACM (Association for Catechumenal Ministry)

6) **Child/Teen Inquirer Information Form:** Suitable for children’s initiation (Infant Baptism, Confirmation & First Eucharist and RCIA Adapted for Children). Sample provided from ACM (Association for Catechumenal Ministry)

7) **Christian Initiation Record:** Suitable for keeping track of a catechumen or candidate in RCIA. Sample provided from ACM (Association for Catechumenal Ministry)

8) **Godparent/Sponsor Information:** Suitable Godparents and Sponsor for sacraments of initiation. Sample provided from ACM (Association for Catechumenal Ministry)
# Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix

SACRAMENTAL RECORDS RELEASE REQUEST

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<td><strong>NAME OF SACRAMENT:</strong> BAPTISM MARRIAGE COMMUNION CONFIRMATION OTHER</td>
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<td><strong>NAME AT THE TIME OF SACRAMENT:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>APPROXIMATE DATE OF SACRAMENT:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NAME OF FATHER:</strong></td>
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In order to protect the privacy of the individual involved, certificates are only issued to the parent of the child, or to the person to whom the records is referring. NO certificates are issued for genealogical purposes. Photo ID must be presented. (A nominal fee may be charged)
Affidavit of Baptism

This form is used when there is a verifiable Baptism, but no official document of certificate exists.

In the presence of the ____________________________ 
(Name of Catholic cleric under whose authority this affidavit is accepted by the Catholic Church)

I (we) testify that ________________________________ 
(full legal name of person baptized)

child of ________________________________________ 
(full legal name of mother of person baptized)

and ___________________________________________ 
(full legal name of father of person baptized)

born in _________________________________________ 
(include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

on the ________________________ day of __________________ in ___________________________
(day of birth) (month of birth) (year of birth)

WAS BAPTIZED

on the ________________________ day of __________________ in ___________________________
(day of Baptism) (month of Baptism) (year of Baptism)

at ___________________________________________ 
(place of Baptism, including church name (or hospital, etc.), locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

by ___________________________________________ 
(name of the individual who performed the Baptism (include the title of the individual, if known))

the godparents (or sponsors) being ___________________________________________ 
(if known)

and ___________________________________________ 
(if known)

Witness(es) to the Baptism

_________________________ Date __________________________ 
(signature of witness (this can be the subject of the affidavit if he/she was old enough to remember the Baptism))

_________________________ Date __________________________ 
(signature of second witness, if required by the diocese)

Office Use Only:

Date affidavit received ___________________________ Received by ___________________________

Parish receiving affidavit record ___________________________

Full address of parish ___________________________

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Adult Inquirer Information Form

Information on this form is held in confidence and is not shared without your permission.

Today’s Date: __________________________

Name: First: ________________________ Middle: __________________ Last: ________________________

Maiden Name (if applicable): _____________________________________________________________________

Date of Birth: ___________________________ Age: __________________

Place of Birth: __________________________________________________________________________________

(include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

Name of Father: ________________________________________________________________________________

Name of Mother: ________________________________________________________________________________

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Mailing Address: ____________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Phone: (Daytime) ___________________________ (Evening/Weekend) ___________________________

Cell/Mobile Phone: ___________________________ Occupation: ___________________________

Email: (Home) ___________________________ (Other) __________________________________________

II. RELIGIOUS HISTORY

1. What, if any, is your present religious affiliation? ___________________________

2. Have you ever been baptized? □ Yes □ No □ I am not sure

   If you answered “Yes” to Question 2, please provide the following information:

   a) In what denomination were you baptized? ____________________________________________

   b) Date of your approximate age when you were baptized: ____________________________

   c) Baptismal name (if different from current name): _________________________________

   d) Place of Baptism (name of church/denomination): _________________________________

   e) Address, if known: ____________________________________________________________

   f) Location, if known: ____________________________________________________________

      (include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

3. If you were baptized as a Catholic, check those sacraments you have already received:

   □ Penance (Confession) □ Eucharist (First Communion) □ Confirmation

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III. CURRENT MARTIAL STATUS

Check the appropriate statement(s) below and provide any information requested beneath each statement.

☐ 1. I have never been married.

☐ 2. I am engaged to be married.
   a) Your Fiancé(e)’s Name: __________________________________________________________
   b) Your Fiancé(e)’s Current Religious Affiliation (if any): _____________________________
   c) For you: □ This is my first marriage. □ I have been married before.
   d) For your fiancé(e): □ This is his/her first marriage. □ My fiancé(e) has been married before.

☐ 3. I am married.
   a) Your Spouse’s Name: ___________________________________________________________
   b) Your Spouse’s Current Religious Affiliation (if any): _____________________________
   c) For you: □ This is my first marriage. □ I have been married before.
   d) For your spouse: □ This is my spouse’s first marriage. □ My spouse has been married before.
   e) Date of Marriage: _____________________________________________________________
   f) Place of Marriage: _____________________________________________________________
      (include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)
   g) Officiating Authority of Marriage: _____________________________________________
      (civil government, non-Christian minister, Christian minister, Catholic cleric)

☐ 4. I am married, but separated from my spouse.

☐ 5. I am divorced and I have not remarried.

☐ 6. I am a widow/widower and have not remarried since my spouse’s death.

IV. FAMILY INFORMATION

List the name(s) of any children or other dependents (e.g., Daughter – Jane; Stepson – John).

Relationship: __________________________ Name: ___________________________ Age: _______

Relationship: __________________________ Name: ___________________________ Age: _______

Relationship: __________________________ Name: ___________________________ Age: _______

Relationship: __________________________ Name: ___________________________ Age: _______

Relationship: __________________________ Name: ___________________________ Age: _______

Relationship: __________________________ Name: ___________________________ Age: _______
V. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What or who has led you to want to know more about the Catholic Faith?

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

2. Please describe the types of religious education you have received, as a child and as an adult.

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

3. What contact have you had with the Catholic Church to date?

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

4. What are some of the questions or concerns you have about the Catholic Church?

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

5. At this point in time, which of the following statements best describes your present feelings and thoughts about the possibility of joining the Catholic Church? (please circle one)

   A. I need much more information about the Catholic Church before I would consider joining.

   B. I am considering joining, but I am still unsure about it.

   C. I am fairly sure that I would like to join, but still need some time to study and pray about it.

   D. I am fairly sure that I want to join the Catholic Church.
Current Martial Status Follow-Up

Inquirer’s Name: ____________________________________________________________

Depending on the responses on the Inquirer Information Form in Section III. Current Martial Status, you may need to complete additional information or ask follow-up questions as indicated below.

If the Inquirer responds... “2. I am engaged to be married.”

1. **Look at Questions (c) and (d)**

   If either the inquirer and/or the inquirer’s fiancé(e) has been previously married, complete Section I and/or II on the Previous Marriage Information Form with the inquirer/inquirer’s fiancé(e). If either party has a previous marriage that has not been adjudicated, the inquirer should be informed of the need to contact the marriage tribunal of the diocese as soon as possible and, if necessary, start a case. The local pastor should be informed of the same.

   You will also need to inform the inquirer immediately that no guarantee can be given that any case submitted to the diocesan marriage tribunal might be adjudicated in time for reception into the Church by the Easter Vigil of the coming year.

2. **Ask this Follow-Up Question**

   When are you hoping to be married?

   You many need to explain the process of marriage preparation in the Catholic Church and any applicable diocesan marriage policies that may affect a wedding date.

If the Inquirer responds... “3. I am married.”

1. **Look at Questions (c) and (d)**

   If either the inquirer and/or the inquirer’s spouse has been previously married, complete Section I and/or II on the Previous Marriage Information Form with the inquirer/the inquirer’s spouse. If either party has a previous marriage that has not been adjudicated, the inquirer should be informed on the need to contact the marriage tribunal of the diocese as soon as possible and, if necessary, start a case. The local pastor should be informed of the same.

   You will need to inform the inquirer immediately that no guarantee can be given that any case submitted to the diocesan marriage tribunal might be adjudicated in time for reception into the Church by the Easter Vigil of the coming year.

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If the Inquirer responds… “3. I am married.” (Continued)

2. Ask these Follow-Up Questions

Was your spouse baptized as a Catholic? □ Yes □ No

If neither the inquirer nor the inquirer’s spouse was baptized as a Catholic, then no further questions are needed.

If either the inquirer or his/her spouse was baptized as a Catholic, then you will need to ask:

Was your marriage witnessed by a Catholic priest of deacon? □ Yes □ No

If “Yes,” then no further questions are needed.

If “No,” then you will need to ask:

Did you receive a dispensation to have someone other than a Catholic priest or deacon witness your marriage? □ Yes □ No □ I am not sure.

If someone was baptized as a Catholic and did not either (1) have their marriage witnessed by a Catholic priest or deacon or (2) receive a dispensation from this requirement, you will need to inform the local pastor to determine if the marriage will need to be convalidated.

If the Inquirer responds… “5. I am divorced and I have not remarried.”

Ask this Follow-Up Question

Is your previous spouse alive? □ Yes □ No

“Yes” – If the former spouse is alive, the inquirer may be received into the Catholic Church without having his/her previous marriage adjudicated. However, the following points must be addressed before taking this route.

While the adjudication of a previous marriage for someone who is divorced and not remarried is not strictly required to be received into the Catholic Church, there is a certain advisability for someone in this situation to contact the diocesan marriage tribunal and start a case, if necessary, if a future marriage is a possibility. If an inquirer chooses not to have a previous marriage adjudicated, the inquirer will need to understand that if he/she is received into the Catholic Church and then wants to marry again, he/she will have to have the previous marriage adjudicated at that point and, if the previous marriage is determined to be valid, he/she will not be able to marry in the Catholic Church until that marital bond is dissolved upon the death of the former spouse. If the inquirer clearly understands this, then he/she may be received into the Church.

“No” – If the former spouse has died, there is no impediment to the person being received into the Church because there is no existing marital bond. People sometimes think that even if they are divorced and their former spouse has died, they still cannot become Catholic. This is not true.
Previous Marriage Information

Complete this form if an inquirer has been previously married (Section I) or if an inquirer’s spouse or fiancé(e) has been previously married (Section II).

I. PREVIOUS MARRIAGE(S) OF AN INQUIRER

Complete questions (a) to (e) for each previous marriage. Copy form for additional marriages.

Name of Inquirer: ________________________________________________________________

___ Previous Marriage

(First, Second, etc.)

(a) Former Spouse’s Current Name:

First: ____________________ Middle/Maiden: ____________________ Last: _____________________

(b) Date of Marriage: _______________________________________________________________________

(c) Place of Marriage: ____________________________________________________________

(include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

(d) Officiating Authority of Marriage: ____________________________________________

(civil government, non-Christian minister, Christian minister, Catholic cleric)

(e) Have you or your former spouse ever petitioned for a decree of nullity from a tribunal of the Catholic Church?

☐ No

☐ A petition is currently in process:

Diocese: ______________________________________________________________________

(include name of diocese, region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

Case Number: ______________________________________________________________________

☐ Yes

If “Yes,” was a decree of nullity issued? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know

Case Number: ______________________________________________________________________

Date of decree of nullity (if issued): ______________________________________________________________________

Diocese: ______________________________________________________________________

(include name of diocese, region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

☐ Decree of nullity verified by: _____________________________________________________________________

(Date: ________________

(include name and title of official)
II. PREVIOUS MARRIAGE(S) OF AN INQUIRER’S FIANCÉ(E)/SPOUSE

Complete for an inquirer’s fiancé(e)/spouse who has been previously married.

Complete questions (a) to (e) for each previous marriage. Copy form for additional marriages.

Name of Inquirer’s Fiancé(e)/Spouse: _______________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Previous Marriage

(First, Second, etc.)

(a) Former Spouse’s Current Name:
   First: ____________________ Middle/Maiden: ___________________ Last: _____________________

(b) Date of Marriage:

   _________________________________________________________________________

(c) Place of Marriage:

   (include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

   ________________________________________________________________________

(d) Officiating Authority of Marriage:

   ________________________________________________________

   (civil government, non-Christian minister, Christian minister, Catholic cleric)

(e) Has the inquirer’s fiancé(e)/spouse or his or her former spouse ever petitioned for a decree of nullity from a tribunal of the Catholic Church?

   □ No

   □ A petition is currently in process:

      Diocese: _______________________________________________________

      (include name of diocese, region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

      Case Number: _______________________________________________________

   □ Yes

      If “Yes,” was a decree of nullity issued? □ Yes □ No □ I don’t know

      Case Number: _______________________________________________________

      Date of decree of nullity (if issued): __________________________________________

      Diocese: _______________________________________________________

      (include name of diocese, region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

   □ Decree of nullity verified by: ______________________________ Date: ________________

      (include name and title of official)
Child/Teen Inquirer
Information Form

Information is held in confidence and is not shared without your permission.

Today’s Date: ____________________________

Child/Teen’s Name:
First: ___________________________ Middle: ___________________ Last: ___________________________

Maiden Name (if applicable): _____________________________________________________________________

Date of Birth: _____________________________________________________ Age: ____________________

Place of Birth: ______________________________________________________________________________
(include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

Grade Level: ________________ School: ________________________________________________________

1. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

List below the name(s) of parent(s)/guardian(s) and present religious affiliation, if any:

Name: _____________________________________________ Relationship: ___________________________
Religious Affiliation: ________________________________________________________________________

Name: _____________________________________________ Relationship: ___________________________
Religious Affiliation: ________________________________________________________________________

Full Mailing Address: ________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: (Daytime) ___________________________________ (Evening/Weekend) _______________________

Cell/Mobile Phone: _____________________________ Email: ______________________________________

Child/teen lives with: ☐ Parents ☐ Mother Only ☐ Father Only ☐ Other (please explain): ___________

If child/teen lives with one parent/guardian, please indicate who has legal custody and/or if the child/teen also
lives with a step-parent: _____________________________________________________________________

If there is joint custody arrangement, please provide alternate full address: ___________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
II. RELIGIOUS HISTORY

1. Has your child/teen ever been baptized? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I am not sure

If you answered “Yes” to Question 1, please provide the following information:

(a) In what denomination was your child/teen baptized? _________________________________________

(b) Date or approximate age when your child/teen was baptized: ________________________________

(c) Baptismal name (if different from current name): ___________________________________________

(d) Place of Baptism (name of church/denomination): ________________________________________

(e) Address, if known: __________________________________________________________________

(f) Location, if known: ___________________________________________________________________
   (include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

2. If your child/teen was baptized as a Catholic, check those sacraments he/she has received.
   ☐ Penance (Confession) ☐ Eucharist (First Communion) ☐ Confirmation

3. For a teen: Has he/she been married or is he/she currently married?
   ☐ Never been married ☐ Is currently married ☐ Has been married

III. FAMILY INFORMATION

List the name(s) of any siblings (e.g., John – Brother; Jean – Stepsister).

Name: ________________________ Relationship: ________________________ Age: ______
Name: ________________________ Relationship: ________________________ Age: ______
Name: ________________________ Relationship: ________________________ Age: ______
Name: ________________________ Relationship: ________________________ Age: ______
Name: ________________________ Relationship: ________________________ Age: ______

IV. LEARNING STYLE

Not all people learn in the same way. You can help your child/teen get as much out of this process as possible by sharing about your child’s learning abilities.

In what ways do you think your child/teen enjoys learning?

Listening (Lecture; Storytelling) ____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Seeing (Looking at pictures; Identifying symbols; Watching a video) _____________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Reading (At what grade level does your child/teen read? Does your child enjoy reading?) __________

____________________________________________________________________________________
**Writing** (At what level is your child’s/teen’s writing skills? Does your child/teen like to write stories/keep a journal?)

___________________________________________________________________________________________

**Hands On** (Does your child/teen enjoy doing projects or making crafts?)

___________________________________________________________________________________________

**Group Work** (Does your child/teen enjoy working with others?)

___________________________________________________________________________________________

It will help to know your child’s/teen’s strongest attributes and challenges. Please add below any helpful details that you think would be relevant.

*For example: “Mary is very outgoing and gets excited when she is having fun. She becomes quiet when she doesn’t understand something. She works well with other children. Mary also has a 30% hearing loss in her left ear. She may not hear you if you are standing behind her and speaking normally.”*

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

**V. GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. Please describe the types of religious education in which your child/teen has participated.

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What contact has your child/teen had with the Catholic Church to date?

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

3. What are some of the questions or concerns your child/teen has about the Catholic Church?

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Please summarize below the reason(s) your child/teen desires to begin the Christian initiation process.

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________
Christian Initiation Record

Use this form to record important dates related to the Christian initiation process and other information for sacramental record-keeping.

Full Legal Name: ____________________________________________________________

☐ Has not been baptized ☐ Has been baptized ☐ Is not sure if he/she has been baptized

Date of Birth: ___________________________ Age at time of initiation: ______________________

Place of Birth: ____________________________________________________________________________

(include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

Full Mailing Address: _____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: (Daytime) ___________________________ (Evening/Weekend) ___________________________

Cell/Mobile Phone: ___________________________ Email: _______________________________________

Father’s First and Last Names: _____________________________________________________________

Mother’s First and Maiden Names: ___________________________________________________________

Was a decree of nullity needed for either the inquirer of the inquirer’s spouse/fiancé(e)?

☐ No ☐ Yes (if yes, section III of this record should be completed)

I. FOR AN UNBAPTIZED PERSON

1. Date of Participation in the Rite of Acceptance: _____________________________

2. Date of Participation in the Rite of Election: _____________________________

3. Date of Reception of Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist: _____________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Godparent(s)/Sponsor(s): ____________________________________________________________

5. Baptismal/Confirmation Name (patron saint): _____________________________________________

6. Cleric Conferring Baptism and Confirmation: _____________________________________________

II. FOR A BAPTIZED PERSON

1. Baptismal Certificate received by date: ___________________________ Date of Baptism: _______________________

2. Date of Participation in the Rite of Welcoming: _____________________________

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Sacramental Records Policy & Guidelines March 2010, Revised October 2010
III. RECORD OF PROCESS TO PETITION FOR A DECREE OF NULLITY

Use this section to keep a record of the various steps completed in process to seek a decree of nullity. Copy pages for additional marriages.

1. Process for □ Inquirer □ Inquirer’s Spouse/Fiancé(e)

☐ ___/___/___ Pastor/parish clergy has been informed.
☐ ___/___/___ Inquirer has been informed about the process and potential timeframe.
☐ ___/___/___ Diocesan marriage tribunal has been contacted for paperwork.
☐ ___/___/___ Inquirer has submitted paperwork to the diocesan marriage tribunal.
☐ ___/___/___ Marriage has been adjudicated and documented in parish records.

Decision: __________________________________________________________

Tribunal Contact: ___________________________________________ Phone: ________________________

Case Number: ______________________________________________________

Date of decree of nullity (if issued): ________________________________

Diocese: ____________________________________________________________

☐ Decree of nullity verified by: ______________________________ Date: ________________

(include name of diocese, region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

2. Process for □ Inquirer □ Inquirer’s Spouse/Fiancé(e)

☐ ___/___/___ Pastor/parish clergy has been informed.
☐ ___/___/___ Inquirer and has been informed about the process and potential timeframe.
☐ ___/___/___ Inquirer’s spouse/fiancé(e) has been informed about the process.
☐ ___/___/___ Diocesan marriage tribunal has been contacted for paperwork.
☐ ___/___/___ Inquirer’s spouse/fiancé(e) has submitted paperwork to the diocesan marriage tribunal.
☐ ___/___/___ Marriage has been adjudicated and documented in parish records.

Decision: __________________________________________________________
Tribunal Contact: ______________________________________ Phone: _______________________

Case Number: ______________________________________________________________________

Date of decree of nullity (if issued): ___________________________________________________

Diocese: ___________________________________________________________________________

(include name of diocese, region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

☐ Decree of nullity verified by: ___________________________________________________________________ Date: __________________________

(include name and title of official)
Godparent/Sponsor Information

Name (First and Last): ________________________________

Please initial after reading the following paragraph:

I understand that as a godparent or sponsor I am to live a life in harmony with the nature of this responsibility, meaning, for example, that I regularly attend Mass; I receive the Eucharist regularly; I make use of the sacrament of Reconciliation; I am not in an irregular marriage; I am not an active homosexual; and I seek to the best of my understanding of my Catholic faith to be faithful to the teachings of the Church. I attest that I have received the sacrament of Confirmation and that I am at least 16 years old. I also understand that being a godparent or sponsor is a commitment of time. I will attend weekly sessions for catechesis, the celebrations of liturgical rites, and other initiation-related events to the best of my ability. I further understand that being chosen as a godparent or sponsor is a lifetime commitment to be, as I am able, a faithful witness of the Catholic way of life to the individual I am called to serve. If I am not a member of the same parish as the person who I am serving, then I will obtain a Letter of Good Standing from my own parish, attesting to the fact that I attend Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, follow the precepts of the Church, and possess no impediments for serving as a godparent or sponsor.

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Mailing Address: ________________________________

Phone: (Daytime) __________________________ (Evening/Weekend) ______________________

Cell/Mobile Phone: ___________________________ Occupation: _________________________

Email: (Home) ___________________________ (Other) ___________________________

II. SACRAMENTAL HISTORY

1. Place Where You Were Baptized:

   (include church name (or hospital, etc.), locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

2. Parish Where You Are Currently Registered:

   Full Mailing Address: ________________________________

   Pastor’s Name: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________

For Office Use

Godparent/Sponsor for: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Completed Initial Sponsor Formation by Date: ___________________________

If from Another Parish, Letter of Good Standing Received by Date: ___________________________

Notes: ___________________________

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APPENDIX E: CARING FOR SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

Sacramental records form an important religious function. They document an individual’s spiritual journey and the spiritual growth of the parish. The records may also be used as legal documents when civil documents do not exist. Canon Law 535 requires parishes to maintain and preserve their sacramental records. While time, fire and flood pose very real threats, the greatest danger these records face is poor storage and wear and tear caused by poor handling. This guide provides the parish with guidelines on the proper handling and storage of these irreplaceable documents.

Handling

Careless handling of sacramental registers can accelerate deterioration. Always handle registers carefully.

If the books are stored on shelving, they should stand upright on their bottom edge. If the books are stored in a file cabinet where they cannot stand upright, they should be stored on their spine, not on the edge opposite the spine. The books should be properly supported and not allowed to sag or lean against each other. Nor should they be tightly together.

If the registers are too large to be stored upright or on their spines, they can be stored flat. However, no more than 3 volumes should be stacked upon one another.

Do not photocopy the pages of the volumes. Pressing the volume down on the photocopier weakens the binding.

Do not expose the volumes to sunlight or artificial light more than necessary. Both types of light emit ultraviolet (UV) radiation which is extremely damaging to paper. Store registers in a dark area. When they are taken out to add or retrieve information, do the work quickly and immediately return the book to storage. Do not leave an open book exposed to light.

When removing a book from the shelf, do not grasp it by the top of the spine. Grasp the sides of the book firmly on each side and gently slide it out.

The area where the volumes are to be used should be free of food, clean, flat and large enough to support the registers.

Environmental Conditions

The environmental conditions in which the registers are kept will go a long way in determining how long the paper will last. The two major threats to the records are temperature and humidity.

Ideally the records will be stored at a constant temperature of 69 degrees year around and a constant relative humidity of 40% - 50%.

Ideally, your parish will provide a storage space that has both heating and air conditioning and a humidifier/dehumidifier. Do not store the records in a basement area. Do not adjust the thermostat when the staff leaves for the day. Maintain the same temperature level year-round.

The worst thing that happens to paper stored in a poor environment is that it becomes brittle. The first warning sign that the paper is becoming brittle is that it discolors along the edges. If any volume shows signs of discoloration, contact the Archives immediately. If the deterioration can be caught and treated early enough, the volume can generally be saved. Once the paper becomes brittle, there is nothing that can be done to reverse the process.
What NOT to Do

Do not use pressure sensitive tape (Scotch tape) under any circumstances. This tape is highly acidic and destructive to paper.

Do not laminate any pages. The process involves driving plastic into the paper through heat. It will ultimately destroy the paper and is virtually irreversible.

Do not staple, glue, or paper clip any documents to the pages of the registers.

Do not let any vendor do any work on your records without first contacting the Archives & Records Center. If a vendor approaches your parish, contact the Archives before agreeing to let them do any work. If you are seeking a vendor, contact us for suggestions.

Rebinding that destroys any data or renders any part of the records unusable is not acceptable. For these reasons, the Chancellor for Archives and Records shall be consulted before any rebinding or restoration work is undertaken.

Under no circumstances shall the original register be discarded.

What to do

Maintain the volumes properly. Address any problems with the books as soon as they arise. The longer you put off conservation repairs, the more expensive and difficult those repairs will become.

Contact the Archives and Records Center for assistance. Our role is to help you preserve your records.

Summary

Sacramental records are the most valuable records in the diocese and must be preserved permanently. By properly caring for its records, a parish can not only ensure that the records are preserved, but they can avoid costly repairs by avoiding damaging the records in the first place.