Sacramental Recordkeeping

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Welcome & Prayer

Session Overview

- Reminder of the basics of sacramental recordkeeping

- Unique scenarios in recordkeeping

- Digitization, Preservation, and Access

- Helpful Contacts

- Your Questions

What does canon law say?

- Each parish is to have parochial registers, that is, those of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, deaths, and others as prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop. ~ Can. 535 §1
  - In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, this also includes First Communion records.

What does canon law say?

- In the baptismal register are ***also to be noted*** (Can. 535 §2):
    - Confirmation
    - Marriage
    - Adoption (if there is a change to an original sacramental record)
    - Holy Orders
    - Perpetual Profession (members of religious communities)
    - Change of Rite (ascription)
    - Declarations of Nullity & Freedom to Marry

Standard Baptismal Entry

Name of Person	Place/Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's name & mother's maiden name	Sponsor(s)	Priest	Date & Place of Confirmation
Brockman, Richard Mark	Novi, IN/March 4, 1950	March 11, 1950	Robert J. Brockman & Angela Torrini	Philip Brockman & Agnes Lippert	James J. Lee	

RCIA

- All sacraments should be noted in baptismal register

  - Catechumen:

Name of Person	Place/Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's name & mother's maiden name	Sponsor(s)	Priest	Date & Place of Confirmation	Notations
Moore, John R	Novi, IN/April 3, 1957	July 17, 1987	Michael Moore & Marie Secrest	Harold Thompson & Beverly Wilson	T.J. Exter	July 17, 1987, St. Odo, Max, OH	Baptized, Confirmed, First Communion on July 17, 1987, St. Odo, Max, OH

  - Candidate:

If person later marries in the Church or has a previous marriage convalidated, this information should be added to the notations in baptismal register.

Name of Person	Place/Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's name & mother's maiden name	Sponsor(s)	Priest	Date & Place of Confirmation	Notations
Moore, John R	Novi, IN/April 3, 1957	Prof. of Faith - July 17, 1987	Michael Moore & Marie Secrest	Harold Thompson & Beverly Wilson	T.J. Exter	July 17, 1987, St. Odo, Max, OH	Received into Full Communion 7/17/1987; Baptized April 10, 1957, United Methodist Church, Novi, IN

Baptism Administered Outside of Church Building

- Emergency Baptisms
  - **Form a relationship** with chaplain/spiritual care departments at hospitals within your parish boundaries to ensure reception of sacramental records.
  - If a priest performs emergency baptism at a hospital, **confirmation should also be administered**.
  - If emergency baptism is administered by layperson, an affidavit from parents or witnesses should be supplied.
  - If solemn rites are later supplied, this should be notated in the baptismal register.

Name of Person	Place/Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's name & mother's maiden name	Sponsor(s)	Priest	Date & Place of Confirmation	Notations
Sanders, Claire Marie	Novi, IN/May 25, 2005	25-May-05	Melvin Sanders & Susan Cheeham	Ronald Jackson & Mary Sanders	T.J. Exter		Baptized by a nurse in Regional Hospital, Olden, IN per parents' affidavit. Solemn rites provided on Nov. 3, 2005. See affidavit in files

Notes about Confirmation

- Candidates may be received for confirmation can be received into the Church at any time (other than Good Friday); Easter Vigil is actually not preferred time
- Children of catechetical age (7 and up) should be treated as adults, and utilize the RCIA process for receiving Sacraments of Initiation
  - Children baptized in another faith tradition desiring to make First Communion must make a Profession of Faith prior to receiving first communion if they do not participate in RCIA.
- Parish registration form for RCIA and other helpful documents can be found on Office of Worship homepage: http://www.archindy.org/worship/index.html

Confirmation Register

- A confirmation register should be maintained, listing the confirmand's name, parents' names, sponsor's name, name of officiating clergy, and place of confirmation.

PERSON CONFIRMED	PARENTS	SPONSOR	CLERGY OFFICIATING	DATE OF CONFIRMATION	PLACE OF CONFIRMATION

- The confirmation should also be notated in the baptismal register.
- Notice of confirmation should be sent to parish of baptism, if different.

Marriage Records

The record must include:
- The complete names of both parties who marry;
- Date of marriage;
- Complete names of witnesses;
- Name of official church witness (bishop, priest, deacon);
- Other Information
  - date of dispensations or permissions
  - dispensation or permission number
  - the name of the Diocese granting that dispensation or permission)
  - church name and location of baptism/profession of faith for the Catholic parties in the marriage
  - the indication as to baptismal status of non-Catholic party
  - and the proper delegation of the cleric, if applicable

Marriage Records

- A notice of marriage must be sent to the church(es) of baptism/profession of faith of the Catholic spouse(s).
  - Full names of the couple
  - Date and place of the marriage (church name and location)
  - Date of baptism/profession of faith.
- Once the annotation is made, the church of baptism/profession of faith should return this card to the church where the marriage took place.
  - This notification is retained in the pre-nuptial file of the couple.

Marriage Prenuptial Files

- It is archdiocesan policy to maintain sacramental records and forms regarding marriage information, dispensations and sacramental records in the pre-nuptial files. These files should include:
  - Affidavits (if needed) regarding freedom to marry
  - Nullity decrees and death certificates of prior spouses for second or subsequent marriages
  - Return notifications from the churches of baptism/profession of faith

It is never permissible to allow these files to leave the parish unless requested directly by the chancery or tribunal.

Under no circumstances are these files to be released to other parishes, individuals, or the parties to the marriage.

Marriage Taking Place Outside of Church Building

- Marriages
  - Marriages performed outside of a church should be recorded in the territorial parish in which the site of marriage is located.
  - Marriages which are performed with a dispensation from Catholic form should be recorded in the parish of the Catholic party.

Name of Person	Place/Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's name & mother's maiden name	Sponsor(s)	Priest	Date & Place of Confirmation	Notations
Brockman, Richard Mark	Novi, IN/March 4, 1950	March 11, 1950	Robert J. Brockman & Angela Torrini	Philip Brockman & Agnes Lippert	James J. Lee	October 16, 1961, St. Jacque, Novi, IN	Married Jane Kennedy, June 14, 1973, in First Christian Church, Moors, IN. Records at St. Jacque, Church, Novi, IN

Marriage Taking Place Outside of Church Building

- Record-keeping exception exists for newly-formed parishes without a church building or parishes where the church building is not usable, e.g., being remodeled, damaged, etc. (hereafter "originating parish").

- The pastor of the originating parish is responsible for the marriage records of his parishioners which take place in other Catholic churches before the church is constructed or when the church is not usable.
  - Records are kept at the originating parish.

- The territorial parish in which these marriages occur will keep a **simple listing** of these weddings in their parish marriage register
  - recording only the names of the couple
  - date of marriage
  - names of the priest or deacon who performed the ceremony

Additionally, a notation that the complete marriage file and record is available in the marriage register of the originating parish is placed in the "remarks" column of the marriage register of the territorial parish.

Note: The pastor of the originating parish must still obtain delegation from the territorial pastor for marriages of his parishioners taking place in these other Catholic churches.

Ordination Records

- Ordination Records in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis are maintained by the Office of Vocations
- Notifications are mailed to parishes after deacon/priest ordinations take place
- Add notation in the baptismal register

Change of Ascription

Image Credit: Diocese of Arlington, Virginia

Change of Ascription by Marriage

- If a woman belonging to an Eastern Church *sui iuris* marries a man belonging to the Latin Church, she may transfer to the Latin Church by virtue of marriage.

- When the woman indicates she desires to transfer to her husband's Church, a notation must be made in the marriage record. Notice should also be sent to the party's church of baptism.

- **Only an Eastern woman may transfer to the Latin Church by virtue of marriage.** Eastern law does not allow the man to transfer to the Latin Church, but Latin law allows a Latin man to transfer to an Eastern Church by virtue of marriage.

Change of Ascription

In cases other than transferring by marriage, if a subject of an Eastern Church *sui iuris* desires to transfer to the Latin Church, he/she must submit a request to transfer.

Contact the Tribunal for assistance with a request to transfer ascription.

Death Records

- Records for funerals celebrated at your parish, or at the funeral home for Catholics, should be recorded in a death register
  - The legal and Christian names of the person
  - The residential address of the deceased person
  - The date and place of death
  - The church and date of burial
  - Additional information, if known

- Death information need not be sent to the parish of baptism

Cemetery Records

- Should be kept separate from death records
- Should include:
  - Burial Date (may be the same as the Funeral Date). Note whether Interred, Entombed, or Cremated.
  - The Name of the Cemetery
  - Grave Location, including Section, Block, Lot and Grave
  - Grave Purchase Date and Cost
  - Deed Issue Date
  - Deed Owner

When Records Cannot Be Located

- Persons missing their sacramental records may provide a sworn affidavit from two witnesses attesting to their sacraments.

- Encourage your pastor to speak with the person to help determine whether a sworn affidavit is appropriate
  - E.g. vague sense of "probably being baptized" vs. having some evidence (photos, baptism candle, names of godparents, detailed stories, etc.)

When Records Cannot Be Located

- If a sworn affidavit is to be used, this should be noted in baptismal record

Name of Person	Place/Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's name & mother's maiden name	Sponsor(s)	Priest	Date & Place of Confirmation	Notations
Brockman, Richard Mark	Novi, IN/March 4, 1950	March 11, 1950	Robert J. Brockman & Angela Torrini	Philip Brockman & Agnes Lippert	James J. Lee	October 16, 1961, St. Jacque, Novi, IN	Baptized on March 11, 1950 at St. Jacque, Novi, IN. Baptism attested to by mother. See affidavit in files

- For baptism, if a sworn affidavit cannot be provided, conditional baptism should be administered and notated in record

Name of Person	Place/Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's name & mother's maiden name	Sponsor(s)	Priest	Date & Place of Confirmation	Notations
Brockman, Richard Mark	Novi, IN/March 4, 1950	May 10, 1973	Robert J. Brockman & Angela Torrini	Philip Brockman & Agnes Lippert	James J. Lee		Original Baptismal Record not Found - Baptized Conditionally

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Closed-Merged-Linked Parishes

- When a parish closes, normally a successor parish is designated to receive the closed parish's sacramental records.
  - A small number of closed parish records are at the archdiocesan archives. See the archives website for the location of sacramental records of all closed parishes: http://www.archindy.org/archives/index.html
- Archives will contact successor parish after suppressed parish closes to confirm location of sacramental records. Response will be noted in archives files for both parishes.

Closed-Merged-Linked Parishes

- When two parishes merge, sacramental records should be moved to the physical location of the merged parish.

- Linked parishes
  - Parishes sharing a pastor should maintain *separate sacramental record books* for each parish
  - Record books may be kept together at one of the linked parishes for convenience
    - Please leave some notification at the other parishes indicating where the record books are currently being housed.

Closed-Merged-Linked Parishes

- If a parish has been closed and its former church building is still being used as a worship site by the successor parish, **the name of the successor parish should be used in the creation of new sacramental records**, regardless of whether the sacrament takes place at a worship site that formerly housed the closed parish.
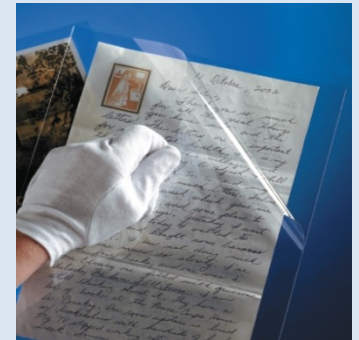
Purchasing Record Books

- Record books should have acid-free and preferably alkaline-buffered paper
- FJ Remey books are recommended

http://store.fjremey.com/Church-Record-Books_c5.htm
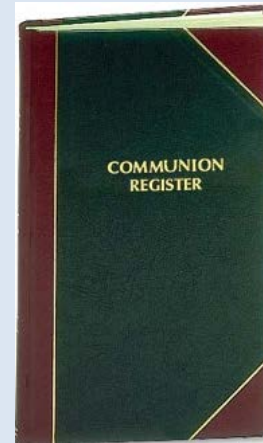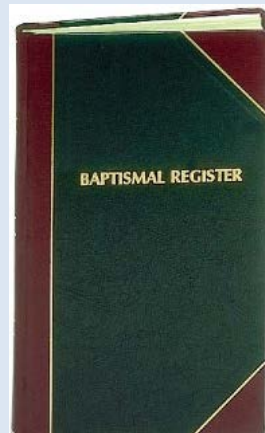
Preservation

- Rebinding is not recommended, as data can become obscured in the re-binding process

- If you have loose pages, place them in acid-free folders with a date and description written on the folder. Store with original record books.

- Stuck-together pages may be interleaved with polyester film.

Preservation

- If your books are falling apart:
  - Digitize for use at your parish
  - Send originals to archdiocesan archives
  - Contact archives for information if you are considering re-binding record books. I recommend the [National Library Bindery Company of Indiana](), but can assist you with sending your books there.

Microfilm

- Microfilming of older sacramental records was done archdiocese-wide in the late 1980s.

- This microfilm is kept at the archdiocesan archives, but PDFs, JPGs, or printed copies can be sent when needed.

- Check with archivist to see what years and types of records we have for your parish.

Digitization

- Digital records **CANNOT** replace sacramental record books
- Creating digital backups via scanning or by entering sacramental data into spreadsheets can:
  - Improve access when records are needed
  - Prevent data from being lost in cases of fire or flood
- Sacramental records should not be removed from the church property, so digitization should occur on site.
  - According to USCCB guidelines, sacramental records should not be provided to the Ancestory.com and other websites which may make the records public, or to groups affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Software

- There are software options available if you need a more robust method of indexing your sacramental records – again, these cannot replace handwritten records.
    - Parish Data System (PDS) Sacramental Register
    - Logos Sacramental Register
    - Sacramental Scribe

Providing Copies of Sacramental Records

- Records of marriages should be sent to church of baptism

- When sending copies of records for parishioners marrying elsewhere or for ordination, **COMPLETE ALL NOTATIONS ON BACK OF CERTIFICATE**

  - If there are no notations, write "no notations"

Providing Copies of Sacramental Records

- Records can be provided to the individuals to whom they belong, or to parents/guardians
  - Requests from outside agencies (Social Security, Immigration, etc.) should be accompanied by a signed release from individual
  - Contact chancellor if you receive a subpoena for sacramental records
- Record books should NOT be made available for browsing by genealogical researchers
- Copies of records originating prior to 1930 may be provided to researchers
  - If your parish receives many requests, consider adding a genealogy policy to your website.
- Genealogical requests for older records may also be directed to the archdiocesan archives

Information to be Included on Certificate

- In general, sacramental certificates should include the information as listed in the sacramental register.

- Information that is confidential or extraneous to the person's canonical status may be left off the certificate

- If there are no notations in the record, make an indication "no notations" on certificate

What can you do?

- When you have RCIA candidates, first communion and confirmation preparation classes, and couples preparing for marriage, gather their sacramental records at the BEGINNING of the preparation process.

- Make occasional reminders to your parishioners that if your parish is their parish of baptism, but they receive sacraments or "other events" elsewhere, they need to make sure the baptismal parish receives copies.

- Encourage your parishioners to keep their own copies of sacramental records in a safe place, such as a fire-proof box.

What Can You Do?

- Create an index in Excel, Access, or other software so that you can locate sacramental records when needed.

- Be sure to fully notate baptismal records. These records are the "root" of each person's sacramental history. Complete your notations as soon as possible after sacraments are received.

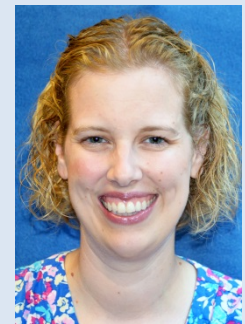- When you have questions, contact the archdiocesan offices. We are here to help!

Important Contacts

- Very Rev. Joseph L. Newton, JCL, Vicar-Judicial
  - Can answer questions about annulments other points of canon law
  - 317-236-1460 or 800-382-9836 Ext. 1460
  - Email: tribunal@archindy.org
- Very Rev. Patrick J. Beidelman, STL, Executive Director, Secretariat for Worship & Evangelization
  - Can answer questions about administration of sacraments
  - 317-236-1480 or 800-382-9836 Ext. 1480
  - Email: pbeidelman@archindy.org

Important Contacts

- Annette "Mickey" Lentz, Chancellor
  - Provides oversight of archives
  - 317-236-7325 or 800-382-9836 Ext. 7325
  - Email: mlentz@archindy.org
- Julie Motyka, Archivist
  - Can answer day-to-day questions regarding sacramental recordkeeping
  - 317-236-1538 or 800-382-9836 Ext. 1538
  - Email: jmotyka@archindy.org
  - http://www.archindy.org/archives
    - Sacramental Records Handbook
    - List of location of sacramental records of closed parishes

Thank You!

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- Thanks for all that you do to maintain the sacramental history of your parish. These records are very meaningful to the people concerned and will continue to be consulted 100+ years from now!

Questions?