

Diocese of Camden

Reference Guide to Sacramental Records: Preservation and Policies

Acknowledgements:

GENERAL NORMS

Canon 535

§ 1 Each parish is to possess a set of parish books including baptismal, marriage and death registers as well as other registers prescribed by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop; the pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurate.

§ 2 In the baptismal register are also to be noted the person's confirmation and whatever affects the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of marriage, with due regard for the prescription of Can. 1133, adoption, reception of sacred orders, perpetual profession in a religious institute, and change of rite; these notations are always to be noted on a document which certifies the reception of baptism.

§ 3 Each parish is to possess its own seal; documents which are issued to certify the canonical status of the Christian faithful as well as all acts which can have juridic importance are to be signed by the pastor or his delegate and sealed with the parish seal.

§ 5 The older parish books are also to be carefully preserved in accord with the prescriptions of particular law.

Canon 876

If it is not prejudicial to anyone, to prove the conferral of baptism, the declaration of a single witness who is above suspicion suffices or the oath of the baptized person, if the baptism was received at an adult age.

Canon 894

The prescriptions of Can 876 are to be observed for the proof of the conferral of confirmation.

Note:

Parishes and churches

There is a distinction between parish and church: a parish refers to the entire enterprise. A pastor, with the assistance of others, provides ministry to parishioners, defined by a territory or national (i.e., ethnic) composition. A church refers to the sacred building in which the faithful worship.

REGISTERS

Required registers

Each parish is required to maintain registers that record baptisms, confirmations, first communions, marriages, pre-marital envelopes and deaths. *No record of first reconciliation (confession) is to be kept.*

Institutions that keep registers

Generally, only parishes are to maintain sacramental records and registers. Non-parochial institutions (such as hospitals) must obtain the express approval of the Bishop to maintain separate sacramental records and registers.

In cases where sacraments are given some place other than a church, the records will either be kept by that institution, if the Bishop approves, or by the territorial parish in which the institution is located. This is most often the case for hospitals.

Mission churches

A mission church must maintain its own sacramental registers.

Merged parishes

A parish that merges into another parish will keep the registers from each original parish and begin a new set of registers for the merged parish. Certificates produced from a merged parish after the date of merger must have the seal of the new parish, and the words “the records of X parish are now in the custody of Y parish” X being the original parish, Y being the name of the “new/merged” parish. The seal(s) from the original parishes are to be sent to the Chancery, according to the Merger Manual of the Diocese.

If two or more parishes merge and create a new parish, the sacramental registers of the original parishes will remain in the new parish.

To issue certificates from these registers, follow these guidelines:

-Use the name the parish had when the person received the sacrament, not the name of the merged parish, unless the person received the sacrament in the merged parish. For example, if someone was baptized at St. Jude, Blackwood, N.J., in 2007, use the name St. Jude on the certificate (that’s what the name of the parish was when “Johnny” was baptized). Include the following on the certificate: “The sacramental records of St. Jude, Blackwood, N.J., are in the custody of Our Lady of Hope Parish.” Also include the full address of the merged parish, in this case, Our Lady of Hope Parish.

-It is entirely possible that an individual who received sacraments in the same building will have sacramental certificates with different parish names on them because of parish mergers.

-Use the parish seal of the new, merged parish on all certificates produced after the merger is complete. Seals from parishes before the merger should be sent to the Chancery.

Closed parishes

Closed parishes must keep their sacramental registers in a safe or room that allows easy accessibility for obtaining information for new certificates. These records should be kept in the new parish offices. A complete list of closed parishes is available on the Diocese of Camden website: www.camdendiocese.org

Sacraments received in the U.S. military

Records of all sacraments administered by priests or deacons serving in any branch of the U.S. military can be found at the Archdiocese for Military Services, P.O. Box 4469, Washington, D.C, 20017-0469 (202) 719-0469. www.milarch.org. This applies to all sacraments since 1917, regardless of where the military base was located.

Copyright of registers

Ownership of all copyrights for all sacramental records is held by the Bishop of the Diocese of Camden.

Under no circumstances may the original registers, or any of the information in the registers, be duplicated in any manner and given, loaned or sold to any person or institution without the express written permission of the Bishop.

Where to get registers

A parish should maintain a separate register for each sacrament. These registers are available from vendors specializing in Catholic religious supplies. Parishes should not create their own register books.

Suggested types of registers

It is suggested that registers be covered in a smooth leather or leather-like material. Cloth covered books should be avoided, as they attract and retain more dust. If the older parish registers are leather, do not use “leather dressing” or “leather oil” on them; this will encourage pests.

Make certain the pages of the registers are acid neutral (usually labeled “acid free”).

How to preserve registers

There are a number of ways to help preserve and protect the registers:

Do not keep loose pieces of paper into the registers; extra paper will damage the binding by causing it to bulge and crack.

Do not use “Post-it” type notes to update registers.

Do not repair any rips or tears in the paper with scotch tape; use archival tape.

Do not use “white out” for errors; use an archival pen to cross out errors with one line.

Do not clip notes to the registers with paperclips or staples; they will damage the paper and may rust.

If staples, paperclips, post-it notes or other added pieces are present in the register, *and can be removed safely without causing further damage*, do try to remove these items. Leave anything that will cause damage to the register by removing it. Leave anything that is glued in.

To remove staples, do not use a staple remover. Turn the page over and lift the ends of the staple and then pull it out from the “front” side.

Keep the registers out of direct sunlight.

Have the registers open only when working on a page.

Keep all food and drink away from the registers.

Watch for signs of mold or insect damage. Contact the Chancery if damage is detected.

Keep registers in a location that has fairly constant temperature and humidity. While 68 degrees Fahrenheit and 40% relative humidity is ideal, this is rarely achievable all the time. Extreme fluctuations in temperature and humidity are worse for the registers than a temperature that is normally a little too high or a little too low.

Do not keep registers in basements or attics as these tend to have poor environmental conditions.

Avoid storing registers near bathrooms, kitchens, washing machines or air conditioners-- any place that has water that could leak onto a register. Be sure to consider any potential water source in the room above where registers are kept.

Heat can be damaging to registers. Don't store registers too near heating ducts, furnaces, fireplaces, or by a window.

If registers are stored in a fire-proof safe or cabinet, it is best to use a “one hour rated” model. Fire-proof safes or cabinets with higher ratings tend to be too humid for long-term storage of paper.

It is best if registers are stored flat, with no more than three or four registers in a “stack,” with the largest register on the bottom of the stack. If registers cannot be stored flat, store them spine side down. Insert a piece of paper in the front of the register, sticking up, with the name of the register and the dates, so the register does not need to be moved to see what information it contains.

If the binding shows wear or pages are coming loose, do not use tape, contact paper or other adhesive products to try to hold the register together or the pages in. Please contact the Chancery; they will refer you to a qualified bindery.

All registers should be stored together, in a locked place. They should only be accessible to authorized personnel and only for legitimate sacramental reasons. The registers may not be removed from the parish by anyone except for reasons given by the archivist, chancellor, or Bishop.

Be wary of supplies that are advertised as “archival” from office supply stores or scrap-booking stores.

Avoid storing registers in plastic boxes or papers in plastic sleeves. These release harmful contaminants.

There is an excerpt from a pamphlet from a professional conservator at the end of this document about how to clean registers.

If you have any questions about storage or preservation of registers, please contact the Chancery. Phone: (856) 583-2807.

Water Damage

Water damage is the most likely severe damage a register could suffer.

If the book is only **damp or partially wet**, stand the book upright on its bottom or top edge (with wettest edge down), with the covers open at a 90 degree angle. If the book won't stand up, lay it open flat, and use clean, all white paper towels to absorb as much water as possible by blotting. *Do not scrub the pages or covers to get out more water.* This may smear the ink. Air dry in a room with low humidity and good air circulation. Do not have a fan blowing directly on the register.

If the book is **very wet**: close it, wrap the book in wax paper and place it spine down (making sure the covers are supported) in a freezer. A sub-zero commercial freezer is best, but a home freezer works too. *The book must be placed in the freezer within 48 hours of getting wet.*

Freezing stabilizes the book: mold growth will be stopped, ink will not run, and dye transfer and swelling will be reduced.

Finally: Phone the Chancery! (856) 583-2807. The Chancery will refer you to a disaster recovery firm.

How to make entries in registers

Use black pen to enter information into the registers. Several archival suppliers carry pens that are waterproof and fade proof. See the list of suppliers at the end of this document for suggestions.

Print neatly; do not use script. Handwriting styles change over time, and what may be legible to today's readers may not be in 50 years time.

Do not use abbreviations for names, places, or ceremonies (Wm. for William or SIC for Sea Isle City or POF for Profession of Faith). Spell out state names and dates (August, not Aug or 8). Use full years, such as 2010. Include full names, such as mother's first and maiden name on a baptismal record, or the full name of a witness to a sacrament. Use the priest or deacon's full name and appropriate title.

Do not write too close to any edge (including the binding) when entering information--writing close to an edge may be obscured in later re-binding or cause information to be lost if the edges of the register are damaged.

When the space for a person's information is full, do not write in the margins, or on slips of paper to be stuck in the book, or on post-it notes. There are several alternatives:

- Leave several pages at the back of each book blank and use that space.
- Leave space at the bottom of each page in each book blank and use that space.
- Skip lines between entries to allocate more space.

If using blank space at the back of the book, note the page of the original entry and the person's full name at the back of the register, and enter the new information there. Make an entry next to the person's name or in the notation column saying, "see page xx" or "see below."

If there are other documents that need to be kept, such as civil documentation of a name change or other correspondence, keep it in a separate file labeled "Sacramental Records." This file should be referenced in the register if there is documentation relevant to the record.

Keep the additional paperwork in a secure filing cabinet. Avoid using plastic storage boxes, plastic binders or plastic sleeves.

Information must be kept in the sacramental register books. If a parish wishes to keep a duplicate of the information in electronic form, that is permitted, but the bound paper registers must be kept current and never discarded. The paper registers are considered the only authentic copy of the sacramental record.

Enter information as soon as possible after the event being recorded.

Entries should be made in chronological order.

Keep a complete index of names. If an entry is made out of chronological order, the index will be the key to finding that entry. If a person's name changes, make certain the name listed in the index has the new name listed as well.

Data which is confidential and is not to be included on certificates should be so noted in the "notations" column, and marked "confidential". The provisions of Canon 535 §2 should be observed.

The actual minister of the sacrament does not need to sign the register, **IF** the person making the entry has a document signed by the minister that certifies conferral of the sacrament. The name of the minister is then printed in the space reserved for the signature.

Including a printed list of the full name of all priests/deacons who have signed the register at the beginning of the register is a great aid in having the full and correct information for certificates.

Changes to entries in registers

Once information is entered into a sacramental register, that data is considered official and permanent. Original data should never be scratched out, whited out, or otherwise destroyed or obliterated.

When making changes to entries already written in a register, there must be proof for the change to be made, such as legal adoption papers for a name change, a driver's license to correct spellings of names, and so on. The issuing agency, the date on the document and any protocol number should be listed in the "notations" column. This documentation should be kept in the sacramental records file.

Minor changes such as correcting a misspelling or date may be made by drawing one line through the information to be changed and printing the change immediately above or below it. Be certain the change(s) are not only made in the register in question, but also in any other relevant register, such as confirmation register that have the individual's name.

Major changes, such as adoption, may require a new entry. In these cases, the original entry must be maintained and the new entry cross-referenced with the original. "Do not issue certificate from this record" should be written in the area of the original entry.

Permitted changes: correction to spelling of name
 correction to date
 new legal name
 adoptive parents

Changes that are not permitted: new godparents or sponsors
 non-adopting step-parents
 customary name or nickname

Permitted changes are then included in any future certificates that are issued in place of the corrected data.

Access to the registers

Only the pastor, or persons authorized by the pastor who work for the parish, may look at or work on the registers. The number of people working on and having access to the registers should be limited. Those working on the registers must be able to do careful, accurate work and be able to protect the confidential nature of the information they handle. Their work with the registers is not to exceed their mandate from the pastor.

Genealogists and registers

The registers and information contained in them is the property of the Diocese of Camden. While the Church acknowledges that the registers are a valuable source of historical information, *no genealogist is allowed to look at the registers*. While parishes may provide genealogical information to researchers if they have the time and staff to do so, they are not obligated to provide this service. If a genealogist contacts the parish directly for information, it is at the discretion of the parish to provide it, but we urge parishes to provide the information in a letter and not as a certificate. Do not answer requests over the phone; ask that the information be sent to the parish in a letter.

If genealogists are given information from sacramental registers, it must be made clear that the information is for personal research use only and cannot be reproduced or published in any way without express written permission of the Diocese of Camden. All confidential material in an entry must stay confidential.

Requests from outside agencies

The registers and information contained in them is the property of the Diocese of Camden. Requests of information from registers from government or corporate agencies (e.g. Social Security, insurance companies, etc.) should be accompanied by a signed letter from the person whose record it is (or from a legally qualified guardian), authorizing the release of information. Subpoenas and other court orders demanding that records be delivered to a third party should be directed to the parish pastor and he should contact the Chancellor's Office at the Chancery. No records are to be given to a court, attorney or agency without the review and approval of the Diocese of Camden.

Certificates from registers

While every individual has a right to a certificate of his or her own sacramental record, no one, with the exception of a parent or guardian asking for the record of a minor child, has the right to another person's record. If someone has power of attorney for another adult, they may request a certificate, but must show the parish personnel the power of attorney before the certificate is prepared. The only other valid requests would be from another catholic parish for sacramental reasons or from a Catholic tribunal for annulment reasons. No one else may receive a copy of sacramental certificate.

A certificate is an official document certifying that a particular individual has received a sacrament or funeral rites of the Church. Each certificate should be an exact duplicate of data entered in a sacramental register.

All information in the sacramental register is to be included on the certificate, unless the information is marked "confidential" or pertains to adoption. If there is nothing in the "notations," column, the words "no notations" should appear on the certificate; the space on the certificate for notations should not be left blank.

Certificates are intended for internal church use, not civil purposes. Since some data is entered based on the word of another person (e.g. the date of birth of a child) the certificate repeats that data but does not certify it as true.

Only the parish holding the original sacramental records may issue a certificate. In the case of a closed parish, the designated repository, usually the office of the merged parishes, may issue certificates.

The actual registers should be used to create the certificates, not parish microfilm or computer reproductions.

Requests for certificates should be submitted in writing, although a faxed request from another parish or Catholic tribunal is acceptable. The written requests should be kept for a full calendar year after the request date. No information from sacramental registers should be given by telephone or electronic means such as email. Care for the privacy of the individual named in the record should be exercised.

Certificates should have an official appearance and should be consistent in format. Parishes may obtain blank certificates from vendors or they may produce them in-house from a computer template. All certificates must have the canonically given name and full street address of the parish. Samples can be found in the appendix of this document.

Certificates must be signed by the pastor or pastoral administrator and be impressed with the parish seal. Photocopies and faxes are not considered authentic documents because the impressed seal cannot be duplicated by a copy or fax.

If some of the data is missing in a register (for example the first name of the priest), complete the certificate with what information is available.

A person requesting his or own certificate, a parent or guardian requesting a minor child's certificate, a Catholic Tribunal or another parish requesting a certificate should receive it free of charge.

Examples of certificates and request forms for certificates can be found at the end of this booklet. They may be adapted for parish needs and use.

Parish Seals

Each parish must have a seal. The name of the parish and the city in which the parish is located is enough to make a seal unique. If the parish wishes to add other "artwork" to the seal, that is permitted. If a seal begins to lose its imprint, another seal can be ordered from any reliable company that manufacturers embossers.

BAPTISMAL REGISTER

Canon 877-§1 The pastor of the place where the baptism is celebrated must carefully and without delay record in the baptismal book the names of those baptized making mention of the minister, parents, sponsors, witness if any and the place and date of the conferred baptism, together with an indication of the date and place of birth.

Canon 878 If baptism was administered neither by the pastor nor in his presence, the minister of baptism, whoever it is, must inform the pastor of the parish in which the baptism was administered, so that he may record it in accord with Canon 877, §1.

The baptismal record serves as an individual's "master record" in the Church, so accuracy is vital.

Information in the baptismal register is to include: full name of the person being baptized, the names of the parents of the person being baptized including mother's maiden name, minister of the sacrament, date and place of birth, date and place of baptism, names of sponsors/witnesses (godparents). This information should be verified before entering it into the register. Baptisms should be recorded in the parish where they took place. If the parish has several worship sites, note at which location the baptism took place.

Routine notations

Routine notations in the baptismal register include subsequent sacraments: Confirmation, Marriage (including convalidation), reception of Holy Orders, perpetual profession in a religious institute and change of rite. Notations of annulment including stipulations, laicization and dispensation of vows and formal withdrawal from the Church should also be entered when requested by the appropriate authorities and supporting documentation is provided. All protocol numbers, dates, and locations should be included in the notations. **If there is no information on Confirmation or Marriage the spaces for those sacraments should not be left blank on certificates, they should be filled in with the phrase "no notations."**

Unmarried parents

If a child is born to an unmarried mother, the mother's name is written into the register if she asks this willingly or has proof from a civil document, such as the birth certificate. Likewise, the name of the father is to be entered if his paternity has been proven by a civil record (such as a birth certificate) or by his own declaration. If these conditions are not met, the child is to be listed as being of "unknown mother (or father)" [in Latin "mater ignota" or "pater ignotus"]. It is not permitted to make an annotation that says "illegitimate." (N.B., when issuing a certificate only the known parent need be included.)

Emergency Baptism

In the rare case when there is an emergency baptism (such as in the event of imminent death at a hospital), the date and place of baptism and the name of person giving the sacrament is to be noted in the sacramental register. When the ceremonies are supplied, (now known as the Rite of Bringing the Baptized Child to the Church) the name of the minister and the date are to be written in the notations column and included on future certificates.

Conditional Baptism

When conditional baptism is conferred, it should be noted in the notations column. Otherwise, the entry is the same as for a "regular" baptism. A conditional baptism should only be given if, after a prudent investigation, the fact or the validity of a prior baptism is doubtful.

Profession of Faith

When someone is received into full communion with the Church, after having been baptized in another Christian faith, an entry must be recorded in the baptismal register, with a notation indicating "profession of faith". The place, date and faith of the original baptism must be noted in the notations column. Documentation of the baptism should be kept by the parish in a separate file.

Ritual Ascription

If the person is being received from an Eastern Church, a notation should be included stating the person's ritual ascription.

Converts to Catholicism

When parents convert to Catholicism, children over the age of 7 may also wish to become Catholic; the child should also make a profession of faith. Children under the age of 7 become Catholic, with the intention supplied by the parents. These children do not make a profession of faith, but celebrate the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church, found in the Rite of Baptism for Children. This is recorded in the same manner as adults.

Adoption before Baptism

If a child is legally adopted before being baptized, proceed as with any baptism. No reference is to be made about adoption on the certificate, but a notation should appear in the register's notations column that the child was adopted. *The adoption must be final before the child can be baptized.*

Adoption after Baptism

If a child is adopted after he/she has been baptized, parentheses should be placed around the names of the birth parent(s). The adopting parents' names should then be added in the parents space. The child's former name should be placed in parentheses and the new name added. The date and agency of legal adoption should be written in the notations column. *No reference to adoption should appear on any certificates and the sponsors names should not appear on the certificate.*

No one is allowed to disclose any information that would reveal, directly or indirectly, that an individual was adopted.

See: www.usccb.org/norms/877-3.htm

Adult Baptism

If an adult is in a valid marriage and is received into the Church, it is enough that the fact of the marriage be noted in the notations column of the baptismal record of the person being received in the Church.

Sponsors/godparents

At least one godparent/sponsor is required; two are customary and they must not be of the same gender. Two is the maximum number of godparents allowed.

When the person serving as godparent is not Catholic, but was baptized in a Christian faith, the words "Christian witness" should be placed after the person's name in the register.

When a godparent cannot be present at a baptism, a proxy can be designated. In that case, both the godparent and the proxy's names should appear in the register, with the proxy identified as the proxy. Both names will appear on any certificates, with the proxy being identified as such.

Godparents cannot be changed; if the original godparent is not available as the child gets older, another person can take on this role, but the sacramental register cannot be changed.

Ascription to a church *Sui Iuris*

Ascription to a church is determined by the rite of the parents, not the minister or parish of baptism, unless the person is 14 years of age or older. When a priest baptizes someone who by canon law is ascribed to an Eastern Rite church, a notation should be made in the notations column. Please see the table of Eastern Catholic Churches in the US at the end of this document.

Ordination

Record each order received: ordained Deacon, Priest, Bishop. Note date of ordination and location where the ceremony was performed.

It is not necessary to record honors received: being named a monsignor, archbishop or cardinal.

If a man is elected pope, it can be noted in the register, but for bragging rights only!

Record official dismissals from the clerical state or dispensations from the obligation of Holy Orders and/or celibacy after being notified by the appropriate authorities in writing.

Profession of Permanent Vows in a Religious Order

Record only Permanent Vows in an order, not first vows. The Religious Order will send notification to the church of baptism.

If the individual takes a religious name (Jemima Puddleduck is now Sister Mary Immaculata) record the religious name in the notations column. Do not amend the baptismal name in any way.

Record official dismissal from vows after being notified by the Religious Order in writing.

Formal defection from the Catholic Church

Formal defection from the Church involves three elements:

- A public act or statement, preferably in writing
- Heresy, or apostasy or schism
- Written reception by the “competent ecclesiastical authority”

If someone has formally left the Catholic Church, the parish of baptism can expect to receive written notice from the Chancery Office of the (arch) diocese where that individual is currently living or from the person’s pastor, saying the person has formally defected from the Catholic faith. Only after receiving official written notification can the baptismal record be changed by adding “Formal Defection from the Faith” and the date of the letter in the notations column. This notation must appear on all future certificates. Reunion with the church should also be noted in the notations column. There is no other method of formally leaving the faith; written notification cannot come directly from the individual.

Name changes

If a person has a civil document legally changing his or her name, the baptismal record can be altered by drawing a single line through the old name and writing the new name above the previous name (along with the date of the legal change). Remember to add the new name to the index and a reference in the index next to the “old name.”

Certificates should show a person’s current legal name, if the name has been legally changed.

If a person has legally changed his/her name because of a change in gender, the person’s new legal name can be entered into the register as above. If a certificate is being issued for marriage purposes, the certificate should make clear the gender of the person at the time of baptism, by using the baptismal name (e.g. “Tom Joiner” baptized as “Cecily Parsley”), or using “son of” or “daughter of” in place of “child of”.

Omitted Records

Baptisms previously omitted from a register may be entered after documentation is provided. An affidavit from a person who was present at the baptism can be used. Photographs are also useful, as are parish bulletins. The supporting documentation should be kept in the sacramental records file.

Supporting documentation

These papers should be kept in a separate file labeled “sacramental records” and retained permanently in the parish offices. This includes adoption or paternity papers, affidavits concerning sacraments, and official civil documents about name changes. The papers should be referenced in the baptismal register’s notations column.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION REGISTER

The information entered should be complete, especially the parish of baptism.

If the person was baptized in the same parish where first communion is given, record the first communion date and location in the baptismal register's notations column.

If the person was baptized in another parish, notify the parish of baptism.

If the person is making a profession of faith, and entering the Church at the time of First Communion, note this in the First Communion register. It should also be entered into the baptismal register.

First communion is **not** noted on baptismal certificates.

FIRST RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION

No such register should be kept.

This is an internal forum matter and the individual's confidentiality should be respected.

CONFIRMATION REGISTER

Canon 894 The prescription of Canon 876 are to be observed for the proof of the conferral of confirmation.

Canon 895 The names of the confirmed, the name of the minister, the names of the parents and sponsor, the place and date of the conferral of confirmation are to be noted in the confirmation register in the diocesan curia, or where the conference of Bishops or the diocesan Bishop has prescribed it, in a book kept in the parish archive; the pastor must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of confirmation so that notation be made in the baptismal register, in accord with the norm of Canon 535, §2.

If the parish has several worship sites, note at which location the confirmation took place.

Fill out the information in the register, especially noting parish of baptism.

If the person was baptized in the same parish as confirmation, update the baptismal register in the Confirmation column.

If the person was baptized in another parish, notify the parish of baptism.

Note the full name of the Bishop, or delegate, who conferred the sacrament, and the diocese if he is from outside the diocese.

Note the "confirmation name."

If a person receiving confirmation received Baptism in a non-Catholic denomination, that church of baptism is NOT notified, but the full name of the church of baptism and the address should be recorded in the confirmation register.

MARRIAGE REGISTER

Canon 1121-§1 After a marriage has been celebrated, the pastor of the place of celebration or the person who takes his place, even if neither has assisted at the marriage, should as soon as possible note the following in the marriage register: names of the spouses, person who assisted and the witnesses, place and date of marriage; these notations are to be made in accord with the method prescribed by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop.

Canon 1121-§1 The contracted marriage is also to be noted in the baptismal register in which the baptism of the spouses has been inscribed.

Canon 1123 Whenever a marriage is convalidated in the external forum, is declared null or is legitimately dissolved other than by death, the pastor of the place where it was celebrated must be informed so that a notation may be duly made in the marriage and baptismal registers.

Fill in the data required in the register: name of bride and groom, place and date of baptism, names of parents, names of witnesses and minister, place and date of marriage, and pertinent notations. Note both bride and groom's names in the index.

If the parish has several worship sites, note at which location the marriage took place.

Notify the parish (es) of baptism of the names of the bride and groom, date and place of marriage, convalidation or sanation, and the name of the officiant. Notify the parish of baptism of the following: dispensations, annulments, and restrictions.

Required notations include:

-dispensation from marriage impediments and protocol number.

-dispensations granted for mixed religion/disparity of worship and protocol number. Include the diocese, protocol number and kind of dispensation in notations column. These marriages are usually recorded in the territorial parish where the marriage occurs.

-dispensations granted. Include diocese, protocol numbers and "lack of form" in notations column. Note location where marriage took place. These marriages should be noted in the territorial parish in which they take place as well as in the Chancery of the diocese which granted the dispensation from canonical form.

-delegation given to assist at the marriage. If the celebrant of the wedding is not a priest or deacon assigned to the parish, his assigned parish and the city and state should be noted.

Annulments

Annulments are to be recorded in the notations column. Include the protocol number, the diocese that declared the marriage null, and the date of ratification.

Other notations to be included:

-restriction on future marriage:

Monitum—cautions whoever prepares the person for another marriage

Vetitum—forbids remarriage in the Church without clearance of the Tribunal

Notations should include who issued the restriction, the protocol number, and the effective date. If a restriction is lifted, note that it was lifted and the date. A lifted restriction is NOT noted on certificates.

Convalidations

Enter as a marriage.

In the notations column, note the date of convalidation, enter the word “convalidation” and note the date and location of the civil marriage being convalidated (e.g. Camden City Hall, June 19, 1993).

Sanatio in radice (a “healing at the root”)

This is a process whereby the Church corrects something which was lacking at time of consent. A request for inclusion of this information into a marriage register will come from a Chancery or Tribunal.

Obtain a copy of the civil marriage record and fill in the appropriate data in the register.

In the notations column, put the notation “**sanated**” with the protocol number and date of sanatio in radice decree.

Previous marriages

The previous marriages of persons who are being baptized or received into full communion with the church do not have to be recorded in the marriage register.

If the previous marriage was invalid and was declared so by a Tribunal, a notation concerning the marriage should be placed in the person’s baptismal record in the notations column. Notification of this would come from a Tribunal.

Premarital files

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

The file for each couple should be maintained separately in its own envelope or folder, clearly marked with the couple’s names and date of marriage. The files should be kept in chronological order and in a secure location.

The files are to be permanently retained.

If requested by an ecclesiastical authority or if the Chancellor has approved the surrender to a civil authority, the file should be copied and the copies sent to the requesting party.

DEATH REGISTER

Fill in all required data as identified by the register.

All persons buried from a church, funeral home, or grave side service by a priest or deacon should be recorded. If the individual was not Catholic, his/her religion, if known, should be recorded.

If a person is cremated, no reference to date or place of cremation is made in the death register; however, the fact of cremation should be noted as well as the date and place of the internment of the ashes.

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