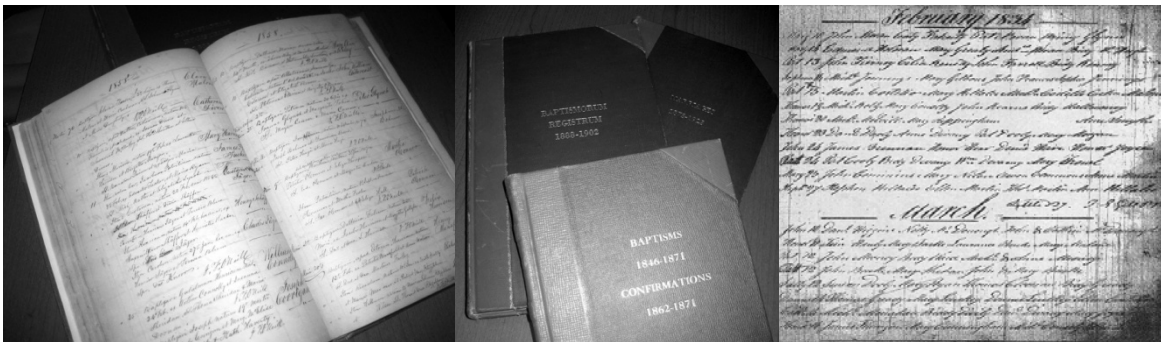


Sacramental Records Handbook



Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta

Office of Archives and Records

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Acknowledgements

The Office of Archives and Records has worked hard on updating the *Sacramental Records Handbook*. However, we did not make these updates on our own and would like to thank a few key people for their assistance and expertise.

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Second, special thanks goes out to the people who helped with the current updates to the *Handbook*, starting with the entire staff of the Office of Archives and Records. We also appreciate the invaluable canon law assistance of the Metropolitan Tribunal, in particular Father Daniel J. Ketter, JCL., as well as the ParishSOFT expertise of the Office of Parish Support & Information Services.

Thirdly, we would like to thank Brian Fahey, Archivist for the Diocese of Charleston for allowing us to utilize their *Sacramental Records Handbook* to update sections within our own, particularly their excellent appendix of example register entries.

Finally, a huge thank you to Francie Quigley at the Cathedral of Christ the King and Kate Oates at Prince of Peace for their many wonderful questions and suggestions over the last few years that helped us decide what was missing and what could be clarified better in the *Handbook*.

Foreword

The Archdiocese of Atlanta has grown tremendously in the last decade since this *Sacramental Records Handbook* was originally written. Several new parishes and missions have been established and many new Catholics have joined our community. All of our parishioners have the right to expect accurate, well-preserved sacramental records. Therefore, all pastors and parochial administrators entrusted with the pastoral care of a parish or mission are required to maintain sacramental registers.

The *Sacramental Records Handbook* for the Archdiocese of Atlanta was originally written in 2010 to assist in that exact goal: proper maintenance and preservation of sacramental registers. This *Handbook* is designed to assist parish clergy and/or personnel in the practical steps of how to enter information in the registers, how to make proper changes, how to maintain those registers long-term, and who to contact with questions.

The Office of Archives and Records has done extensive research to update the *Sacramental Records Handbook* for the new decade, incorporating details that are more specific and adding entire sections of new information. I am very grateful to them for preparing this new edition of the *Handbook* and to those who will use it to preserve our Catholic history for future generations.

+ Gregory J. Hartmayer, O.F.M. Conv.

The Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, O.F.M. Conv.
Archbishop of Atlanta

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Introduction

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta, in accordance with the norms of canon law, maintains sacramental records in order to continue the tradition of the Church and to protect the spiritual lives of its members. Sacramental records are those records created when individuals receive one of the seven sacraments—Baptism, Penance, Eucharist (First Communion), Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and the Anointing of the Sick. Records of Baptism, Confirmation, and Marriage are the most common types of records and are required by canon law. Keeping records of Anointings and First Communions are optional, while records of Penance should not be maintained. Although not sacramental in nature, Death Registers are particularly important to be maintained by parishes that have cemeteries and/or columbaria because there may be certain civil laws that apply. The [Office of Catholic Cemeteries](#) is available to assist those parishes responsible for the management of cemeteries and/or columbaria.

Sacramental Records are vital and essential to the Church, individuals, and communities. Since such records are often the only documents that exist relative to people's ancestors, their creation, preservation, and proper use are imperative. The value of sacramental registers is acknowledged in civil and canon law as they provide documentation of those who make up parishes and, collectively, the Archdiocese. Sacramental Records document the canonical status of parishioners and record the history of Catholic communities.

Sacramental records are generally made by the clergy or their delegates in a parish when the sacrament is performed, and are maintained in the parishes. The records are kept in special volumes set aside for this purpose and therefore, are normally distinct from all other parish records. Clergy are required to make and keep the records and, since they also have cause to examine earlier records on a fairly regular basis, the records should be carefully prepared.

The use and maintenance of sacramental records are governed by canon law. The individual rules or canons of canon law are often referred to as "norms." These norms are to be found in the Code of Canon Law, the ritual books used for the celebration of the sacraments, and other legal texts. Each of the sacramental records has associated norms that must be followed. The provisions of canon law, as well as Archdiocesan policies and procedures, have been incorporated to develop the current *Sacramental Records Handbook*. The *Handbook* is meant to provide practical guidance for parish use and is not intended as a complete statement of all issues that may arise in canon law, civil law, or archival practice.

Sacramental records are of particular value to genealogists and social historians. They are also of value to ecclesiastical tribunals seeking information for matrimonial nullity and dissolution cases as well as dispensations and permissions. Such essential records are comparable to the vital statistics of births, marriages, and deaths that are maintained by state and federal governments. They are often the only essential records of certain groups of people in existence, particularly in the periods of history prior to census taking. The State of Georgia, for instance, did not begin collecting birth and death records until after 1919. Public access to sacramental records is limited by canon law to protect confidentiality.

In 2005, ParishSOFT was instituted in the parishes throughout the Archdiocese. ParishSOFT is a computer software program that consolidates and manages information, including data that is entered from handwritten sacramental registers. It is a useful tool to collect statistics, to keep accounts of collections and donations, to gather information on parish families and activities, and to prepare reports, mailings and certificates. ParishSOFT procedures may vary from those that are required for paper registers. Some of the more distinct ParishSOFT procedures will be noted herein. However, for specific questions contact the [Office of Parish Support & Information Services](#) for assistance.

Sacramental Registers as Bound Books

By Carolyn S. Denton, Former Director of Archives and Records

When information about an event is entered by hand on paper, dated, and authenticated by signatures near the time when the actual event occurs, the document then becomes a manuscript, a primary source, and therefore is official and legal. Traditionally a manuscript is defined as an original document written by hand and not reproduced in multiple copies. Such is the nature of sacramental registers as bound books.

With the advent of the computer, the question often arises as to the appropriateness of using database printouts stored in ring binders as official sacramental registers, thereby eliminating the need to enter information by hand into bound books. Because computer printouts are not manuscripts, can be easily manipulated, deleted, and duplicated, they are not as authentic as manuscripts, particularly when they are not certified by original signatures. *The Code of Canon Law* (Can. 535) refers to sacramental registers as “parish books” that are to be “accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.”

In historiography, a primary source (also called “original source”) is an artifact, a document, a recording, or other source of information that is created at the time under study. If created by a human source, then it is a source with direct personal knowledge of the event being described and can be used as evidence. A Baptismal register should be such a source.

Also, because book pages are bound together and contain multiple entries per page, it is less likely that an entry will be removed or altered without notice. Changes to entries can also be easily traced since they are not obliterated or easily erased as in a database. Computers are known to crash; books do not. Computer data has an average life expectancy of ten years or less; books can last 500+ years. Data entered into a computer cannot be associated with a particular person, while the handwriting of a person on a document can be identified.

The Baptismal register is the chief locus for requisite information on every Catholic in a parish and exists to help uphold and preserve the culture and spiritual life of the community and the church. Computer systems dependent on hardware and software are wonderful for storing and manipulating sacramental data found in sacramental registers, but they are unstable and will not preserve information as long as paper.

The Catholic Church since early times has placed high value on handwritten books. The Vatican Library is one of the oldest libraries in the world and contains one of the most significant collections of historical texts, which includes 75,000 manuscripts.

The printed Bible, as an example, is based on the existence of ancient manuscripts that verify authenticity. Biblical manuscripts have become notarized affidavits or statements that can be classified as original, primary source documents. From manuscript discoveries like the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is undeniable evidence that today's Old Testament Scripture, for all practical purposes, is the same as it was when originally inspired by God and recorded. Combined with the massive amount of manuscript evidence supporting the New Testament, it is clear that the Bible is a trustworthy and reliable book. Sacramental registers should also be trustworthy and reliable books.

Registers in General

Canon Law Related to Sacramental Records

CAN. 491 §1. A diocesan bishop is to take care that the acts and documents of the archives of cathedral, collegiate, parochial, and other churches in his territory are also diligently preserved and that inventories or catalogs are made in duplicate, one of which is to be preserved in the archives of the church and the other in the diocesan archives.

§2. A diocesan bishop is also to take care that there is an historical archives in the diocese and that documents having historical value are diligently protected and systematically ordered in it.

§3. In order to inspect or remove the acts and documents mentioned in §§1 and 2, the norms established by the diocesan bishop are to be observed.

CAN. 535 §1. Each parish is to have parochial registers; that is, those of Baptism, marriages, deaths, and others as prescribed by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan bishop. The pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.

§2. In the Baptismal register are also to be noted Confirmations and those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of marriage, without prejudice to the prescript of Can. 1133, of adoption, of the reception of sacred orders, of perpetual profession made in a religious institute, and of change of rite. These notations are always to be noted on a Baptismal certificate.

§3. Each parish is to have its own seal. Documents regarding the canonical status of the Christian faithful and all acts which can have juridic importance are to be signed by the pastor or his delegate and sealed with the parochial seal.

§5. Older parochial registers are to be carefully protected according to the precepts of particular law.

Types of Records

Sacramental records are required by canon law to be kept according to a formula that varies with each kind of record. Parishes must keep the following sacramental registers: Baptismal, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death (Canons 535-§1, 895). Listed below is a description of the information contained in the records of the sacraments, as well as in several optional books.

Baptisms

Records include the date of the Baptism, the Baptismal name of the child at the time of the Baptism, the date of birth of the child being baptized, the names of the parents [always including the maiden name of the mother], the names of the sponsors [that is, the godparents], and the printed signature of the officiating priest or deacon. Entries are made in the record books as they occur in time; initial access to these records is therefore by date. Access to names is by the alphabetical register index.

Marriages

Records include the date, the names and dates of births of the parties being married, the names of the two official witnesses, and the signature of the officiating priest. Initial access is also by date and then by the surname of the husband.

Confirmations

Confirmation is usually administered to children as part of a class or group at about the age of fifteen and is usually administered by a bishop or his delegate. The records of the sacrament are kept in the parishes. Confirmation records include the date, the location, the confirming bishop (or delegate), the names of those confirmed, the Confirmation names of those confirmed, the Confirmation sponsors, and the total number of males and females confirmed.

Deaths

Records of deaths and burials are kept as part of the parish or mission sacramental records. Burial records more frequently appear as part of cemetery records and are required by canon law.

Eucharist (First Communions)

A child usually receives First Communion as part of a class or group at about the age of seven. Individual reception of First Communion has become increasingly common in recent years. Records of First Communions have not been kept as regularly and carefully as those of Baptisms and Marriages. The Archdiocese of Atlanta encourages, but does not require, the maintenance of First Communion registers that record the date and names of communicants.

Ordinations

Records of ordinations, that is celebrations of the sacrament of Holy Orders, which are performed only by bishops, are kept as part of the episcopal register (located at the Chancery) and are not kept at the parish level. Ordination records in the episcopal registers include the date of the ordination, the name of the person being ordained, the date of birth of the person being ordained, the rank to which the person is being ordained, the location of the ordination, and the name of the presiding bishop (See Can. 1053). The Holy Orders Registers are kept in the "curia of the place of ordination," which is the Office of the Archbishop for priestly ordinations and the Office of the Permanent Diaconate for diaconal ordinations. Notification of the ordination should be sent to the parish of baptism to be recorded as a notation on the baptismal record.

Anointing of the Sick

Records, when they are kept, include the person's name, their address, a notation of the person's condition, as well as a notation of viaticum. If records of anointings are kept, they are strictly for administrative purposes, not archival ones.

Ritual Books

A ceremonial book used as part of the Church's ritual (e.g., Book of the Elect) should be completely distinct from the regular sacramental registers. The data from the Ritual Register should be transferred to the Baptismal and Confirmation Registers as soon as possible after the conferral of sacraments or the reception into Full Communion. Ceremonial books do not need to be retained permanently and can be disposed of once the book has been filled and all the information has been transferred to the appropriate Sacramental Register. Please

request permission for disposal from the Office of Archives and Records via a Records Disposition Request Form, available on their office website.

Ownership and Responsibility

Ownership

The ownership of the registers and the ownership of copyrights of all parish sacramental records within the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Atlanta reside with the parishes. However, any decisions or issues related to publishing, microfilming, scanning, replacement, rebinding, repair, or disposal of registers should be determined by the Office of Archives and Records and by the Chancellor of the Archdiocese to ensure proper policies and procedures are followed.

Required Records

Each parish and mission is required to maintain paper records in bound book format of Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, and Deaths. Even when a priest serves as pastor of more than one parish, separate registers are to be maintained for each parish. For security and convenience, however, the registers may all be stored at one of the parishes. Maintaining records of First Communion is optional, though they may be noted in the Baptismal Registers. Registers in paper format are considered the original, essential archival record of sacraments administered in parishes and must be handled, stored, protected, and maintained as such.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta also requires that parishes consistently utilize ParishSOFT to capture data from the paper sacramental register books. In addition to entering the information about the sacraments, ParishSOFT has fields that allow you to enter the register volume, register page number, and register number from the Sacramental Register to make it easier to locate the official entry. ParishSOFT is not an acceptable replacement for the actual handwritten books, but is meant to supplement the paper records for statistical purposes. The hand-written sacramental register remains the official record from which certificates are to be issued.

Parishes, Missions and Other Institutions

Generally only parishes and missions maintain sacramental records and registers. If a chapel or pastoral center (i.e., school or college campus ministry) operates under the authority of the local pastor, its sacramental records should be kept in the parish registers, rather than separately.

Persons assigned as chaplains or clergy with sacramental responsibilities for Catholic or non-Catholic institutions, such as schools, campus ministries, hospitals, etc., that maintain no distinctly Catholic sacramental registers should see to it that the reception of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death be recorded in the sacramental registers of the territorial parish in which the hospital/institution is located. Such sacraments may not be recorded in the parish where the priest is assigned, if it is not the territorial parish. [See the [Parishes by Boundaries Map](#) for assistance in determining the territorial parish.]

If a parish is suppressed or merged with another, the registers must be transferred to the Office of Archives and Records. All future sacraments performed at that location are to be then recorded in the registers of the territorial parish.

Mission Registers

A pastor or other clergy who also have charge of a mission church are required to maintain for that church a *separate set* of sacramental registers for any sacraments performed at that location. Since missions sometimes get transferred to new parishes and many eventually become parishes, the complete record of those particular

parishioners can be transferred in whole and then easily located and maintained in one place as opposed to having to track down records for a mission across multiple parishes.

Responsibility

The creation, preservation, and use of sacramental records are the responsibility of the pastor. While the pastor can delegate the responsibility to a “person in charge,” whether clergy, chaplain, or administrator, ultimately the pastor is still responsible for the registers. Inputting information from the bound paper registers into ParishSOFT is also required as mandated by the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Delegated Responsibility

The person in charge may choose to assign the day-to-day administration of sacramental records to a parish secretary or another responsible person. That person should be an employee of the parish or mission, not a volunteer, have knowledge of the parish history and parishioners, and be in direct communication with the person (if a separate role) entering sacramental information into ParishSOFT to ensure quality control. Persons charged with the task of data entry must go through the screening requirements as determined by the Office of Human Resources. The screening must be completed in order for a login to the ParishSOFT system to be established.

Accuracy of Information

It is the responsibility of pastors in the parishes to ensure that entries in all of the registers and in ParishSOFT are complete and accurate. Quality control initiatives that double-check entries on a regular basis will ensure accuracy. Neither the Office of Archives and Records nor the Archdiocese guarantees the accuracy of the information recorded in Sacramental Registers.

Inspection and Certification of Registers

If the pastor does not personally make entries in the registers, the records should at least be certified (signed or initialed by the pastor or delegated clergy). Also, all sacramental registers are to be inspected during the three year term of each area Dean and certified as inspected with the appropriate seal, signature, and date of inspection. A form, included in the appendices, is to be utilized to document the inspection and must be sent to the Vicar General by the appropriate Dean.

Non-Transferable

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

Transfer of Registers to the Office of Archives and Records

The ordinary repository for sacramental registers is the parish or mission that created them. Since parishes and missions do not have the appropriate archival facilities or the means to preserve their older registers, the Office of Archives and Records should be contacted for a possible transfer of registers and related sacramental files to the Archives.

All parish registers created approximately 75 years prior to the current register are to be transferred to the Archives for safekeeping. Some early 20th-century registers that also include later entries may remain in individual church parishes until they are no longer needed, as long as they are properly stored and handled. Later volumes that are no longer accessed or seldom accessed could also be sent to the Archives.

Records of Closed Parishes

In the event that a parish or mission is closed (suppressed), the registers and all other parochial records shall be surveyed by the Office of Archives and Records to determine appropriate retention and disposition. Sacramental registers are to be transferred to the Archives after inventory, or to the parish that assumes parochial responsibility for the majority of the closed parish's territory. The Archbishop shall designate which parish assumes parochial responsibility. The registers may remain in the new parish that assumes parochial responsibility for three years and then they are to be sent to the Office of Archives and Records, who will assume the responsibility for administering them.

Inventories of Registers

Canon law requires that parishes and missions periodically prepare inventories of sacramental registers and send copies of the inventories to the Office of Archives and Records.

Confidentiality

Care must be taken to protect the privacy of people. Although sacramental registers contain information about public events and other facts readily known by certain other parties, they also contain information that is very personal and confidential.

Access to Registers

Sacramental registers are maintained in the individual parishes. They are kept for the good of the Christian faithful; but they are private documents, not public ones. No one other than the pastor can claim a right to direct access to registers. Confidentiality of parishioner information and identity must be protected.

Authorized Personnel

The pastor is always and ultimately responsible for the confidentiality of the sacramental registers themselves, as well as any reproductions and entries made in ParishSOFT. He may designate other persons to make entries in the registers and ParishSOFT, and to prepare certificates. The designated persons should be employees of the parish, and limited in number as to who has access. The designated persons must be capable of careful work and protecting confidentiality.

Genealogical Research

All current sacramental registers (those 75 years ago to present day) and ParishSOFT entries should never be made directly available to genealogical researchers to peruse at will. The pastor or other regularly designated person may research information as requested on a need to know basis, and as time permits, and make the information available on a separate paper. Care must be taken not to disclose confidential information.

The Office of Archives and Records is not open for in-person visits to those engaged in genealogical studies or family research. Requests for general genealogical research of the sacramental registers held in the Archives may be made to the Archivist via the Genealogical Research Request Form on the Office of Archives and Records

website. All requests for individual sacramental and cemetery records are handled by email or written mail according to the procedures outlined below. The Archdiocese does not have a central database of all names that are recorded in sacramental registers across the Archdiocese. If the church, parish, city, or county where the sacrament took place is not known, it may not be possible to find records of a particular person.

Access to Sacramental Registers

Private and Public

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

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

The passage of time has a critical effect on the sensitivity of all records. As current events become historical events, the need for withholding them from use is reduced and in some cases may eventually disappear entirely. As a result, older records may be made more broadly available to researchers, whereas recent records shall be restricted from use. The Archdiocese allows access only to those sacramental records created earlier than 75 years ago. Such access does not imply authority to microfilm, scan, or copy the records. However, restrictions do not apply to Death Registers. Below are guidelines governing access to sacramental records, whether they are originals or copies.

Sacramental Records Prior to 75 Years Ago

All researchers seeking records prior to 75 years ago are to be referred to the Office of Archives and Records, assuming those registers prior to 75 years ago have been transferred to the Archives from the parishes. Consolidating the oldest sacramental registers in the Archives allows for better long-term preservation of the records in addition to centralizing the point of contact for genealogy research.

Since the safe, secure, convenient, and professional service of the Office of Archives and Records is available, genealogy researchers will have no need to contact individual parishes for assistance, alleviating the work of parish staff. The rules are designed to protect legal rights and the exercise of responsibilities of all concerned, both civilly and canonically.

Sacramental Records from 75 Years Ago to the Present Day

Only authorized and trained personnel can examine sacramental records in the parishes and missions. If a person is seeking his own record or has a legitimate reason to request family records (i.e., a parent of a minor child under 18 years of age or a child seeking records of an infirmed or incapacitated parent with legal proof of guardianship or executor status required), the pastor or appointed parish personnel can examine the registers and issue the required information either directly or by mail. If a pastor feels that an exception is justified in a particular case, it is important that he first contact the Chancellor.

A sacramental records request should be made in writing and include proof of identification (picture ID) and when applicable the name of the parents, the date of birth, and other pertinent information so that there is no doubt that the person requesting the information is entitled to receive it.

Under no circumstance are sacramental registers to be loaned out to anyone or removed from parish premises or the Office of Archives and Records by anyone, including clergy or staff, unless for preservation purposes as approved by the Chancellor and Archbishop.

Access Authorization

Requests made by government or corporate agencies (i.e., Social Security Administration, Immigration, insurance companies, etc.) should be accompanied by a release signed by the person whose record is requested (or a legally qualified guardian) authorizing the release of the information.

Subpoenas and other court orders demanding that records be handed over should be accepted, but no records should be handed over to the server of the subpoena. In cases where the pastor has been served a subpoena, contact the Chancellor before responding.

Access Fees

Parishes should not charge any fees for providing information from sacramental registers.

Preservation of Registers

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

Format

Sacramental information is to be maintained in two different formats, paper and digital. The format of paper has well established archival standards for preservation that differ substantially from those records in digital format. Special register books are available from private vendors and are required to be kept by canon law. A parish may retain separate Baptismal, Confirmation, First Communion, Marriage, and Death Registers or Combined Registers, depending on the needs of the parish. All registers should be handwritten.

Acid Free Paper

Since registers are meant for permanent preservation of information, the bindings and paper must be of a quality that is considered permanent and durable. Therefore, the pages of registers must be made of acid-free paper. The majority of supply companies in the United States sell registers that are manufactured by the F.J. Remey Co. Registers made by Remey are archival no matter who sells them.

Ink

Entries should be made in fade-proof, waterproof, acid-free permanent ink. The ink must be black. Felt-tip pens and pencils are not acceptable. A medium point on a pen is best. Never use white-out over ink or try to scratch out or erase entries. ([Preferred Archival Ink Pen](#))

Repair and Restoration of Registers

The adage “Do No Harm” applies regarding the repair of registers. Do not use tape of any kind, labels, post-it notes, staples, paper clips, glue, or rubber bands on registers. Since the registers are archival by nature, only a trained conservator or professional bookbinder can be allowed to repair registers.

If your sacramental register is showing signs of wear (loose/broken binding, loose pages, etc.), please contact the Office of Archives and Records for an assessment of what can be done to repair the register properly. Depending on the level of deterioration, the register may need to be sent off to a conservation company for rebinding. The Office of Archives and Records has a preferred company they contract with on projects and can facilitate the entire process.

Safe Storage

The sacramental registers and related sacramental files are to be stored in a locked place, such as a file cabinet or safe, ideally one that is fireproof or fire-resistant. The registers may not be taken off the parish premises except for microfilming, scanning, and restoration by the Office of Archives and Records with permission of the Chancellor or Archbishop.

Related sacramental files likewise must be preserved. They are never to be glued, taped, stapled, or paper clipped into the actual corresponding register. They should instead be maintained in a separate, labeled file folder where sacramental registers are stored.

Not only must sacramental registers be kept in a secure place, but they are to be stored and handled in an environment that ensures their preservation. Ideally that means a constant cool temperature (i.e. 70F) with a low relative humidity (i.e. 40%) and no prolonged exposure to sunlight or artificial light.

While most parish offices cannot fulfill such precise requirements, steps can always be taken to avoid high temperatures, dampness, bright light, and florescent light. Never store registers in attics, basements, outside sheds, or storage units of any kind.

Duplicating Sacramental Registers

Sacramental registers can be protected from loss due to fire, age, or heavy use by making duplicate copies in any one of several ways: transcripts, photocopies, microfilm, or digital scans. Under no circumstances, however, shall the original registers be discarded. Because it is required by canon law that copies of sacramental records be made for security purposes, the Office of Archives and Records may undertake a diocesan-wide microfilming or scanning project in the future to duplicate sacramental records. (The same access restrictions apply to copies as to original records.)

Reporting Loss or Destruction

The loss or destruction of any sacramental register should be reported immediately to the Chancellor and/or the Office of Archives and Records.

Data Entries in Registers

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

Types of Data

Only that data required by canon law and otherwise necessary for the complete and accurate maintenance of sacramental records is to be entered into the sacramental registers. Parishes and missions are also responsible for maintaining accurate digital data of sacramental records in ParishSOFT.

Chronological Order

Entries should be made in chronological order. If the chronological order cannot be kept in some particular case, a small note should be made in the proper chronological location in the register, cross-referencing the actual entry, e.g., "See JONES, page 37."

Register Columns

Each page of the register has several columns, and each column is titled. It is important to enter the data in the proper columns for each register and in the correct fields in ParishSOFT as well. The *Sacramental Records Handbook* has many references to the Notations column. For the sake of convenience the column for notations is referred to as the "Notations" column throughout the *Handbook*. In ParishSOFT the corresponding sacramental tab is "General Remarks."

Index

Every entry is to be listed in the register's index, according to the person's last name. If you run out of space in the index, you can create a supplemental index to be stored in a sacramental file near the register books.

Style for Names and Dates

In paper registers, use the name as verified on the birth certificate, even if it includes a hyphenated last name. Do not use a hyphenated name that does not appear on the birth certificate. Do not use a Social Security card to authenticate a name. The last name of the entry should be printed in upper case (e.g., "SMITH"). When it comes to dates, print the name of the month rather than use the month's number (e.g., "May" instead of "5") in the paper registers. Use YYYY for the year as in 2020.

Confidential Data

Data which is confidential and which is not to be included on certificates is to be so marked when entered in the register (e.g., "Confidential – do not include on certificate"). The provisions of Canon 535 §2 are to be observed. By default the entries in the General Remarks field in ParishSOFT are not printed on certificates.

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

The name of the minister of the sacrament is to be clearly printed in the register entry. If a pastor delegates the ministry of a sacrament to other cleric (e.g. a deacon or a visiting priest), then that delegation must be noted in the register.

Celebrations outside the Parish Church Building

When sacraments are administered in places other than the parish church building (i.e., hospital, campus chapel, a private home), it is important that the records not be "lost" and can be retrievable for future reference: (See [Parishes by Boundaries Map](#) for assistance in locating the proper territorial parish.)

1. **Baptism:** Baptism shall be recorded at the parish whose territory encompasses the location at which the sacrament was celebrated, unless the place of Baptism is a Catholic institution that has received permission from the local Ordinary to maintain its own sacramental records.
2. **Marriage:** When the wedding takes place according to canonical form, the sacramental records are entered and kept at the territorial parish within the boundaries of which the wedding was celebrated, unless the place of marriage is a Catholic institution that has received permission from the Chancery to maintain its own sacramental records. In the case of a wedding celebrated with a dispensation from canonical form, the marriage shall be recorded in two places: (1) in the parish of the Catholic party whose clergy prepared the couple for marriage and requested the dispensation (or at least gave permission for another priest to do so); and (2) in the Chancery of the diocese which granted the dispensation from canonical form. The pre-nuptial files are to be kept in the first location. The parish who requested the dispensation is responsible for sending the usual notification of marriage to the parish of Baptism of the Catholic party or parties. They are also responsible for notifying the Chancery that granted the dispensation from canonical form if the marriage was not celebrated.
3. **Death:** If a member of the clergy is called upon to preside at a non-Catholic burial, an entry may be made in the parish's death register together with a notation concerning the religion of the deceased and the services that were provided. All Catholic funeral liturgies, even if celebrated outside the parochial church building, shall be entered in the parish death records.

Supporting Documentation

After the information has been entered into the Sacramental Register and into ParishSOFT, the parish no longer needs to retain all of the supporting documents used during the sacramental preparation process. The Office of Archives and Records recommends retaining the paperwork for one year before shredding. (Permission to shred these specific preparation records does not need to be obtained.)

The exceptions to this recommendation are the supporting documents for major changes and for marriage preparation. These types of documents are to be retained permanently in a sacramental records file for major changes paperwork and in a premarital file for marriage preparation paperwork. [Please refer to the sections on Major Changes and Premarital Files for more information.]

General Changes and Additions to Entries

Once entered into a sacramental register, data is considered official and permanent. One of the tests for the validity of a record as legal proof is whether it has been officially kept and whether there have been any alterations. Care should be taken to accurately input the information into the sacramental registers to avoid having to make changes. However, if an error is brought to your attention, make sure to follow the guidelines in this *Handbook* for the proper way to make corrections. Original data should never be scratched out, erased, whited-out, covered over, or otherwise destroyed or obliterated. All changes should be visible and dated.

Style for Minor Changes

Minor changes (e.g., correcting a misspelling) may be made directly to the original entry. Such changes are to be made by drawing one straight, simple line through the word, number, or letter to be changed and printing the change immediately above or below the error. Example: SMITHE

Style for Major Changes

Major changes (e.g. to record an adoption after Baptism) may require that a new entry be created. In these cases, the original entry is to be preserved without change; a new entry, with all the data from the original entry reproduced (except the relevant change or changes), is to be made in the same register as close to the original entry as possible; both entries, as well as listings in the index, are to be cross-referenced; "Do Not Issue Certificate from This Record" is to be printed carefully across the face of the original entry.

Authorization for Minor Changes

An insubstantial error (e.g. misspelling) may be corrected upon request of those persons who have a right to a certificate.

Authorization for Major Changes

More significant errors and other changes require authentic supporting documentation. Such documentation will ordinarily consist of an original, "raised seal" certificate from a civil or ecclesiastical office, court, agency, etc. The issuing agency, date of the certificate, and any protocol number should be printed in the "Notations" column of the register. When an error involves data pertaining directly to the celebration of a sacrament or rite of Christian burial (e.g. date, identity of Godparent) such that no external verifying documentation exists, the written or oral testimony of a reputable witness will suffice. Supporting documents are to be maintained in a separate sacramental records file and stored near the registers for quick reference. (Do not place the supporting documents in-between the pages of the sacramental register as it causes long-term damage to the book and is more likely to be lost.)

Non-Permitted Changes

Some non-permitted changes include:

1. New Godparents or Sponsors—the names of Godparents or sponsors are not to be changed because they have died or because parents feel they are no longer suitable. In these situations, parents may ask someone else to serve in the role without making a change in the permanent record or on certificates.
2. Non-adoptive step-parents
3. Customary name or nickname

Certificates

A certificate is an official document certifying that a particular individual has received a sacrament. It should be an exact duplicate of data already entered in a sacramental register, excepting certain confidential notations.

Accuracy Required

As an authenticated (i.e., signed and sealed) transcript of the original record, every certificate must be accurate, legible (preferably typewritten), and complete, including all notations, except in cases of adoption.

Absence of Information

The absence of information to fill an item on a certificate shall be indicated by a line or the words "none" or "not given," rather than by leaving the space blank. It is also possible to issue a signed and sealed certificate without

adding the notations. Certificates of this kind must be clearly marked with the words "FOR NON-SACRAMENTAL PURPOSES" since they are not sufficient to certify the canonical status of an individual.

Authorized Source of Records

Only the parish or other locations (i.e. Office of Archives and Records) holding the original sacramental record may issue a certificate. Only the actual paper register, rather than a microfilm reproduction or a computer record, should be used in verifying information needed in preparing certificates. While previous sacramental details should be entered into ParishSOFT for members preparing to receive another sacrament in a different parish, certificates for a sacrament may only be issued by the parish that confers the actual sacrament. (Notations of sacraments received at other parishes on a Baptism certificate would be the exception.)

Authorized Requests

Any member of the Christian faithful has a right to obtain a certificate of a sacrament he or she has received and which was recorded in a sacramental register. But only that person, the parents of a minor child, someone with legal guardianship of another, or a bona fide pastoral minister at another Catholic parish has that right. When the parents of a child are separated or divorced, both parents, regardless of legal custody, are presumed to have the right to a certificate.

Procedure for Requests

Requests for certificates should be submitted in writing, although telephone requests from a Catholic parish or agency are acceptable, and should include a copy of a photo ID to verify identity. No information from sacramental registers should be provided by telephone or other electronic means except to another Catholic parish or agency. Even then, care for the privacy of persons is to be exercised.

Format

Certificates should appear official and be issued in a consistent format. Parishes may obtain blank certificates from commercial vendors or have them printed locally. Alternatively, parishes may also create or use a computer template to print their own certificates. All certificates must bear the name and address of the parish and include all relevant information related to that sacrament.

Alternate Locations

Sometimes sacraments are performed at locations within the territorial boundaries of a parish, but not physically in the parochial church building. In those situations, make sure to provide the actual location where the sacrament was performed in the location field on the certificate while also making it clear the name of the parish maintaining the sacramental register books.

This also applies for parishes maintaining sacramental registers for an active or defunct mission. Ensure that the mission name is listed in the location field of the certificate while also making clear the name of the parish maintaining the sacramental register books.

Authentication

Certificates must be typed, printed by computer, or hand-printed in ink. They are to be signed by the pastor and impressed with the parish seal. Photocopies, digital reproductions, and faxes of certificates are not considered authentic documents.

Required Data

Certificates are to include all data contained in the sacramental register, except that which is marked confidential or extraneous to the person's canonical status. Data in the "Notations" column are to be included. ParishSOFT data that is present in the General Remarks field can be typed as needed for printing certificates from a computer. If there is no data in the "Notations" column, the words "No Notations" should be printed on the certificate.

Because a member record may be built with a woman's married surname in ParishSOFT, for printing a certificate regarding a "full reception into the Church" that should always reflect a woman's maiden name, enter the maiden name on the General tab in the Sacramental Details section of ParishSOFT.

Certificates issued directly to a parish or other church authority for purposes of a canonical investigation (i.e., pre-marital, Tribunal, etc.) shall be clearly marked "For Canonical Investigation Only," preferably with a red ink stamp.

Data on Certificates after Changes

Once specific data has been changed in the sacramental register, the original data is not transcribed onto certificates (e.g., the natural parents' names after adoption).

Missing Records

Sometimes when a certificate is requested, the record in question cannot be found. If there is any possibility that the sacrament may have been conferred in some other parish, the inquirer should be encouraged to check the sacramental records of that other parish or parishes or consult the Office of Archives and Records. If such a search is unwarranted or fails, Canons 876 can be applied.

Only that data which can be vouched for with certainty should be entered in the register, even though doing so may leave an incomplete entry. The name of the witness or witnesses, the date of testimony, and the words, "Based on the testimony of _____," should be printed in the "Notations" column of the register.

Sworn statements of parents, sponsors, and/or the pastor should be added to the sacramental records file. These sworn statements should be witnessed by the pastor or parochial vicar and include the priest's signature, date, and parish seal. A notation should be written in the register that the entry is a "recreation of a missing record" and a cross reference should be made to the time when the event should have occurred. In ParishSOFT the information should be notated in the General Remarks tab for the corresponding sacrament.

Baptism

Canon Law Related to Baptismal Records

CAN. 535 §1. Each parish is to have parochial registers; that is, those of Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths, and others as prescribed by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan bishop. The pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.

§2. In the Baptismal Register are also to be noted Confirmation and those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of Marriage, without prejudice to the prescript of Can. 1133, of Adoption, of the reception of Sacred Orders, of perpetual profession made in a religious institute, and of change of rite. These notations are always to be noted on a Baptismal certificate.

CAN. 852 §1. The prescripts of the canons on adult Baptism are to be applied to all those who, no longer infants, have attained the use of reason.

CAN. 869 §2. Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community must not be baptized conditionally unless, after an examination of the matter and the form of the words used in the conferral of Baptism and a consideration of the intention of the baptized adult and the minister of the Baptism, a serious reason exists to doubt the validity of the Baptism.

CAN. 870 An abandoned infant or a foundling is to be baptized unless after diligent investigation the Baptism of the infant is established.

CAN. 873 There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.

CAN. 874 §2. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the Baptism.

CAN. 876 To prove the conferral of Baptism, if prejudicial to no one, the declaration of one witness beyond all exception is sufficient or the oath of the one baptized if the person received Baptism as an adult.

CAN. 877 §1. The pastor of the place where the Baptism is celebrated must carefully and without delay record in the Baptismal Register the names of the baptized, with mention made of the minister, parents, sponsors, witnesses, if any, the place and date of the conferral of the Baptism, and the date and place of birth.

§2. If it concerns a child born to an unmarried mother, the name of the mother must be inserted, if her maternity is established publicly or if she seeks it willingly in writing or before two witnesses. Moreover, the name of the father must be inscribed if a public document or his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses proves his paternity; in other cases, the name of the baptized is inscribed with no mention of the name of the father or the parents.

CAN. 878 If the Baptism was not administered by the pastor or in his presence, the minister of Baptism, whoever it is, must inform the pastor of the parish in which it was administered of the conferral of the Baptism, so that he records the Baptism according to the norm of Can.877 §1.

CAN. 1685 As soon as the sentence is executed, the judicial vicar must notify the local ordinary of the place in which the marriage was celebrated. The local ordinary must take care that the declaration of nullity of the marriage and any possible prohibitions are noted as soon as possible in the marriage and Baptismal registers.

Baptism Register Entries

The Baptismal Register serves as the "master record" for a person's membership or "incorporation" in the Catholic Church and therefore notations concerning certain other sacraments received later in life are also recorded within it.

Types of Data

For Baptism celebrated under normal circumstances, the following information is to be entered in the Baptismal Register:

1. The Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the parent(s)/adoptive parents or the legal name of the adult (always use the maiden name of a woman).
2. The name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle, if any, and maiden name), or names of adoptive parents.
3. The date and place of birth.
4. The name(s) of the sponsor(s), godparent(s), or witness(es), as well as their faith (C for Catholic or CW for Christian Witness).
5. The place and date of the Baptism.
6. The name of the minister performing the Baptism.

Source of Data

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

Before the data is transferred to the Baptismal Register, a parent, guardian, or adult candidate should verify the data written on the sacristy record (usually at the time of Baptism) as correct, and the minister must sign the sacristy record verifying that the sacrament was conferred. There should be a clear procedure in place for assuring that the data is transferred from the sacristy record to the Baptismal Register as quickly and as accurately as possible.

Clergy from Outside the Parish

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

Supporting Documents

Certain notations in the Baptismal register are accompanied by legal documents that serve as evidence and should also be preserved. Examples include adoption documents proving paternity, affidavits concerning previously omitted Baptisms, and notarized court and governmental documents concerning name and/or date changes. After the appropriate notations are made, the items must be kept permanently in a separate file corresponding to each register and page number. The Sacramental Records File must be referred to in the notation and the file itself should be stored physically near the sacramental register.

Recipients from More than One Parish

When persons from more than one parish are baptized or received into full communion with the Catholic Church at a single ceremony, it is preferred that the record for all the persons be retained at the parish where the rites are celebrated.

Godparents

No more than two names (one male and one female) may be entered in the "Godparents" or "Sponsors" column. Canon 874 §2 allows a baptized person, who is not a member of the Catholic Church, to serve as "a Christian witness." The designation "CW" might be useful for clarity. Church law holds that a baptized member of an Eastern Orthodox Church is properly a Godparent and not a Christian witness. When a Godparent or sponsor appoints a proxy to participate in the rite of Baptism, both names should be entered in the register, with "Proxy" written after that person's name. The names of Godparents or sponsors are not to be changed later in the Baptismal register because they have died or because parents feel they are no longer suitable. In these situations, parents can ask someone else to serve in the role, but no changes will be made in the permanent record or on certificates.

Unmarried Parents

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

If a child is born of an unmarried mother, the name of the mother is to be inserted in the Baptismal register, if her maternity is established publicly (e.g. birth certificate) or if she seeks it willingly in writing or before two witnesses. Likewise, the name of the father shall be inserted in the register if his paternity has been proved either by some public document (e.g. birth certificate) or by his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses. If these conditions are not met, the child is to be recorded as being of "Unknown Mother" or "Unknown Father," in Latin "mater ignota" or "pater ignotus". It is not permitted to make an annotation that states "Illegitimate."

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

1. The Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the guardian(s).
2. The date and place (city and state) of birth, if known, or of when child was found or placed under guardianship.
3. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) selected by the guardian(s), as well as their faith (C for Catholic or CW for Christian Witness).
4. The date and place of the baptism.
5. The name of the minister who performed the baptism.

Ascription to Proper Church Sui Iuris

If the pastor has concerns or questions regarding the proper ascription of the person to be baptized, please contact the Office of the Metropolitan Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Atlanta for assistance.

Baptismal Certificates

The issuance of a Baptismal certificate should reflect what is recorded in the Baptismal Register. Its purpose is to prove the fact of Baptism and the reception of any subsequent sacrament or church action that affects that person's Canonical status in the Church. Once specific data has been changed in the sacramental register, the original data is not transcribed onto certificates (e.g., the natural parents' names after adoption).

Changes and Additions to Baptismal Entries

The Baptismal record is the primary sacramental record for Catholics. It serves as a log for all the significant, public developments in one's relationship with the Church. As a result, most changes to entries in the sacramental registers are to be made in the Baptismal Register and then updated in ParishSOFT.

Changes to Original Data

Some changes are actual modifications of the original data entered for Baptism (e.g. change of name or change of parent). Baptismal records can potentially be recognized as legal documents so it is not up to pastors or staff to alter them to suit a person's preference later in life.

Notifications Added to "Notations" Column

Changes are often additions to the "Notations" column. For example, when a Catholic is confirmed, married or ordained, the churches where the sacraments are celebrated notify the church of Baptism, so the new sacraments can be noted in the Baptismal Register and entered into ParishSOFT. Also, when a marriage is declared invalid or when cleric is returned to the lay state, the Tribunal will notify the church of Baptism, so that a notation can be made in the person's Baptismal record.

Types of notification include Confirmation, marriage(s) (including convalidations), reception of Holy Orders, perpetual profession in religious institute, and change of rite. Notations of annulment (and prohibitions on future marriages), laicization, and dispensation from vows shall also be entered when requested officially by the appropriate authorities. Notification documents should include a "turn around" document to verify notations have been recorded. Notations may be entered in the General Remarks field of ParishSOFT under the Matrimony tab.

Defection from Church

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

Extraordinary Types of Baptism

Emergency Baptism

When a Baptism is conferred in an emergency situation, ceremonies may be supplied at a later date. The Baptism, if it is a Catholic Baptism, is recorded properly in the territorial parish where the emergency baptism occurred; that is where the hospital or other place is located. If the ceremonies are supplied at a later date [cf.

1973 Rite of Baptism for Children No. 31.3], a notation should be made in the margin indicating the date and place the ceremonies were supplied.

Conditional Baptism

When conditional Baptism is conferred, "baptized conditionally" is to be written in the "Notations" column. Otherwise the entry is the same as for any other Baptism. Conditional baptism is to be administered only if there is a doubt whether a person has been baptized or whether baptism was conferred validly and the doubt remains after a serious investigation.

If the original attempt at Baptism was celebrated in a Catholic Church, the conditional Baptism should be noted in the margin of the entry that recorded the original Baptism. If the original attempt was in a non-Catholic community, a new entry should be made in the register of the parish within whose boundaries the conditional Baptism was celebrated. In such cases the date and place of Baptism should be noted instead of the purported earlier Baptism. A note as to its conditional celebration should be included. The entry should also be made in ParishSOFT with the phrase "Baptism Conditional" entered in the General Remarks field.

Adoption and Baptism

On October 20, 2000, the USCCB issued norms for the purpose of assisting those with the responsibility of recording the Baptism of children who had been adopted or who later are adopted (Can. 877 §3). The norms were originally approved by the USCCB on November 18, 1998, and in turn, received Roman approbation on September 30, 2000.

Baptism before Adoption

For children baptized before adoption, the following information shall be added in the Baptismal Register and in ParishSOFT after the adoption is finalized:

1. Parentheses () shall be placed around the names of the natural parents.
2. The name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added.
3. The child's former surname shall also be parenthesized () and the new surname added.
4. A notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted. The information pertaining to the natural parents and former surnames may be entered in ParishSOFT under the General tab in the General Remarks field, under the Sacramental Details screen.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals should give the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of birth, the date and place of Baptism, and the name of the minister who administered the sacrament.

The name(s) of the natural parents and the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the Baptismal certificate. The certificate is issued from the record created *after* the adoption; no certificate ever should be issued from the record created before adoption.

A new entry should be made, and in the index cross-reference should be made to the old entry, with the following information:

1. The new legal, Christian name of the child as designated by the adoptive parents.
2. The names of the adoptive parents, as well as their faith.
3. The date and place of birth.
4. The date and place of the Baptism.
5. The name of the minister performing the Baptism.

In ParishSOFT, a Family Record should be created which includes the adoptive mother and father and the child (with current surname) so that any certificates generated with the system will include such data.

Baptism after Adoption

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

For children baptized after adoption, no reference to the adoption or the natural parents is to be made in the Baptismal Register. Any such data which has been recorded is to be treated as confidential and is not to be included on any certificate.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other Baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the Baptismal certificate.

The following information shall be entered in the Register:

1. The Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s).
2. The name(s) of the adoptive parent(s).
3. The date and place of birth.
4. The names of the sponsors selected by the adoptive parent(s), as well as their faith (C for Catholic or CW for Christian Witness).
5. The place and date of the Baptism.
6. The name of the minister performing the Baptism.

Same Sex and "Transgender" Couples Presenting an Adopted Child for Baptism

For instances in which a same sex couple or "transgender" persons present an adopted child for baptism, the parish should follow the above norms with the following modifications. Only the name of the natural or adoptive father and mother (man and woman) or that of the unmarried mother (woman), as well as that of the father (man), if his paternity is proven by a public document, should be recorded in the baptism register.

This guidance is based on a November 15, 2017 letter from the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, which states:

In the current Code, there is no specific law regarding the annotation of same sex couples or "transgender persons" as parents in the baptismal register. The term "parents" used by can. 877 CIC refers clearly to the father and the mother, man and woman created by God who are united in the sacrament of marriage (cf. can. 1055 §1 CIC) or to such a couple who adopted a child.

According to the disposition of can. 877 CIC, the parish priest must record in the baptismal register the name of the natural or adoptive father and mother (man and woman) or that of the unmarried mother (woman), as well as that of the father (man) if his paternity is proven by a public document. [...]

Given the above indications, we do not consider it possible to annotate in the baptismal register two mothers or two fathers or a "transgender father" whose real nature is a woman or a "transgender mother" whose real nature is a man.

Surgical Gender Change

The Vatican Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith holds that no changes should be made to a baptismal record to reflect the “new” sex of an individual who has undergone what is commonly referred to as a gender reassignment surgery. An October 15, 2002 letter from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops further clarifies:

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



Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Definition of Terms

RCIA

Outside of emergency situations, adults and children over seven years of age are required by canon law to participate in a process of formation governed by the “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.” RCIA culminates in the celebration of all three sacraments of initiation—Baptism, Confirmation and first reception of the Eucharist—in the same ceremony. Information concerning those who receive the sacraments of initiation shall be recorded in the Baptismal and Confirmation Registers.

Catechumens

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

Elect

An “elect” person is a catechumen who has subsequently celebrated the “Rite of Election or Enrollment of names” as part of the RCIA, and so has been chosen by the Church to receive the sacraments of initiation. The name of an elect catechumen, along with the names of the sponsor, officiating minister, and date and place of the celebration, is entered into a special “Book of the Elect.” Note that already-baptized candidates for full communion and Confirmation technically are not catechumens and do not become members of the Elect, and that these persons’ names are not placed in the “Book of the Elect.”

Sacraments of Initiation Register Entries

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

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

1. The given or Christian name(s) of the person (use the maiden name of a woman).
2. The names of the parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name).
3. The date and place of birth (city and state).
4. The name(s) of the sponsor(s), as well as their faith (C for Catholic or CW for Christian Witness).
5. The date and place of the baptism (including city and state).
6. The name of the minister who performed the baptism.

7. Marginal notation of reception of Eucharist and confirmation and marital status (either current valid marriage or the convalidation of the current civil marriage). Any decree of annulment or dissolution (including where granted and protocol number) should also be noted.

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

1. The legal and Christian names of the person (use the maiden name of a woman).
2. The chosen Confirmation name of the person.
3. The names of the parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name).
4. The date and place of baptism (including city and state).
5. The name of the sponsor, as well as their faith (C for Catholic).
6. The place and date of the confirmation.
7. The name of the minister who performed the confirmation.

Once the Sacraments of Initiation have been received and recorded in the appropriate sacramental registers, that parish becomes the parish of record for future certificate requests.



Reception into Full Communion

Register Entries

When persons are received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, after having been baptized previously in another Christian church, an entry must be made in the Baptismal Register and in ParishSOFT. The data concerning the Rite of Reception should be entered in the spaces provided for Baptism, and the data concerning the original Baptism should be entered in the "Notations" column, especially the date and place. In ParishSOFT, enter the data concerning the Rite of Reception on both the Baptism and RCIA tabs. On the Baptism tab under General Remarks, enter the data concerning the original Baptism.

Special care must be taken to follow the proper procedure when young children are received into Full Communion along with their parents. In such cases, it is suggested that the ceremonies be supplied as in an emergency Baptism, so there is a formal reception into the Church.

The date the ceremonies were supplied should be noted in the spaces provided for Baptism. The data concerning the original Baptism should be entered in the Notations column and in ParishSOFT's General Remarks field, especially the date and place.

For the "Full Reception into the Church" celebrated for a baptized adult (RCIA), the following information is to be entered in the Baptismal Register and in ParishSOFT:

1. The given or Christian name(s) of the person (use the maiden name of a woman). Because a member record may be built with a woman's married surname in ParishSOFT, for certificate printing, manually enter the maiden name once the certificate is generated, if applicable.
2. The name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name).
3. The date and place of birth.
4. The name of the sponsor, as well as their faith (C for Catholic or CW for Christian Witness).
5. The date and place of the Rite of Reception are noted in the space provided for Baptism (and entered on the Baptism and RCIA tabs in ParishSOFT).
6. Marginal notations giving the date and place of the original Baptism, reception of Eucharist and Confirmation, and marital status (either current valid marriage or the convalidation of the current marriage). Any decree of invalidity or dissolution (including where granted and protocol number) should be noted.

Bringing a Baptized Child into the Church

For baptized children before age seven who are being received into the Church, the following information is to be entered in the Register and in ParishSOFT. It is the same procedure to follow when the child is being received, along with the parents, into Full Communion with the Catholic Church:

1. The Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the parent(s).
2. The name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name).
3. The date and place of birth.
4. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) now selected by the parents

5. The date and place (church and town) of formal reception into the Church are noted in the spaces provided for Baptism.
6. Data concerning the original Baptism should be entered in the Notations column, especially the date and place (Rite of Baptism for Children).



First Communion (Optional)

First Communion Register Entries

Some parishes still give notice of First Communion (i.e. Holy Communion or First Eucharist), although this is no longer required. When First Communions are performed in a parish where registers are maintained, the following information is to be entered into the Communion Register and in ParishSOFT:

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

First Communion records are not required to be retained or reported. They may be shown on the Baptismal record.

Because they are a non-canonical record, unlike Confirmation records, First Communion records cannot be required for the administration of other sacraments, including Marriage.



Confirmation

Canon Law Related to Confirmation Records

CAN. 894 To prove the conferral of Confirmation the prescripts of Can. 876 are to be observed.

CAN. 895 The names of those confirmed with mention made of the minister, the parents and sponsors, and the place and date of the conferral of Confirmation are to be recorded in the Confirmation Register of the diocesan curia or, where the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a register kept in the parish archives. The pastor must inform the pastor of the place of Baptism about the conferral of Confirmation so that notation is made in the Baptismal Register according to the norm of Can. 535-§2.

CAN. 896 If the pastor of the place was not present, the minister either personally or through another is to inform him as soon as possible of the conferral of Confirmation.

Confirmation Register Entries

Types of Data

For Confirmation celebrated under normal circumstances, the following information is to be entered in the Confirmation Register and in ParishSOFT

1. The legal and Christian names of the child or adult (use maiden name of a woman).
2. The chosen Confirmation name of the child or adult.
3. The name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name).
4. The date and place of Baptism.
5. The name of the sponsor selected by the person, as well as their faith (C for Catholic).
6. The place and date of the Confirmation.
7. The name of the minister performing the Confirmation. If a priest is delegated by the (arch)bishop to perform the confirmation, a notation should be made of that fact.

The place of Baptism should be notified of the Confirmation. In the case of a baptized person who was brought into Full Communion in the Church, the place of reception (Profession of Faith) is to be notified instead of the place of Baptism.

Emergency Confirmation

As in the case of emergency Baptism, the record of an emergency Confirmation is to be kept in the territorial parish in which the Confirmation occurred. Entry should also be made in ParishSOFT.

Large Group of Recipients

When several persons are confirmed at the same ceremony by the same minister, the date of conferral and the name of the minister may be written only once in the register, so long as it is clear that the references apply to all the confirmed.

If there is more than one minister at a single ceremony, the record should show clearly which ministers confirmed which recipients.

Recipients from More Than One Parish

When Confirmation is conferred upon persons from several parishes at one ceremony, all records are made at the parish where Confirmation was celebrated with notification sent to the parishes of Baptism.

Baptismal Certificate

In order to satisfy the obligation of notifying the parish of Baptism about the conferral of Confirmation, a Baptismal certificate for each candidate for Confirmation should be obtained in advance of the celebration of Confirmation.

Some additional reasons for obtaining a Baptismal certificate:

1. The fact of valid Baptism and membership in the Catholic Church will be established.
2. Any previous reception of valid Confirmation, especially in the case of Catholics who were baptized in Eastern Catholic Churches, will be uncovered.
3. Any discrepancies between name and parentage provided in the Baptismal Register and given at the time of Confirmation will be discovered.
4. The identity of Baptismal Godparents can be ascertained.

Baptismal Data

It is recommended that the place and date of Baptism be noted in the Confirmation Register, which can be especially helpful when a person has difficulty locating a Baptismal record later in life.

All verified information regarding sacraments should be keyed in ParishSOFT for ease of use with the Notification Letters and Certificates.

Notification of Church of Baptism

The Church of Baptism should be notified of the Confirmation as soon as possible by the clergy of the place where the record of Confirmation is retained. This notification is to include the name of the recipient and the date of Baptism, as well as the place and date of Confirmation. The names of the minister, parents, and sponsor are not required.

When a person previously baptized in another Christian communion is received into Full Communion and Confirmed at the same time, the church of Baptism is not notified.

Marriage

Canon Law Related to Marriage Records

CAN. 1081 The pastor or the priest or deacon mentioned in Can. 1079 §2 is to notify the local ordinary immediately about a dispensation granted for the external forum; it is also to be noted in the Marriage Register.

CAN. 1121 §1. After a marriage has been celebrated, the pastor of the place of the celebration or the person who takes his place, even if neither assisted at the marriage, is to note as soon as possible in the Marriage Register the names of the spouses, the person who assisted, and the witnesses, and the place and date of the celebration of the marriage according to the method prescribed by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan bishop.

CAN. 1122 §1. The contracted marriage is to be noted also in the Baptismal Registers in which the Baptism of the spouses has been recorded.

CAN. 1123 Whenever a marriage is either convalidated in the external forum, declared null, or legitimately dissolved other than by death, the pastor of the place of celebration of the marriage must be informed so that a notation is properly made in the Marriage and Baptismal Registers.

CAN. 1685 As soon as the sentence is executed, the judicial vicar must notify the local ordinary of the place in which the marriage was celebrated. The local ordinary must take care that the declaration of the nullity of the marriage and any possible prohibitions are noted as soon as possible in the Marriage and Baptismal Registers.

Marriage Register Entries

Types of Data

All marriages (including marriages convalidated in the external forum) are to be entered in the Marriage Register. For weddings celebrated with recognition by the Catholic Church, the following information is to be entered into the Marriage Register and in ParishSOFT:

1. The legal names of the groom.
2. The name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name) of the groom.
3. The legal names of the bride (always use the maiden name of a woman, even if a second marriage).
4. The name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name) of the bride.
5. The date and place of Baptism of each party.
6. The date and place (actual church and town) of the wedding.
7. The names of the witnesses, as well as their faith (C for Catholic or CW for Christian Witness).
8. The name of the priest or deacon asking for and receiving the couple's vows.
9. Notation of any permissions, dispensations and delegations obtained for the valid celebration of the wedding (including protocol number if existing).

The informational facts in the prenuptial file or envelope are the source for the Marriage Register. The marginal notation column is for the purpose of noting any permission or dispensation, regardless of the source for the permission/dispensation, and other significant factors (for instance, delegation for the minister or sanation).

Source of Data

The pastor is responsible for seeing that the necessary information is recorded in the parish where the marriage was celebrated. The premarital file ordinarily contains all the necessary information. However, the celebrant should be alert to any last minute changes or corrections to the information contained in the premarital file.

Marriage Outside Parish Church

When a marriage is celebrated in a place other than a parish church (e.g., a chapel), the proper parish for the marriage record is the territorial parish in which that place is located. (To assist in determining the territorial parish, please see our [Parishes by Boundaries](#) map.) The only exception is with a dispensation from the canonical form: in that situation, the proper parish for the marriage record is the parish of the Catholic party.

Convalidation

When a civil marriage is convalidated, the data concerning the convalidation is to be placed in the usual columns. The date, place, and officiant of the original ceremony are to be noted in the "Notations" column. In ParishSOFT, the date of the civil union may be placed in the General Remarks field on the Matrimony tab.

Sanation

When a marriage is sanated, the data concerning the original ceremony is to be placed in the usual columns. The date, diocese, and protocol number of the sanation are to be noted in the notations column.

Marriages of persons who are baptized or received into full communion in the Catholic Church are not to be recorded in the marriage register, unless the marriage now is being validated, convalidated, or sanated. A notation concerning the marriage is to be placed in the person's baptismal record in the notations column.

Notation of Dispensations and Annulments

When a dispensation is granted prior to marriage, or an annulment or a dissolution (Pauline Privilege, Petrine Privilege, Ratified but Non-Consummated) is granted after marriage, the date, diocese, and protocol number, along with the type of dispensation (e.g. "Dispensation from Disparity of Worship") or the word "Annulment," or "Dissolution" are to be noted in the "Notations" column. Also to be included are any permissions granted; the delegation given to assist at marriage; and any restrictions on future marriages as set forth in the decree of nullity. Any special recording directions contained in the dispensation or annulment document are to be followed as well.

Notification of Church of Baptism

When the marriage of a Catholic is celebrated, convalidated, or sanated, the pastor of the parish where the record of marriage is retained must notify the church of Baptism. This notification is to include the names of the spouses and the date and place of the wedding, convalidation or sanation; the names of the officiant and witnesses are not required.

Premarital Files

Contents

Each parish and mission is required to maintain a file of the papers collected during the period of marriage preparation. The file typically will include prenuptial forms, questionnaires, correspondence, sacramental notifications, relevant notes, dispensation documents, and affidavits. A copy of the civil license also is retained in the file. Do not keep the FOCCUS survey except for current use, but note the date the survey was taken on the premarital envelope or in the file before requesting permission to dispose of the confidential information.

Location

The premarital file for each couple should be retained by the parish or mission where the marriage is recorded in the Marriage Register. If the marriage prep takes place at a different parish from the wedding, a copy of the premarital file should be sent to the parish where the marriage is recorded in the Marriage Register. The priest at the parish who performed the preparation may retain a copy of the premarital file for 1-2 years in case any questions arise before contacting the Office of Archives and Records to properly dispose of the confidential information.

Filing and Retention

The file for each couple is to be kept in its own acid-free envelope or folder, clearly marked with the parties' names and the date of the marriage. A file is considered to be "expired" or "inactive" when the parish receives notice that one of the spouses has died. The files should be kept together in a locked file cabinet or safe. Expired pre-marital files can be weeded down to essential documents (questionnaires and marriage registration forms). Retain pre-nuptial files permanently and in a secure location at the parish.

Transmission of File

If a legitimate request for the copy of the file is made by an ecclesiastical tribunal, a photocopy or digital scan of the file should be sent. The original file should remain in the parish's archives. If the photocopy of the original file is later returned, it should be destroyed properly.

Holy Orders

Canon Law Related to Ordination Registers

CAN. 1053 §1. After an ordination has taken place, the names of those ordained and of the ordaining minister and the place and date of ordination are to be noted in a special register to be kept carefully in the curia of the place of ordination; all the documents of individual ordination are to be preserved carefully.

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

Ordination Register Entries

The archbishop's delegates shall enter all ordinations (permanent deacon, transitional deacon, presbyteral, and episcopal) performed within the territory of the Archdiocese of Atlanta into the appropriate ordination register.

Responsibility for Entry

The Office for the Permanent Diaconate is responsible for maintaining the Sacramental Register for Ordinations to the Permanent Diaconate. The Office of Priest Personnel is responsible for maintaining the Sacramental Register for Ordinations to the Priesthood. (Ordinations to the transitional diaconate will be recorded in the Sacramental Register for Ordinations to the Priesthood.)

Types of Data

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

1. The date of the ordination.
2. The full name (last, first middle) of the ordained.
3. The date of birth of the ordained.
4. The type of ordination (permanent deacon, transitional deacon, presbyteral, episcopal).
5. The ordaining prelate.
6. The (arch)diocese for which the person is being ordained.
7. The location (church, city, state) of the ordination.

Notification of Church of Baptism

The archbishop's delegates must notify the church of baptism as soon as possible. This notification is to include the name of the ordained, the date and place of the ordination, and the ordaining prelate. The Office for the Permanent Diaconate is responsible for sending notifications for all newly ordained Permanent Deacons. The Office of Priest Personnel is responsible for sending notifications for all newly ordained Transitional Deacons, Priests, and Bishops.

Death

Canon Law Related to Death Records

CAN. 1182 When the burial has been completed, a record is to be made in the register of deaths according to the norm of particular law.

Death Register Entries

Types of Data

Death registers are required to be kept by all parishes. All Catholic funeral liturgies, even if celebrated outside the church building, should be entered in the parish Death Register.

For deaths where the funeral is celebrated in the parish or in the parish boundaries, the following information is to be entered into the Death Register and ParishSOFT:

1. The legal and Christian names of the deceased person.
2. The residential address of the deceased person.
3. The date and place of death.
4. The date and place of burial (which may be the same as the funeral date).
5. Additional information, particularly in ParishSOFT, may include the name of the funeral home, next of kin, the cause of death if known (should be taken from an official Certificate of Death only), vigil place and celebrant, and funeral place and celebrant.

Source of Data

The data needed for the Death Register is ordinarily provided by the funeral director.

Cremation

When the body has been cremated, no reference to the 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 ashes' interment.

Memorial Services

There is no canonical requirement to record a memorial service in the Death Register. It is up to the preference of the parish as to whether or not to record this information in the register.

Non-Catholic Burial

If a priest or deacon is called upon to preside at a non-Catholic burial, an entry can be made in the Death Register together with a notation concerning the religion of the deceased and the services that were provided.

Burial Permits

Burial permit books do not satisfy the conditions of a permanent Death Register.

Cemetery or Columbaria Records

For those parishes with cemeteries or columbaria, civil law requires additional records to be maintained. Information related to cemeteries should be recorded in ParishSOFT on the Funeral tab and are required to be completed as fully as possible. Contact the [Office of Catholic Cemeteries](#) for further advice.

1. Burial Date (may be the same as the Funeral Date). Note whether Interred, Entombed, or Cremated.
2. The Cemetery or Columbaria Name.
3. Grave Location, including Section, Block, Lot and Grave.
4. Grave Purchase Date and Cost.
5. Deed Issue Date.
6. Deed Owner.



Appendix I: Sacramental Registers Inventory Form

Parish/Mission Name: _____

Current Register Custodian: _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Book Number and/or Title: _____

Type of Book: *(circle one)* Baptism First Communion Confirmation Marriage Death Combination

No. of Pages _____ No. of Pages Used _____ Inclusive Dates _____

Dimensions _____ inches X _____ inches X _____

Index in: *(circle one)* Front Back None

Color of Binding _____

Book publisher: _____

Additional description: _____

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

Current location of book _____

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

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

Has the information in the register been entered into ParishSoft? *(circle one)* Yes No

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

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

Name of Person Completing Form _____ Date _____

Email Address _____ Phone Number _____

Email completed inventory forms to: archives@archatl.com

(First and last name, if known)

Witness to the Baptism
Name (This can be the subject of the affidavit if he/she was old enough to remember the Baptism)

Signature of Witness _____ Date _____

Additional Witness to the Baptism
Name (This can be the subject of the affidavit if he/she was old enough to remember the Baptism)

Signature of Witness _____ Date _____

Contact information of Catholic cleric serving as Witness to this Affidavit:
Church Name
Mailing Address (Include street, city, state, and zip code)
Mailing Address (Include street, city, state, and zip code)

Email Address

Phone Number

Signature of Catholic Cleric

Date

Place church seal here

Office Use Only

Date Affidavit Received _____

Parish Receiving Affidavit _____

Appendix III: Sample Register Entries

Standard Entries

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

Conditional Baptism

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

Unmarried Parents – No father noted

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

Unmarried Parents – Father attested and noted

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

Christian Witness

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

Proxy Godparent

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

Bringing Baptized Child into the Church

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

Baptism of an Unbaptized Adult

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

Reception into Full Communion

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

Ascription to Eastern Catholic Church

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

Testimony of Witness Verifying Reception of Sacrament

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

Notation of Confirmation and Marriage

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

Notation of Ordination to Priesthood

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

Notation of Ordination to Permanent Diaconate

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

Notation of Perpetual Vows

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

Notation of Place of Marriage and Site of Record if Different

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

Notation of Declaration of Nullity (Annulment)

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

Notation of Marriage after Annulment

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

Minor Change – Name correction

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

Major Change – Termination of original entry - Adoption

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

Major Change – Replacement of original entry - Adoption

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

Additional Space Required for Notations

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

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

Recreation of a Missing Record

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

Appendix IV: Additional Resources

Office of Archives and Records

The Office of Archives and Records is located in the Chancery and offers outreach services to parishes and missions. For information and advice related to recordkeeping, sacramental records, preservation, bookbinding, and repair, please contact the Office of Archives and Records at 404-920-7690 or email archives@archatl.com. Visit the Office of Archives and Records' website for additional information: <http://www.archatl.com/offices/archives>.

Metropolitan Tribunal

The ministry of the Metropolitan Tribunal includes all matters concerning the application and practice of canon law within the Archdiocese of Atlanta as well as the appeals court for the suffragan dioceses of the ecclesiastical province, which includes the dioceses of Charlotte, Charleston, Raleigh and Savannah. By delegation, the Tribunal also handles all matters of permissions and dispensations pertaining to marriage. Visit the Metropolitan Tribunal's website for additional information: <http://www.archatl.com/offices/metropolitan-tribunal/>

Office of Parish Support & Information Services

Parish Support and Information Systems supports the work of the Office of Finance by providing training on and administration of our Parish Data Systems—primarily ParishSOFT. Our support staff is here to help parish staff find useful and streamlined ways to manage their parish data and accounting systems and implement best practices in managing this data. Visit the Office of Parish Support & Information Services' website for additional information: <http://www.archatl.com/offices/parish-support-information-services/>

Office of Divine Worship

The Office of Divine Worship provides direct support to parishes as well as programs designed to aid parish clergy, volunteers, and staff. Diocesan Norms are published on the website at <https://archatl.com/offices/divine-worship/diocesan-norms/>.

Sacramental Registers Vendors

Many church supply vendors in the United States obtain their sacramental registers from the manufacturer F.J. Remy. The two major companies to order sacramental registers from are F.J. Remy (<http://www.fjremey.com/>) and Tonini Church Supply (<http://www.tonini.net/>). Search the Remy site under "record books" and the Tonini site by "registers."

Preferred Archival Ink Pen

The Office of Archives and Records highly recommends using an archival quality ink pen when recording the sacraments in the registers. While many pen companies produce pens with permanent ink, we prefer the Sakura brand Pigma Micron 08 (0.50mm) Ink Pens. These can be purchased from a variety a retailers, including [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).