

## **SECTION 15: ARCHDIOCESAN RECORDS**

The following policies shall be followed in regard to Archdiocesan records.

### **15.1 OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS**

All records<sup>1</sup> created, received, used, maintained or preserved by an Archdiocesan entity<sup>2</sup>, employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese of New Orleans during the course of employment or in the transaction of Archdiocesan business are solely the property of the Archdiocese. No records shall be removed, destroyed, transferred, stored, transferred into another media format, e.g., digital imaging, or otherwise disposed of except in compliance with Archdiocesan policies governing properly established Retention Schedules and the procedures developed by the Office of Archives and Records.

### **15.2 RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES**

Records retention scheduling for the disposition of all Archdiocesan Records shall be approved by the Records Conservation Board<sup>3</sup> and administered by the Office of Archives and Records.

#### **15.2.1 Procedures**

A records retention schedule is created by the Office of Archives and Records Staff for the Archdiocese and includes a record's series title, description, retention period and legal citation. This schedule mandates the minimum retention period of records of the Archdiocese and is approved by the entity's head, the Department Director and the Records Conservation Board. As the disposition of all records is to be in compliance with these schedules, all employees should consult the retention schedule for the Archdiocese. Any questions in this regard should be directed to the Archdiocesan Office of Archives and Records.

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<sup>1</sup> Records" as used herein shall include, but shall not be limited to, all recorded information, documents, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, tapes (magnetic and otherwise), records generated in an electronic format, and any other documentary material regardless of media format or characteristics that have been created, received, used, maintained, or preserved by an Archdiocesan entity or its employees and volunteers in the course or transaction of its business or pursuant to its legal obligations. Examples of materials that are not records within the meaning of these policies and procedures include library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes; extra copies of documents that have been preserved for convenience of reference; stocks of publications or blank forms; and similar material not normally included within the definition of record.

<sup>2</sup> An "Archdiocesan entity" as used herein shall include any archdiocesan department, institution, office, parish, mission, archdiocesan school, parochial school, or corporation as found in the Archdiocese of New Orleans section of the Official Catholic Directory whether separately incorporated or not. However, nothing herein shall be construed as affecting the separate corporate nature of any separately incorporated, affiliated entity, and "Archdiocese" is used for descriptive purposes only. "Archdiocesan" is descriptive of "Archdiocese." This does not apply to independent entities listed in the Official Catholic Directory under the Archdiocese of New Orleans but are recognized as Catholic organizations by the Archbishop as Shepherd of the Archdiocese.

<sup>3</sup> The Records Conservation Board is the governing authority for approval of records retention schedules for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The Board consists of the Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of New Orleans' Finance Officer, Legal Counsel, the Archivist or their designates.

## 15.3 LITIGATION HOLD<sub>4</sub> ORDERS

When any employee of an Archdiocesan entity receives a subpoena for records, a notification of forthcoming litigation, or is alerted that certain information may be relevant to a legal issue and/or sought in the discovery process in litigation, destruction of all records or related records must cease until further notice.

### 15.3.1 Procedures

Upon receipt of a subpoena for records, complaint, a demand letter or a "preservation letter" expressly requesting that certain documents be preserved, the employee will notify immediately his supervisor and the Vicar General/ Moderator of the Curia of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The Moderator will notify the Archdiocesan attorney, who has a vital role in communicating to and coordinating with the Archdiocesan Office of Archives and Records when and how to suspend document retention policies, determining the scope of the potential investigation or lawsuit and the source and location of possible relevant documents. A "litigation hold memo" addressed to the key employees and IT personnel outlining which information would be relevant to the litigation and preferred methods for preservation will be circulated by the Moderator of the Curia.

The Archdiocesan attorney's written permission is needed to lift a hold order and allow destruction to continue.

## 15.4 SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

### 15.4.1 PROCEDURES FOR THE CREATION OF SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS AND THEIR ANNOTATION

#### 15.4.1.1 Registers In General

**Required Registers.** Each parish shall keep the following sacramental registers: Baptismal, Confirmation, Marriage and Death. (C. 535/1, 895) A First Communion register is optional, as is a Profession of Faith register (If a Profession of Faith register is not used, the Baptismal register must be used for this purpose). Each sacramental register shall include the name of the parish, the dates and shall be indexed. Although computer storage may supplement the registers for reference or statistical purposes, it is not an acceptable replacement for the books themselves.

**Permanent Bindings, Paper, Ink.** Registers are meant for permanent preservation, therefore, bindings and paper shall be of a quality that is considered permanent, durable and acid-free (i.e., non-yellowing). The ink that is used shall also be of a permanent quality. Only black ink shall be used. The best types of inks are those made for artwork or India inks (usually found in cartridges). A black ballpoint pen is acceptable. (Felt-tip

pens, gel ink pens and pencils are not acceptable.)

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<sup>4</sup> A litigation hold is a suspension of document retention/destruction policies for those documents that may be relevant to a legal issue and/or lawsuit that has been actually filed or one that is reasonably anticipated. It ensures that relevant data is not destroyed and that key employees are notified of document preservation requirements.

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

***Corrections, Additions, Deletions.*** One of the tests for the validity of a record as legal proof is whether it has been officially kept and whether any alterations were made. For this reason, the proper way to correct a factual error (i.e., a name or date) is to draw a single line through the error and add a notation. Do not erase or cross out what someone claims is incorrect. The notation must be based on some written proof of error (this proof should be identified in the notation). The notation should be dated and initialed by the person making the correction. In case of a technical or incidental error (i.e., spelling, date out of sequence, etc.), which is obvious to the "person in charge", once it is pointed out, a change in the original entry may be made without the need for the notation or proof (C. 876). In cases of doubt, the Archdiocesan Archivist and/or Chancellor's Office shall be consulted.

#### **15.4.1.2 Baptismal Registers**

***In General.*** The baptismal register shall record the following information for each baptism: the name, date and place of birth of the baptized; the name of the minister of the sacrament; the names of the parents (including mother's maiden name), sponsor(s), godparent(s) and witness(es); and the date and place (if outside the church parish) of the conferred baptism. (C. 877)

***Routine Notations.*** The baptismal register serves as the "master record" for a person's membership in the Church. (C. 535/2) Notations concerning other sacraments received later in life that change the status of the person are to be entered there: 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, dispensation from vows, and departure from the Catholic Church by a formal act shall also be entered when requested officially by the appropriate authorities.

***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." This 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 as set forth in this section entitled

*Baptismal Registers. (In General and Routine Notations above and Professions of Faith and Confirmation Registers below.)*

***Catechumens.*** A catechumen is a person who is not yet baptized at all 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 this celebration, shall be entered into a special parish register of catechumens (see RCIA, above). 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 this celebration, shall be entered into a special parish "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."

***Professions of Faith.*** The name of persons who first were baptized in another Christian religion and who enter into full communion with the Catholic Church by means of a formal profession of faith shall be recorded in the parish baptismal register, or in the parish register of professions of faith. The date and place of the person's profession of faith are indicated, as well as the date-if known, even if only approximate-of the non-Catholic baptism, as well as all of the other information as required in a typical baptismal entry. Note that since 1983 confirmation is ordinarily administered at the time of this profession of faith, so that the proper entry must also be made in the parish confirmation register. The "sponsor" for a person joining the Church typically serves also as the sponsor for confirmation.

***Child of Unwed Parents.*** If a child is born of an unmarried mother, the name of the mother is to be inserted in the baptismal register if there is public proof of her maternity (i.e., a civil birth record, record of birth). The name of the father shall be inserted in the register if there is a public document (i.e., civil birth certificate, record of birth). In the event that the father's name does not appear on the birth certificate, the space for the name of the father on the baptismal certificate should not be left blank, but instead, a notation of *not declared* should be entered on the certificate. The space in the baptismal register is to be left blank (C. 877/2). **It is not permitted** to make an annotation that says *Illegitimate*.

***Adoption.*** (C. 877/3) Baptism shall be postponed until after the child has been placed with the adopting parent(s), except in extraordinary circumstances such as a serious threat of imminent death. This is with the understanding that the postponement will be for a relatively short time only.

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

- the Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s);
- the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s);
- the date and place of birth;
- the names of the sponsors selected by the adoptive parent(s);
- the place and date of the baptism;
- the name of the minister performing the baptism; and
- the fact of adoption but not the names of the natural parents.

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.**

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

- parentheses shall be placed around the names of the natural parents;
- the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added;
- the child's former surname shall also be parenthesized and the new surname added; and
- a notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.

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

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

parents, and the date and place of birth.

Parish personnel having access to parish registers have an obligation not to disclose to any person any information, which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted.

***Attestation of a Baptism.*** There are occasions when baptism entries cannot be located, were mistakenly omitted, cannot be read because of damage to the register or the register was lost. The following procedures should be followed in posting an attestation of a baptism.

If a person presents a valid Baptism Certificate (a certificate with the original signature and the seal of the parish) it may be posted to the register. It should be posted to the year in which the baptism took place. A notation should be made in the note field stating that this is a delayed posting and is being made from a copy of the original baptism certificate. Copy the certificate, authenticate it and keep it with the baptism register.

In the circumstance where there is no certificate, the baptism may be posted to the register under specific conditions. The declaration of a witness (in the case of an infant baptism) or the testimony of the person baptized (in the case of an adult baptism) properly given and notarized is sufficient proof of baptism (C 876). As much information about the baptism as possible should be included in the statement (name of the person, date and place of birth, date and place of baptism, church, celebrant, sponsors). The signature of the person making the statement may be witnessed by a priest or a deacon or it may be notarized by an ecclesiastical notary or a civil notary. An after-the-fact entry can be made in the baptism register based on this testimony. As much as possible, information should be included in the register in the year in which the baptism took place. The note field entry should state the following: *Entry made in accordance with Canon 876 per attestation of (name of the person)*. The original of the testimony should be kept with supporting documents for that baptism register.

***Supporting Documents.*** Certain notations in the baptismal register are accompanied by legal documents that serve as evidence and should also be preserved. Examples include acknowledgement of paternity affidavits, adoption documents; affidavits concerning previously omitted baptisms; and notarized court and governmental documents concerning name and/or date changes. These items shall never be glued, stapled or paper clipped into the actual register. After the appropriate notations are made, these items shall be kept in a separate file corresponding to each register and page number. The file shall be referred to in the notation. The file shall be kept permanently.

#### **15.4.1.3 Confirmation Registers**

The names of the confirmed, the parents, the sponsors, and the minister; the place and date of the conferral of confirmation; and the place and date of baptism are to be noted in the confirmation register of the parish. A notice must also be sent to the church of baptism indicating the name of the recipient; date and place of confirmation; and the

name of the conferring bishop or priest, so that a notation may be made in the baptismal register. (C. 895)

#### **15.4.1.4 Marriage Registers**

*In General.* All marriages (including marriages convalidated in the external forum) are to be entered in the marriage register. The following items are to be noted: the names of the spouses, the person who assisted and the witnesses, the place and date of the marriage celebration, and any pertinent notation (i.e., date and place of baptism) (C.1121). It is also necessary to retain the pre-nuptial file permanently in the parish archives.

*Notations.* The following notations are to be entered in the marriage record: permission or dispensation received from impediments; the delegation given to assist at marriage; a decree of dissolution or nullity; and any restrictions on future marriages. Whenever a rescript is involved, the name of the diocese, congregation, or tribunal, etc., which issues the rescript shall be noted, together with the date and the protocol number if one is provided. The pastor of the parish in which the marriage has taken place must forward this information as soon as possible to the pastor of the parish where each party was baptized (C.1122) or to the Archdiocese for the Military Services, if required.

When a rescript is granted dispensing a marriage from Canonical Form and the marriage is celebrated in a place other than a Catholic Church, it is to be recorded in the following manner:

- A marriage entry shall be recorded in the marriage register of the parish where the priest or deacon who prepared the couple is assigned. A copy of the prenuptial file should retain by that parish. The priest or deacon is responsible for notifying the parish where the Catholic party was baptized, and
- The original prenuptial file along with the original rescript for Dispensation from Canonical Form shall be sent to the Office of the Chancellor and recorded in the Archdiocesan Marriage Register.

#### **15.4.1.5 Death Registers**

Funerals should be recorded at the parish of the deceased. If not conducted by parish of deceased, then in parish of person (priest/deacon) conducting the funeral.

A bound register shall be used to record deaths and burials. Burial permit books do not satisfy the conditions of a permanent register. The registers shall be chronologically arranged by date of parishioner death. It shall include the date of anointing, name of anointing priest and place of burial. Additional information may include name of funeral home, next of kin and cause of death (if known).

#### **15.4.1.6 First Communion Registers**

Where these registers are kept, they shall include the names of the first communicant and parents as found on the baptismal certificate; the place and date of baptism; and the date

of reception of the sacrament.

#### **15.4.2 RECORDING OF SACRAMENTS CELEBRATED IN HOSPITALS**

Canons 877 and 878 (baptism), 895 (confirmation), and 1121 (weddings) provide that all baptisms, confirmations, and weddings are to be recorded in the register kept in the church parish where the sacrament is celebrated.

Hospitals are not exceptions to these canons. Therefore, whenever a baptism, confirmation, or wedding is celebrated in a hospital, the parish in which the hospital is located is to be notified so that they may enter the proper record.

**15.4.2.1** Multiple records of a sacrament are not to be encouraged. Therefore, the sacrament is to be recorded **ONLY** in the parish where the sacrament was celebrated. This is especially true of baptisms. The baptismal record is used as the permanent record of status in the Church. Confirmations, ordinations, religious profession, marriages, and annulments are recorded in the baptismal register. Clearly then, it is important to have only **ONE** record of baptism. This record is to be in the parish where the Baptism was celebrated.

**15.4.2.2** Sometimes baptisms are celebrated in a hospital due to a life threatening emergency. Later, if the child recovers, the family may request the home parish to "supply the ceremony". Such a practice is acceptable. (See nos. 165-185 in the Rite of Baptism for Children) This is **NOT** the, baptism, however, and is **NOT** to be recorded in the baptismal register. The parish where the baptism was celebrated should be notified of the names of the sponsors by the home parish.

**15.4.2.3** In such a situation, the home parish may record the name of the child in the **INDEX** of the baptismal register with a note next to or beneath the name giving the name of the parish where the baptism is recorded. No record, however, should be made in the register itself.

**15.4.2.4** Even if the family does not request that the ceremony be supplied, a pastor may decide to record the names of parishioners who have been baptized in a hospital outside of the parish in the **INDEX** of the Baptismal register with a notation of where the baptism is recorded so that in the future there will be no confusion in finding the record.

#### **15.4.3 SACRAMENTAL CERTIFICATES (C.535/3)**

As an authenticated (i.e., signed and sealed) transcript of the original record, every certificate shall be accurate, legible (preferably typewritten) and complete (including all notations except in cases of adoption as indicated above in *Baptismal Registers: Adoption*). The absence of information to fit an item on the printed form 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 NONSACRAMENTAL PURPOSES," since they are not sufficient to certify the canonical status of an individual.



## **15.4.4 PROCEDURES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF SACRAMENTAL RECORDS**

### **15.4.4.1 In a Safe Place**

Sacramental registers are to be kept in a secure place (i.e., the parish safe) as well as stored and handled in an environment that ensures their preservation (C.535). Ideally, this means a constant, cool temperature with a relative humidity of 40 to 50% 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 and direct sunlight.

### **15.4.4.2 Restoration**

Registers that have been worn out by use and age can be rebound and restored, provided this work is done according to archival requirements. Rebinding that destroys any data or renders any part of the records unusable is not acceptable. For these reasons, the Archdiocesan Archivist shall be consulted before any rebinding or restoration work is undertaken.

### **15.4.4.3 Copies**

Sacramental registers can be protected from loss due to fire, flood, age or heavy use by making duplicate copies in any one of several ways: transcripts, digitization, microfilm and computer. Under no circumstances, however, shall the original register be discarded. For the purpose of providing disaster recovery copies, the Archdiocese has undertaken an archdiocesan-wide digitization/microfilming project of sacramental records, which includes the periodic updating of the digital image/film. This project and any other steps taken at the parish level shall be regarded as a means of preservation, not free access or publication. The same restrictions of access apply to copies as to original records.

### **15.4.4.4 Transfer to Archdiocesan Archives**

The ordinary repository for sacramental registers is the parish that created them. All sacramental registers that are 75 years or older shall be transferred to the Archdiocesan Archives for preservation. In the event that a parish or institution does not have the facilities or the means to preserve an older book or to handle the volume of research requests, the Archdiocesan Archives shall be contacted for a possible transfer of the register to the Archdiocesan Archives.

## **15.5 PROCEDURES FOR ACCESS TO SACRAMENTAL RECORDS**

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 civil law as valid and authentic evidence when an appropriate civil record does not exist. They are not "public" in the sense that they are open to immediate examination and inspection by anyone for whatever reason.

Every person has the right to be furnished with an authenticated certificate of his/ her own

sacramental records. However, these records are not only of value to the persons named in the registers. Research (whether historical, genealogical, sociological, demographic, etc.) is also a valid reason for permitting access to these records, provided that the rules of access 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 these 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. For this reason older records may be made more broadly available to researchers, whereas recent records shall be more restricted from use. At present a record is considered for unrestricted use when it is 100 years or older. The norms governing access to sacramental records (whether originals or copies) is as follows:

#### **15.5.1 SACRAMENTAL RECORDS THAT ARE 100 YEARS OR OLDER**

All researchers seeking records that are 100 years or older shall be referred to the published records: Archdiocese of New Orleans Catholic Church Records, located at various libraries and archives. Certificates and copies of the original may be requested from the archdiocese, where there is a fee for this service.

#### **15.5.2 SACRAMENTAL RECORDS THAT ARE NOT 100 YEARS OR OLDER**

These records are not open to examination except by authorized & trained parish personnel and legitimate church authority.

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 yrs. of age) or a child seeking records of an infirm or incapacitated parent (legal proof of guardianship or executor status required) ], the pastor or authorized parish personnel shall examine the registers and issue the required information either directly or by mail. If the person is not known to parish personnel, a signed request with proof of identification (picture ID) is required. If the request is in writing it must be signed and include the name of parents, date of birth and other pertinent information so that there is no doubt that the person requesting the information is entitled to receive it.

If the administration of the parish records becomes burdensome (i.e. age and value, demands of researchers, or care and storage), the pastor should contact the Archdiocese for a possible transfer of the registers to the Archdiocesan Archives where they can be more safely preserved and more easily administered.

#### **15.5.3 ALL SACRAMENTAL RECORDS**

Parishes should not charge any fees for providing information from sacramental registers. However, a minimum handling fee may be charged for issuing a certificate to private persons. (If hardship is claimed, fees should always be waived.)

Requests made by government or corporate agencies (i.e., Social Security Administration, Immigration, insurance companies, etc.) should be accompanied by a signed release by the

person whose record is requested (or a legally qualified guardian) authorizing the release of the information.

## **15.6 OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY OF RECORDS**

**15.6.1 COPYRIGHT.** Ownership of copyrights for all sacramental records of parishes under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of New Orleans rests with the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

**15.6.2 RESPONSIBILITY.** The creation, preservation and use of sacramental records are the responsibility of the person in charge, whether pastor, chaplain or administrator. (C. 535/1)

**15.6.3 CHAPELS.** A pastor who also has charge of a subordinate church, oratory or chapel ("mission") is obliged to maintain records for services rendered there in the church parish.

**15.6.4 INSTITUTIONS.** Persons assigned as chaplains or parish priests with sacramental responsibilities for Catholic or non-Catholic institutions which maintain no distinctly Catholic sacramental registers shall see to it that the reception of the sacraments of baptism and marriage be recorded in the sacramental registers of the territorial parish in which the hospital/institution is located. These sacraments shall not be recorded in the parish to which the priest is assigned if it is not the territorial parish.

## **15.7 PARISH BULLETINS**

Each parish must retain a permanent record of all parish weekly bulletins. For safety and efficiency, these bulletins should be bound annually.

## **15.8 MASS INTENTION RECORDS**

Mass intentions are to be recorded in a separate book reserved for this purpose. The book is to record the amount donated for the intention, the date the intention was fulfilled and the name of the celebrant of the Mass. This book is to be kept until the canonical visit of the Dean. Once the dean has inspected the book, it may be discarded and a new book begun.

## **15.9 POLICIES GOVERNING ACCESS TO AND USE OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN ARCHIVES**

### **15.9.1 Functions of Office of Archives and Records**

The Office of Archives and Records of the Archdiocese of New Orleans exist: 1) to manage efficiently the archdiocesan central files and to assist archdiocesan offices, parishes, schools, and agencies in managing their records, and 2) to identify, collect, appraise, arrange, preserve, protect, describe, and make available the historical and/ or vital records of the Catholic Church in Louisiana, particularly within the former and current archdiocesan boundaries. The archives house the historical records of the Catholic Church's mission, people, and events in this area, and

as such, participate in the local Church's mission as a people of many cultures who draw from the richness of our diversity.

The Office of Archives and Records' main function is to serve the administrative needs of the archbishop as well as archdiocesan offices, parishes, schools, and agencies. The archives staff manages the active and inactive central files in the administration building; develops and manages an approved records retention schedule, and assists archdiocesan offices, parishes, schools, and agencies in establishing and maintaining cost-efficient records and information programs.

The second function is to identify, collect, appraise, arrange, preserve, protect and describe those historical records which document the Catholic Church within the former and current boundaries of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

The third function is to develop and manage a vital records program for curial or current records (those records necessary for the archdiocese's continued operation and the protection of its legal, financial, and moral rights in case of a disaster) and to develop and manage a program to protect, preserve, and, where necessary, restore archdiocesan historical records.

The fourth function is to make available the archdiocese's rich documentary heritage in accordance with the norms of church law and sound archival practice. This function includes: 1) historical and archival publications; 2) educational and professional presentations; and 3) reference services to scholars and researchers.

### **15.9.2 Access to Records Housed**

To implement the Office of Archives and Records mission and functions, the following policies govern access to and use of all records housed in the archdiocesan archives:

- Those collections which have been described at a collection level are available for scholarly research. A list of these collections is available upon request.
- Access to described collections is available to scholars in accordance with church law (particularly Canons 483--491), the National Council of Catholic Bishops' 1974 "Document on Ecclesiastical Archives," and Catholic Diocesan Archivists' 1991 "Guidelines for Access to Diocesan Archives". The archivist has the responsibility for reviewing the applications of individual researchers.
- Access to individual collections is governed by federal and state law, archdiocesan policy, sound archival practice, and individual deeds of gift or trust. These laws, policies, practices and individual stipulations provide a balanced approach that is sensitive to individual right-to-know, sound historical scholarship as enunciated by Pope Leo XIII, preservation, privacy, and confidentiality. Collections which are closed or restricted are so indicated.
- Individual documents are provided by the archives staff and must be used under staff supervision. All materials, particularly fragile documents, must be handled with special

care. No document may be marked, folded, traced, or altered in any way. No materials may be taken from the premises.

- Photocopies/digital images are available when documents can be copied without damage. Photocopies/digital images and reproductions are made solely for the purpose of private study, scholarship, or research. Researchers assume full responsibility for obtaining required permissions to publish materials protected by copyright.
- Permission to reproduce or publish archives materials in their entirety or a substantial portion thereof requires the written authorization of the archivist. Permission to cite consulted materials is included in the agreement to use the archives and is governed by scholarly practice and copyright. Written consent to publish or reproduce materials does not restrict the archdiocese's right to publish the same materials or allow others to do so.
- Proper credit must be given to the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Office of Archives and Records, when materials are cited or published in scholarly works.
- In general, the archives staff responds to written requests for limited historical research according to the established fee schedule and staff availability.
- To assist future researchers, the archives requests that one copy of those articles, monographs, or books which include original research material from the archives be placed in the archives' library.

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