

HANDBOOK FOR SACRAMENTAL RECORDS



DIOCESE OF WINONA-ROCHESTER
September 15, 2023

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The translations of ecclesiastical documents are taken from www.vatican.va.

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GENERAL NORMS

- 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 ascription to a Church *sui iuris* and/or any transfer, also 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.
- §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.
- §4. In each parish there is to be a storage area, or archive, in which the parochial registers are protected along with letters of bishops and other documents which are to be preserved for reason of necessity or advantage. The pastor is to take care that all of these things, which are to be inspected by the diocesan bishop or his delegate at the time of visitation or at some other opportune time, do not come into the hands of outsiders.
- §5. Older parochial registers are also to be carefully protected according to the prescripts of particular law.
- 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. 894** To prove the conferral of confirmation the prescripts of can. 876 are to be observed.
- Can. 1541** Unless contrary and evident arguments prove otherwise, public documents are to be trusted concerning everything which they directly and principally affirm.
- Can. 1573** The testimony of one witness cannot produce full proof unless it concerns a qualified witness making a deposition concerning matters done *ex officio*, or unless the circumstances of things and persons suggest otherwise.

SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS

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| <i>Required Records</i> | Each parish is required to maintain records of baptisms, confirmations, marriages and deaths. ¹ Records of first communions are optional. |
| <i>Parishes, Other Institutions</i> | Generally only parishes are to maintain sacramental records and registers. Non-parochial institutions must obtain the express approval of the Diocesan Bishop to maintain sacramental records and registers. ² |
| <i>Format</i> | Special registers, which are available from private vendors, are required. A parish may choose to retain separate Baptismal, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death Registers or combined registers, depending on the needs of the parish. |
| <i>Acid Free Paper</i> | The pages of the registers are to be made of acid-free paper. |
| <i>Computer Reproductions</i> | Sacramental records may be duplicated on computers that are secure and do not provide public access. A complete record must be maintained in the physical registers, which are never to be destroyed or discarded. The handwritten registers are considered the only authentic copy of sacramental records. |
| <i>Repair of Old Registers</i> | As registers become worn, they are to be rebound by a professional binder. Only if a register is beyond repair may the records be transferred to a new register. The original is to be retained in as safe a condition as possible. |
| <i>Safe Storage</i> | The sacramental registers are to be stored together in a locked place that is fire-proof or fire-resistant. They may be removed only by authorized personnel and only for legitimate purposes. The registers may never be taken off the parish premises except for archival purposes, approved by the Diocesan Chancellor. |
| <i>Reporting Loss or Destruction</i> | The loss or destruction of any sacramental register should be reported immediately to the Office of the Chancery. |

CONFIDENTIALITY

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| <i>Nature of Information</i> | Every precaution must be taken to protect people's privacy. Although sacramental registers contain information about public events and other facts readily known to any interested party, they also contain information that is personal and confidential. |
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¹ 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, the registers may all be stored at one of the parishes.

² If a chapel or pastoral center operates under the authority of the local pastor, its sacramental records are to be kept in the parish registers rather than separately.

Access to Registers

The sacramental registers belong to the individual parish. They are maintained for the spiritual welfare of the Christian faithful and the administrative needs of the Universal Church. All information contained in the sacramental records is to be treated as confidential. No persons, other than the pastor or his delegate, can claim a right to direct access to physical or digital copies of the registers.

Authorized Personnel

The pastor is ultimately responsible for the care and confidentiality of the sacramental registers and their content. A limited number of employees or volunteers may be delegated to make entries in the registers and to prepare certificates. These persons must be known well by the pastor, of good reputation, capable of safeguarding confidentiality, and adequately trained to work with the registers. Their work with the registers is not to exceed their mandate from the pastor.

Genealogical Research

Sacramental registers are not to be made available to genealogical researchers. The pastor or other regularly designated persons may research information as requested and as time permits in order to make the information available on a separate document. Care must be taken not to disclose confidential information. Death records may be released without restrictions. Records older than 100 years can be made available provided proof that the person(s) named in the record have died (see p. 45).

ENTRIES

Type 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 in the sacramental registers.

Timeliness

Entries should always be made as soon after the event as is possible.

Place of Entry

As a general rule, the proper parish for the recording of sacraments and deaths is the parish in whose territory the sacraments or *Rites of Christian Burial* were celebrated. For exceptions, see the individual register sections below.

Chronological Order

Entries are to 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 (see p. 25, n. 26).

Specific 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. The Baptismal Register

will have a column titled “Remarks” or “Notations.” Frequent references to this column will be made throughout this handbook.³

- Index*** Every entry is to be listed in the register’s index, according to the person’s last name.
- Excess Data*** If there is inadequate space for all the data to be entered, the excess data may be entered elsewhere on the same page or even on a different page of the register. Clear cross-referencing is essential (see p. 24, n. 9).
- “Sacramental Records” File*** Discursive material should not be written in sacramental registers. Discretion must be exercised in deciding which material to place in this file. Documents and other material, such as civil records and correspondence, should be retained securely in a designated file titled “Sacramental Records” in the parish archives. The words “See Sacramental Records File” should be printed in the “Notations” column of the sacramental register when reference is necessary.
- Printing/Ink*** Neat printing is preferred to cursive. Entries are to be made using black ink, which is fadeproof and indelible.
- Style for Names and Dates*** The last name of the entry’s subject should be printed in upper case; e.g., “JONES”. Printing the name of the month is preferred to using the month’s number; e.g. “Aug” rather than “8” (see p. 24, n.5).
- 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.” However, the provisions of can. 535, §2 are to be observed. (see p. 24, n. 19).
- Minister of Sacrament*** The actual minister of a sacrament does not need to sign the register if the person making the entry personally witnessed the event or has available a document (e.g., Baptismal Registration Form) signed by the minister which certifies the conferral of the sacrament. In these cases, the name of the minister is printed in the register.

CERTIFICATES

- Definition*** A certificate is an official document certifying that a particular individual has received a sacrament. It is an exact duplicate of nonconfidential data already entered in a sacramental register.

³ For the sake of convenience this column will be referred to as the “Notations” column throughout the handbook.

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| <i>Church Use Only</i> | Certificates of sacraments are intended primarily for internal church use, not for civil purposes. ⁴ |
| <i>Authorized Source of Records</i> | Only the parish or other location holding the original sacramental record may issue a certificate. ⁵ Only the actual register, rather than a microfilm or electronic reproduction, should be used in preparing certificates. A computer copy of the record may be used for a certificate, so long as there is assurance that the computer copy corresponds identically to the original register. |
| <i>Authorized Requests</i> | Any member of the Christian faithful has a right to obtain a certificate of a sacrament that he or she has received and which was recorded in a sacramental register. The parents of a minor, someone with legal guardianship of another, a <i>bona fide</i> pastoral minister at another Catholic parish, and a diocesan tribunal official have the right to obtain sacramental certificates. When the parents of a minor are separated or divorced, both parents, regardless of legal custody, are presumed to have the right to a certificate. |
| <i>Procedure for Requests</i> | Requests for certificates should be submitted in writing, although telephone requests from a Catholic parish or agency are acceptable (see p. 32). The written requests and a log of telephone requests should be kept on file for one year. No information from sacramental registers should be provided by telephone or other electronic means except to another Catholic parish or other Catholic agency. Even then, care for the privacy of persons is to be exercised. |
| <i>Format</i> | Certificates are to have an official appearance and should be issued in a consistent format. Parishes may obtain blank certificates from commercial vendors or may have them printed locally. All certificates must bear the name and address of the parish. (see pp. 29, 30-31, 34) |
| <i>Authentication</i> | Certificates must be typed, printed by computer or hand-printed in ink. They are to be signed by the pastor or his delegate and impressed with the parish seal. Photostatic and facsimile copies of certificates are not considered authentic documents. |

⁴ Since certain data is entered in the sacramental registers based purely on the word of another person (e.g., the date of birth of a person being baptized), the certificate is merely repeating data but without certifying its veracity.

⁵ When a parish closes or merges, formal arrangements are made for the transfer and retention of its sacramental registers to the receiving parish. Contact the Chancery for other former institutions which maintained sacramental registers.

Required Data

Certificates are to include all data contained in the sacramental register, except that which is marked confidential or which is extraneous to the person’s canonical status. Data in the “Notations” column are to be included. If there is no data in the “Notations” column, the words “No Notations” is to be printed on the certificate.

Missing Record

There are occasions when a specific record cannot be found. If there is a possibility that the sacrament has been conferred in some other parish, the inquirer should be encouraged to check the sacramental records of that other parish or parishes.⁶ If such a search is unwarranted or fails, canons 876 and 1573 may be applied (see p. 27). Only that data which can be ascertained with certainty should be entered in the register, even though this may leave an incomplete entry. The name of the witness or witnesses, the date of his or her testimony and the words “Based on the testimony of _____” should be printed in the “Notations” column of the register.

CHANGES TO ENTRIES

Caution about Changes

Once entered into a sacramental register, data is considered official and permanent. Data may not be modified except under special conditions as detailed below. Original data is never to be scratched out, erased, whited out, or otherwise destroyed or obliterated.

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 a straight line thorough the word, number or letter to be changed and printing the change next to it (see p. 24, n. 4).

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 in the notations or across the face of the original entry or in the “Notation” column (see p. 24, nn. 10, 13).

Authorization for Insubstantial Changes

An insubstantial error (e.g., misspelling) may be corrected upon request of those persons who have a right to obtain a certificate, as mentioned in the CERTIFICATES section above.

⁶ No central registry for the Diocese is available to assist in such a search. The Chancery can, however, publish a records search notice when there is need for a search across multiple parishes.

***Authorization
for Substantial
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 and the document retained in the Sacramental Records File. 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.

***Permitted
Changes***

Some permitted changes:

- * correct name
- * correct date
- * correct spelling
- * new legal name
- * adoptive parent(s)

***Non-Permitted
Changes***

Some non-permitted changes:

- * new godparents or sponsors⁷
- * non-adoptive stepparents
- * customary name or nickname

***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.

⁷ The names of godparents or sponsors are not to be changed without the legitimate authorization of the Diocesan Bishop (see Request for Baptismal Sponsor Substitute, p. 13). Parents can ask someone else to serve in this role without making a change in the permanent record or on certificates in these situations.

BAPTISMAL REGISTER

Can. 877 §1. The pastor of the place where the baptism is celebrated must carefully and without any 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.

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. 296 - §1. (*Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*) In the parish there are to be parish books, namely, baptismal, matrimonial, death and others, according to the norms of the particular law of its own Church *sui iuris* or, if there are no norms, of the eparchial bishop himself; the pastor is to see to it that these parish books are properly filled out and preserved observing said norms.

ENTRIES

Source of Data

Ordinarily, the data used to create a record of baptism (as required by can. 877 §1) originates on a “Baptismal Registration Form” [hereafter Registration Form] (see p. 26), a form authored by a member of the parish staff or sold by commercial vendors. The Registration Form is filled out by a family member or a member of the parish staff. A parent, guardian or adult candidate should verify the data written on the Registration Form before the data is transferred to the Baptismal Register. It is recommended that the minister sign the Registration Form to verify the accuracy of the information and that the sacrament was conferred. There should be a procedure in place to ensure that the data is transferred from the Registration Form to the Baptismal Register as quickly as possible. The biological gender of the baptized person should be noted in the register when it is not easily identified by the name.

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, the record for all the persons is to be retained at the parish where the rites are celebrated. Home parishes are to keep an unofficial duplicate record for statistical purposes. Duplicate records may be recorded in the baptismal register or in a separate place with notation of where the event took place and that the record is unofficial.

***Solemn Baptism
Outside the
Parish Church***

In the exceptionally rare situation when baptism is conferred solemnly (that is, with a priest or deacon celebrating the full rite of baptism) in a chapel, hospital, jail or home, the minister is to see to it that the requisite data is transmitted in writing to the pastor of the territory where the baptism occurred for recording in the Baptism Register (see p. 28). Baptismal Certificates should identify the location of the baptism.

***Emergency and
Other Baptisms
Outside the
Parish Church***

In the equally rare situation when emergency baptism is conferred (that is, with any person celebrating the bare matter and form of baptism when the recipient is in danger of death), the minister (or some other witness) is to notify the pastor of the territory where the baptism occurred (see p. 28). A record of the emergency baptism is to be made in the Baptism Register. In those instances when the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church (properly adapted in the case of an adult recipient) is celebrated, a notation of the date, place and minister of the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church is placed in the “Notations” column (see p. 25, n. 14). The same procedure should be followed when a person is baptized “privately” by a lay person, even though there is no danger of death.

***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 baptism.

***Celebration of
the Baptism of
an Adult***

The recording of baptisms of those greater than seven years of age is always to include: the given and/or Christian name(s) of the person (woman’s maiden name); the name of the father and of the mother (first, middle, and last or maiden name); the date and place of birth; the name of the sponsor(s); the date and place of the baptism; the name of the minister performing the baptism; and marginal notations of reception of Eucharist and confirmation, and of marital status. All declarations of nullity are to be recorded with the protocol number.

***Reception
into Full
Communion***

When persons are received into full communion with the Catholic Church, after having been baptized previously in another Christian community, an entry must be made in the Baptism Register or the Register for Reception into Full Communion and in the Confirmation Register. The data concerning the original baptism should be entered in the spaces provided for baptism and the data concerning the Rite of Reception and current and previous marriages should be entered in the “Notations” column (see pp. 24-25, nn. 6, 18).

Special care is to be taken when children under seven (7) years of age are received into full communion of the Catholic Church. The written intent of one parent or legal guardian is to be received and preserved in the Sacramental Records File in each case (see p. 25, n. 15). In addition to information recorded for all baptisms, a notation of the written intent of the parent or legal guardian is also to be recorded in the “Notations” portion of the record.

***Unmarried,
Adopting, and
Transgender or
Same-Sex
Parents***

It is important that the provisions of Canon 877 concerning unmarried parents, adopting parents and natural parents be followed. It is unjust to enter the names of unauthorized parents in the Baptism Register (see p. 24, n. 7).

Following the finalization of adoption, parenthesis are placed around the names of the natural parents (see pp. 24, n. 2; 45), the names of adoptive parents are added. Notation of confidentiality of natural parents is to be added when ordered by civil authorities.

No entry is to be made when the Father is unknown. The expression “*Pater ignotus*” (Father unknown) is not to be used in the Baptismal Register or on any certificates (see p. 24, n. 3).

See the opinion of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts regarding the annotation of same sex couples or “transgender persons” as parents in the baptismal register (see p. 48).⁸

***Gender
Reassignment***

Gender reassignments may be noted in official parish records after consultation with the Diocesan Chancery (see p. 25, nn. 28, 29).⁹

***Adoption
before
Baptism***

When a child is adopted before baptism, no reference to the adoption or the natural parents is to be made in the Baptism Register. Any such data which has been recorded is to be treated as confidential and is not to be included on any certificate. Notation of non-disclosure is to be noted (see pp. 24-25, nn. 19, 31).

***Number of
Godparents***

No more than two names may be entered in the “Godparents” or “Sponsors” column. One of the two must meet the requirements of a Catholic Godparent.

⁸ In accord with the response offered by the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, dated November 15, 2017 (Prot. N. 15986/2017), up to one man and one woman may be included in the register as parents and/or legal guardians.

⁹ 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 arise 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.” The Diocesan Chancery is to be consulted before any notations are made.

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| <i>Proxy Godparent</i> | When a godparent or sponsor appoints a proxy to participate in the Rite of Baptism, both names should be entered in the Baptismal Register, with “Proxy” written after that person’s name (see p. 25, n. 8). |
| <i>Christian Witness</i> | When someone serves as a witness to baptism rather than as a godparent, in accord with Canon 874 §2, the words “Christian Witness” should be placed after the witness’s name in the Baptismal Register (see p. 24, n. 17). Christian Witnesses may be listed on the original and subsequent certificates, always identified as “Christian Witness.” |
| <i>Ascription to Proper Church, Sui Iuris</i> | Ascription to a uniate church <i>sui iuris</i> (e.g., Byzantine, Maronite) is determined by the rite of the parents, not the rite of the minister or parish of baptism, unless the person is 14 years of age or older. Thus, when a Latin priest or deacon baptizes someone who by law is ascribed to an Eastern Catholic church or one transfers to another rite, a notation should be made in the “Notations” column (see pp. 24-25, nn. 16, 20, 27). ¹⁰ A notation is to be made when one ascribes to a Eastern church <i>sui iuris</i> through marriage (see p. 25, n. 30). |
| <i>Registers for Ritual Use</i> | Any register that is used as part of the Church’s ritual (e.g., Book of the Elect) should be completely distinct from the official sacramental registers. The data from the ritual register should be transferred to the Baptism and Confirmation Registers as soon as possible after the conferral of sacraments or the reception into full communion. |

CHANGES TO ENTRIES

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| <i>Most Changes Occur in Baptism Registers</i> | 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 will be made in the Baptism Register. |
| <i>Changes to Original Data</i> | Some of these changes are actual modifications of the original data entered for baptism, for example, change of name or change of parent. Directions for making such changes can be found in the GENERAL NORMS section of this handbook. |

¹⁰ Latin priests and deacons do not automatically have the faculty to baptize persons who by law are ascribed to an Eastern Catholic church. If it is determined that one or both of the parents are ascribed to an Eastern Catholic church, contact should be made with the Chancery before the celebration of baptism. Similar requirements apply to Orthodox Christians who are received into full communion with the Catholic Church.

***Additions to
“Notations”
Column***

Some of the notations are additions to the “Notations” column. For example, when a Catholic receives the sacrament of Confirmation, Marriage or Ordination, the parish where these sacraments are celebrated is to notify the church of baptism for notation in the Baptismal Register.¹¹ When a marriage is declared null by an ecclesiastical tribunal, the tribunal will notify the church of baptism, so that a notation can be made in the person’s baptismal record.

***Society of Saint
Pius X (SSPX)***

The Diocesan Chancery will provide instruction for the notation of marriages celebrated by clergy members of the Society of Saint Pius X. Contact the Diocesan Chancery before proceeding with requests for notation of Confirmation and Marriage by a cleric of the SSPX, that has been submitted by a member of the Society.

***Defection from
the Church***

Occasionally, a parish will receive a notice from an individual or a church indicating that the person is no longer a Catholic with the request that his or her name be removed from Catholic church records. While it is appropriate to remove the person’s name from the parish membership census, the sacramental records may not be altered. A notation may be inserted in the “Notations” column of the Baptism Register if the request is received from a legitimate ecclesiastical authority or there is proof that the defection has been received by one. The notation should say “Formal defection from Catholic Church, [date]”.¹² Any written documentation verifying the act is to be kept in the Sacramental Records File (see pp. 42-44). Reunification with the Church should also be noted, if the parish of baptism is made aware of the act.

***Request for
Baptismal
Sponsor
Substitute***

Parents of children who are still in the formative period of Christian life (infancy to age 14) may request, for serious reason, a substitute sponsor for the actual baptismal sponsor under conditions met in accord with directives of the Congregation for the Sacraments (13 Nov 1984 Prot. No. 1032/84) (see pp. 38-39). The notation is created by drawing a line through the current sponsor(s) and placing the name of the new sponsor(s) in the “Notations” (see p. 25, n. 32).

***Style for
Notations***

The notations mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs should be made neatly and succinctly in the “Notations” column. Names, dates, places and

¹¹ Some parishes continue to give notice of First Communion, although this is no longer required. When a marriage is celebrated at a place other than the place where its record is maintained, both places should be noted in the “Notations” column.

¹² Some situations may warrant a letter to the individual explaining noting that the act has been recorded with an extended invitation for the person to return to full communion at any time in the future.

protocol numbers are usually the only information needed. These notations are not confidential and should ordinarily be included on certificates.

CONFIRMATION REGISTER

Can. 894. To prove the conferral of confirmation the precepts 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 archive. The pastor must inform the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of confirmation so that a 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.

ENTRIES

Source of Data

When a large number of persons is to be confirmed, it is essential that one person be designated to collect the necessary information and see to it that it is communicated accurately to the parish or parishes of the recipients for proper recording in the Confirmation Register.

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. An unofficial record of each confirmation is to be made in the Confirmation Register at the respective parishes of the recipients, with notation of the location, date, and minister of the Sacrament.

Baptismal Certificate

A baptismal certificate for each candidate for confirmation should be obtained in advance in order to ensure that there are no obstacles present prior to the reception of Confirmation and to facilitate the obligation of notifying the parish of baptism about the conferral of confirmation.

Confirmations Outside of the Parish Church

The conferral of confirmation in an emergency, or any other situation, is to be recorded in the register of the parish territory where the confirmation occurred.

***Baptism
Data***

It is recommended that the place and date of baptism be noted in the Confirmation Register. (This can be especially helpful when a person has difficulty locating a baptismal record later in life.)

***Notification of
Church of
Baptism***

Official notification about the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation should immediately be sent to the church of baptism by the pastor or his delegate (see p. 33). 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 (see p. 24, n. 12). When a person previously baptized in another Christian communion is received into full communion and confirmed, the church of baptism is not notified.

***Confirmation
Saint Names***

Many parishes within the Diocese of Winona-Rochester participate in the custom of having their candidates select the name of a saint to serve as a confirmation name. This is a local custom and the name may be recorded in the Confirmation Register. However, the confirmation name is not to be forwarded to the parish of baptism and may not be changed by the confirmand at a later date.

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. 1122 §2. If a spouse did not contract marriage in the parish in which the person was baptized, the pastor of the place of the celebration is to send notice of the marriage which has been entered into as soon as possible to the pastor of the place of the conferral of baptism.

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 the celebration of the marriage must be informed so that a notation is properly made in the marriage and baptismal registers.

ENTRIES

Source of Data

The priest or deacon who assists at a marriage is responsible for communicating the necessary information to the parish where the marriage was celebrated. The premarital file ordinarily contains all the necessary information. However, the assisting minister should be alerted to any last-minute changes or corrections to the information contained in the premarital file.

Marriage Outside of the Parish Church

When a Catholic marriage is celebrated in a location other than a parish church (e.g., a chapel), the proper parish for the marriage record is the one in which that location stands (see p. 24, n. 25).

Dispensation from Form

All marriages that receive a dispensation from Catholic form are to be recorded in the Marriage Register of the parish where the parties were prepared.

Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX)

Only those marriages that enjoy faculties from the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate are to be recorded in the Marriage Register of the parish in the territory where it is celebrated and the Baptismal Register of the Catholic party(ies). The Chancery will notify the parish of the marriage and provide a protocol number to be recorded in the Marriage and Baptismal Register.

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| <i>Convalidation</i> | When a marriage is convalidated, the data concerning the convalidation is to be placed in the usual columns. The date, place and official of the original ceremony are to be noted in the “Notations” column. |
| <i>Sanation</i> | When a marriage is sanated, the data concerning the original ceremony are to be placed in the usual columns. The date, diocese and protocol number of the sanation are to be noted in the “Notations” column. |
| <i>Previous Civil Marriage</i> | The previous civil marriage of persons who are baptized or received into full communion with the Catholic Church is not to be recorded in the Marriage Register, unless the previous marriage was invalid and is now being convalidated or sanated. A notation concerning the marriage is to be placed in the person’s baptismal record, in the “Notations” column. |
| <i>Notation of Dispensations and Annulments</i> | When a dispensation is granted prior to marriage, or an annulment 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,” are to be noted in the “Notations” column. Any special recording directions contained in the dispensation or annulment document are to be followed (see p. 24, nn. 22-24). |
| <i>Notification of Church of Baptism</i> | 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 of the Catholic party(ies) as soon as possible. Non-catholic communities receive notice only upon request. 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 official and witnesses are not required. Commercial vendors sell marriage notification forms (see p. 35). |

PREMARITAL FILES

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| <i>Contents</i> | Each parish 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, notes and dispensation documents. The minister’s portion of the civil license is also retained in this file. It is recommended that only the summary page of premarital inventories be permanently retained. |
| <i>Location</i> | Ordinarily, the premarital file for each couple should be retained by the parish where the marriage is recorded in the Marriage Register. |
| <i>Filing</i> | The file for each couple is to be kept in its own envelope or folder, clearly marked with the parties’ names and the date of the marriage. The files should be arranged in chronological order and kept together in a locked file cabinet or safe. |

Retention

Premarital files are to be retained for seventy-five years, or until it is known that both parties have died. Expired files are to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of so that no one can gain access to them.

***Transmission
of File***

If a legitimate written request for the original copy of the file is made by an ecclesiastical tribunal or if the Chancellor has approved the surrender of the file to a civil authority, the file should be hand delivered and receipted or mailed by registered mail with a receipt (see p. 40). A photostatic copy of the original file, along with the receipt, should replace the original copy in the parish's archive. If the original file is later returned, the photostatic copy is to be destroyed.

DECLARATIONS OF NULLITY

Instructions for inserting a notation for a declaration of nullity must be received from an ecclesiastical tribunal. The notation is always inscribed in the "Notations" column of the Baptismal Register. A copy of the notification should be placed in the marriage file when it is kept at the parish of baptism.

DEATH REGISTER

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.

ENTRIES

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| <i>Source of Data</i> | The data needed for the Death Register is ordinarily provided by the funeral director. |
| <i>Recordable Events</i> | All Catholic persons receiving a funeral Mass or some other liturgical service, whether at the parish church or some other location within the parish boundaries, are to be recorded in the Death Register |
| <i>Cremation</i> | 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. |
| <i>Notification of Church of Baptism</i> | A notice of death does not need to be sent to the church of baptism |