

DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY

Sacramental Register Handbook

Most Reverend David Laurin Ricken, D.D., J.C.L.



By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
Bishop of Green Bay

DECREE

On July 1, 1999, my predecessor, Most Reverend Robert J. Banks, issued the *Handbook for Sacramental Registers* for the Diocese of Green Bay. Revisions to the 1999 edition of the handbook are necessary to conform to norms passed since that time by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and to better assist parish personnel in their important work of recording and safeguarding sacramental records.

Sacramental records mark important moments of grace in the life of the People of God. Keeping them diligently is an important service to the Church. May this new revision of the *Handbook for Sacramental Registers* assist parish personnel in fulfilling this important obligation.

Thus, I hereby promulgate the following *Handbook for Sacramental Registers* as particular law for the Diocese of Green Bay, effective September 1, 2010. It replaces the handbook promulgated in 1999.

Given at the Chancery on August 2, 2010.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Ricken".

Most Reverend David L. Ricken, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Green Bay

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R. Doerfler".

Chancellor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Diocese of Green Bay wishes to acknowledge the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, especially Reverend R. Daniel Conlon, and Reverend Christopher R. Armstrong, former Chancellors who assisted in the production of the 1999 edition of this handbook. Gratitude is also expressed for the permission for us to borrow material extensively from their handbook in the production of the 1999 edition of the handbook for the Diocese of Green Bay, on which this new revision of 2010 is primarily based.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL NORMS	5
REGISTERS	5
Required Records	5
Parishes/Other Institutions	5
Format	5
Acid Free Paper	5
Computer Reproductions	5
Repair of Old Registers	5
Safe Storage	6
Reporting Loss or Destruction	6
Parish Merger	6
CONFIDENTIALITY	6
Nature of Information	6
Access to Registers	6
Authorized Personnel	6
Genealogical Research	7
ENTRIES	7
Type of Data	7
Timeliness	7
Place of Entry	7
Chronological Order	7
Specific Columns	7
Index	7
Excess Data/Allowing for Extra Space	8
Printing/Ink	8
Style for Names and Dates	8
Confidential Data	8
Minister of Sacrament	8
CERTIFICATES	8
Definitions	8
Church Use Only	9
Authorized Source of Records	9
Authorized Requests	9
Procedure for Requests	9
Format	10
Authentication	10
Required Data	10
Missing Record	10
CHANGES TO ENTRIES	10
Caution about Changes	10
Style for Minor Changes	10
Authorization for Insubstantial Changes	10
Authorization for Substantial Changes	11
Permitted Changes	11
Non-Permitted Changes	11
Data on Certificates after Changes	11
BAPTISM REGISTER	12
ENTRIES	12
Required Data	12

Source of Data	12
Recipients from more than one Parish	12
Emergency and other Baptisms outside the Parish Church	12
Conditional Baptism	13
RCIA and Reception into Full Communion	13
Unmarried Parents	14
Adoption	14
Number of Godparents	14
Proxy Godparent	15
Christian Witness	15
Ascription to Proper Church <i>Sui Iuris</i>	15
Registers for Ritual Use	15
Defection from the Church	15
Style for Notations	15
CONFIRMATION REGISTER	16
ENTRIES	16
Required Data	16
Baptism Data	16
Source of Data	16
Large Group of Recipients	16
Recipients from more than one Parish	16
Baptismal Certificate	17
Notification of Church of Baptism	17
MARRIAGE REGISTER	18
ENTRIES	18
Required Data	18
Source of Data	18
Marriage outside a Parish Church	18
Validation	18
Sanation	18
Previous Civil Marriage	19
Notification of Dispensations and Declarations of Nullity	19
Notification of the Church of Baptism	19
PREMARITAL FILES	19
Contents	19
Location	19
Filing	19
Retention	19
Transmission of File	20
DEATH REGISTER	21
ENTRIES	21
Required Data	21
Source of Data	21
Cremation	21
Notification of Church of Baptism	21
APPENDIX: SAMPLE PAGES FROM "HOLY SPIRIT PARISH"	23

GENERAL NORMS

See canons 535, 876, and 894 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

REGISTERS

Required Records

Each parish is required to maintain records of baptisms, confirmations, receptions into full communion, marriages and deaths. 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 communions is optional, but highly encouraged.

Parishes/Other Institutions

Generally only parishes are to maintain sacramental records and registers. Non-parochial institutions must obtain the express approval of the Bishop to maintain sacramental records and registers. If a chapel or pastoral center operates under the authority of the local pastor, its sacramental records should be kept in the parish registers rather than separately.

Format

Special registers, which are available from private vendors, are required. A parish may retain separate Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death Registers or may retain a combined register depending on the needs of the parish.

Acid Free Paper

The pages of the registers should be made of acid-free paper. These registers can be purchased commercially through the religious supply companies.

Computer Reproductions

Sacramental records may be duplicated on computers. However, a complete record must be maintained in the registers, and the registers themselves are never to be destroyed or discarded. The registers are considered the only authentic copy of sacramental records.

Repair of Old Registers

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 register is to be retained in as safe a condition as possible. If pages are torn, contact the Diocesan Archives for recommendations on proper repair or preservation materials. The use of common tape or laminating materials to repair torn pages is discouraged.

Safe Storage

The sacramental registers are to be stored together in a locked place, preferably one which is fireproof or fire resistant. Locations with extreme ranges of temperature or humidity should be avoided, since that will contribute to the deterioration of the registers. For example, the registers should not be stored in attics or basements.

The sacramental registers may be removed only by authorized personnel and only for legitimate purposes. The registers may never be taken off the parish premises except for microfilming by the Diocese, or to be permanently stored in the Diocesan Archives. It is recommended that sacramental registers dated before 1920 be stored in the Diocesan Archives to assist their preservation.

Reporting Loss or Destruction

The loss or destruction of any sacramental register should be reported immediately to the Chancery.

Parish Merger

If two or more parishes merge to form one new parish, a new set of sacramental registers is to be utilized for the new parish, beginning with the date of the merger. The sacramental registers of the former parishes are stored at the new parish.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Nature of Information

Care 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 might contain information which is very personal and confidential.

Access to Registers

The sacramental registers belong to the individual parish. They are maintained for the good of the Christian faithful, but they are private documents, not public ones. No one other than the pastor, administrator or parish director can claim a right to direct access to the registers.

Authorized Personnel

The pastor is always and ultimately responsible for the care and confidentiality of the sacramental registers themselves, as well as any reproductions. He may designate other persons to make entries in the registers and to prepare certificates. These may be employees or volunteers, but their number should be very small. These designated persons must be known well to the pastor, must be capable of careful work and protecting confidentiality, and must be 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 should not be made available to genealogical researchers. People who wish to conduct genealogical research may be referred to the Diocesan Archives, which has sacramental records on microfilm that are available for research.

ENTRIES

Type of Data

All and only the data required by canon law and otherwise necessary for the complete and accurate maintenance of sacramental records are to be entered in the sacramental registers. The required data will be discussed later on in the handbook in the individual register sections. For example, the required data for baptisms will be discussed in the section on Baptism Registers.

Timeliness

Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event to be recorded.

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.

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".

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. At least the Baptism Register will have a column titled "Remarks", "Notations", or something similar. There are many references to this column throughout this handbook.¹

Index

Every entry is to be listed in the register's index, according to the person's last name.

¹ For the sake of convenience this column will be referred to as the "Notations" column throughout the handbook.

Excess Data/Allowing for Extra Space

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, e.g., "See SMITH, bottom of page".

It is a good practice to allow some blank space at the bottom of each page of the Baptism Register, or to reserve a few blank pages at the end of the register. This will allow additional data to be entered, with proper cross-referencing, if the need should arise.

The Sacramental Register should not be used to "file" other communications, such as notices of sacraments that are to be entered in the Baptism Register. After the notation has been duly made in the register, such communications should be filed according to the parish record retention schedule.

Printing/Ink

Entries are to be printed in fade-proof, water-proof black ink.

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").

Confidential Data

Data which are confidential and which are 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 annotations of confirmation, marriage, holy orders, perpetual religious profession and change of rite are always to be reproduced on a baptismal certificate (cf. canon 535, §2).

Minister of Sacrament

The actual minister of a sacrament is to sign the register. Another person who personally witnessed the event or has available a document (e.g., Sacristy Record of Baptism) signed by the minister which certifies the conferral of the sacrament may make the entry. In these cases the name of the minister is printed in the register.

CERTIFICATES

Definitions

A certificate is an official document certifying that a particular individual has received a sacrament. It is an exact duplicate of data already entered in a sacramental register. All of the data in the register is to be duplicated on the certificate, except that which is marked confidential, and that which pertains to adoption as explained in this handbook.

Church Use Only

Certificates of sacraments are intended primarily for internal church use, not for civil purposes.² Nonetheless, sometimes information may be legitimately requested for civil purposes, for example to correct an error on a birth certificate.

Authorized Source of Records

Only the parish or other location holding the original sacramental record may issue a certificate.³ Only the actual register should be used in preparing certificates. A computer copy of the record may be used for a certificate, only if there is assurance that the computer copy corresponds identically to the original register.⁴ In each case, the original register must be consulted to assure that the computer copy is accurate.

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, someone with legal guardianship of another or a bona fide pastoral minister at another Catholic parish have this 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. The Diocesan Archives has prepared an authorization form that parishes may use for written requests. 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.

² Since certain data are entered in the sacramental registers based purely on the word of someone else (e.g., the date of birth of a person being baptized), the certificate is simply repeating that data but not certifying it as true.

³ When a parish closes or merges, formal arrangements are made for the transfer and retention of its sacramental registers. Refer to the *Wisconsin Pastoral Handbook* or the *Diocesan Archives* for a listing of the locations where the sacramental registers of former *parishes* are retained. Contact the Chancery for other former *institutions* which maintained sacramental registers.

⁴ If a certificate is issued from the microfilm copy of the sacramental record in the Diocesan Archives, for example, when the original record cannot be found, the following notation will be made on the certificate: "from the microfilmed copy of the register, accurate to the date of filming" with an indication of the filming date.

Format

Certificates should have an official appearance and should be issued in a consistent format. Parishes may obtain blank certificates from commercial vendors, have them printed locally, or generate their own templates for use with a computer. All certificates must bear the name and address of the parish.

Authentication

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.

Required Data

Certificates are to include all data contained in the sacramental register, except that which is marked confidential, and that which pertains to adoption as explained in this handbook. Data in the "notations" column is to be included. If there are no data in the "Notations" column, the words "No Notations" should be printed on the certificates. The annotations of confirmation, marriage, holy orders, perpetual religious profession and change of rite are always to be reproduced on a baptismal certificate (cf. canon 535, §2).

Missing Record

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, a sincere effort should be made to check the sacramental records of that other parish or parishes. The Archives or the Chancellor's office may be able to assist with such a search. If a sacrament was never recorded, contact the Chancellor's office for assistance in establishing a sacramental record.

CHANGES TO ENTRIES

Caution about Changes

Once entered into a sacramental register, data are considered official and permanent. They may not be modified except under special conditions, as detailed below. Original data should never 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, simple line through the word, number or letter to be changed and printing the change immediately above or below it.

Authorization for Insubstantial Changes

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

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. When an error involves data pertaining directly to the celebration of a sacrament or rite of Christian burial (e.g., date, identity or 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 sponsors⁵
- non-adopting stepparents
- customary name or nickname

Data on Certificates after Changes

Once specific data has been changed in the sacramental register, the original data are not transcribed onto certificates (e.g., the natural parent's name after adoption).

⁵ 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 can ask someone else to serve in this role without making a change in the permanent record or on certificates.

BAPTISM REGISTER

See canons 877, §1, and 878 of the *Code of Canon Law*, and canon 296, §2 of the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*.

ENTRIES

Required Data

The following data are to be entered into the Baptism Register:

- name of the person baptized
- name of the minister
- names of the parents
- names of the sponsor(s)
- name of the witness, if any
- place and date of the baptism
- place and date of birth

Source of Data

Ordinarily, the data indicated above, which is used to create a record of baptism, originates on a "Sacristry Record", a small form sold by commercial vendors or created by the parish. The Sacristry Record is completed either by someone in the parish office at the time the baptism is scheduled, by a member of the baptism preparation team during the catechetical program, or by the minister of baptism at the time of the actual baptism. Before the data are transferred to the Baptism Register, a parent, guardian or adult candidate should verify the data written on the Sacristry Record (usually at the time of baptism), and the minister should sign the Sacristry Record verifying that the sacrament was conferred. There should be a clear procedure in place for assuring that the data are transferred from the Sacristry Record to the Baptism Register as quickly as possible.

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 persons is to be retained at the parish where the rites are celebrated.

Emergency and other Baptisms 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 or home, the minister of baptism is to see to it that the requisite data are transmitted in writing to the local pastor for recording in the Baptism Register. 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 recipient. No record of emergency baptism is to be made in the Baptism Register; instead the pastor of the recipient should celebrate the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church (properly adapted in the case of an adult recipient) and create a record of

that event, with a notation of the date, place and minister of the emergency baptism in the "Notations" column. The same procedure should be followed when a person is baptized illicitly 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. A person is baptized conditionally when there is doubt about the validity of a previous baptism.

RCIA and Reception into Full Communion

After fully initiating non-baptized adults or receiving baptized non-Catholics into full communion, see that the proper information is recorded in the sacramental registers.

For a non-baptized person, the following information should be recorded in the Baptism Register:

- the name of the person receiving the sacraments of initiation
- date and place of birth
- names of parents
- name of the sponsor
- date and place of baptism and confirmation
- name of the bishop or delegated priest
- the notation of any previously celebrated marriage before the person entered the Catholic Church
- Notation of the confirmation should also be made in the Confirmation Register.

For a baptized non-Catholic entering full communion, the following information should be recorded in the Baptism Register:

- the name of the person entering full communion
- date and place of birth
- names of parents
- name of the sponsor
- the date and place of confirmation in the Catholic Church
- name of the bishop or delegated priest
- in the notations section – date and place of baptism in the non-Catholic community and *the notation of any previously celebrated marriage* before the person entered the Catholic Church
- Notation of the confirmation should also be made in the Confirmation Register.

Special care must be taken to create a record for young children who are received into full communion along with their parents, even though there may be no ritual involving the children; for example in the case when they have already been baptized and they are still too young to make a profession of faith and receive confirmation.

Unmarried Parents

In the case of unmarried parents, the mother's name is to be entered if her maternity is publicly known or if she requests that this be done either in writing or before two witnesses. Similarly, the father's name is to be entered if paternity is established by a public document or by his own declaration in the presence of the parish priest and two witnesses. In other cases, the name of the baptized person is entered without mention of the father or of the parents. The expression "*pater ignotus*" (Father unknown) is not to be used in the register or on any certificates.

Adoption

Documentary proof of the adoption should be provided.

(1) For children baptized after their adoption is finalized, the following information is 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 priest or deacon performing the baptism
- In the notations section, indicate the fact of adoption but not the names of the natural parents.

The fact of the adoption is not indicated on any baptismal certificates.

(2) For children baptized before their adoption is finalized, the following notations shall be added to the Baptism 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
- parentheses are placed around the child's former surname and the new surname added
- In the notations section, indicate that the child was legally adopted.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals indicate 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) is not to be given, and the fact of the adoption is not indicated.

Number of Godparents

No more than two names may be entered in the "Godparents" or "Sponsors" column. If there are two Godparents, there is to be one male and one female (cf. canon 873).

Proxy Godparent

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.

Christian Witness

When a baptized non-Catholic serves as a witness to baptism, along with a Catholic sponsor, in accord with canon 874, §2, the words "Christian Witness" should be placed after the witness's name in the register.

Ascription to Proper Church *Sui iuris*

Ascription to a Catholic Church *sui iuris* (In addition to the Latin or Roman Church there are 21 other Eastern Churches, e.g., Ukrainian, Melkite, Maronite, etc. Each Church is known as a Church *sui iuris*) 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 baptizes someone who by law is ascribed to an Eastern Catholic Church, a notation should be made in the "Notations" column indicating to which Catholic Church *sui iuris* the person belongs, for example, "ascribed to the Ukrainian Catholic Church".⁶

Registers for Ritual Use

A register 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 Baptism or Confirmation Registers as soon as possible after the conferral of sacraments or the reception into full communion.

Defection from the Catholic Church

Occasionally, a parish will receive a notice from an individual indicating that the person is no longer a Catholic, and even asking that his or her name be removed from Catholic Church records. Contact the Chancellor's office for instructions on how to record the Defection from the Catholic Church.

Style for Notations

The notations should be made neatly and succinctly in the "Notations" column. Names, dates, places and protocol numbers are usually the only information needed. Unless specified otherwise, such as in the case of adoption, these notations are not confidential and should be included on certificates.

⁶ 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. According to the tradition of the Eastern Catholic Churches, baptism and chrismation (confirmation) are conferred at the same time. The Chancery can assist in contacting the proper Eastern Catholic Eparch to obtain the necessary faculties. Similar requirements apply to Orthodox Christians who are received into full communion with the Catholic Church.

CONFIRMATION REGISTER

See canon 894-896 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

ENTRIES

Required Data

The following data are to be entered into the Confirmation Register:

- name of the person confirmed
- name of the minister of confirmation, the bishop or delegated priest
- names of the parents
- names of the sponsor(s)
- place and date of the confirmation

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.)

Source of Data

When a large number of persons are 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 of confirmation, the date of conferral and the name of the minister of confirmation 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 of confirmation at a single ceremony, the record should show clearly which ministers of confirmation confirmed which recipients.

Recipients from more than one Parish

When confirmation is conferred upon persons from several parishes at one ceremony, two methods of recording are acceptable:

- 1) all records are made at the parish where confirmation was celebrated;
- 2) records are made at the respective parishes of the recipients.

Parishes should use either method #1 or method #2 consistently and not switch methods from year to year. Note that when the pastor of some recipient(s) is not present for the conferral of confirmation, and when method #2 is used to record the fact of confirmation, the minister of the sacrament or the pastor where it was conferred is obliged to notify the absent pastor about the fact of confirmation.

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.⁷

Notification of Church of Baptism

Notification to the church of baptism about the fact of confirmation should be made as soon as possible by the pastor 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, the church of baptism is not notified.

⁷ There are some additional reasons for obtaining a baptismal certificate: 1) the fact of valid baptism and Catholicity will be established; 2) any previous reception of valid confirmation, especially in the case of Catholics who were baptized in uniate Eastern churches, will be uncovered; 3) any discrepancies between name and parentage provided in the Baptism Register and given at the time of confirmation will be discovered; 4) the identity of baptismal godparents can be ascertained, pursuant to canon 893, §2.

MARRIAGE REGISTER

See canons 1121-1123 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

ENTRIES

Required Data

The following data are to be entered into the marriage register:

- names of the spouses;
- name of the person (e.g., the bishop, priest, or deacon) who assisted
- names of the witnesses
- the date and place of the celebration of the marriage

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 alert to any last minute changes or corrections (for example, the names of the witnesses) to the information contained in the premarital file.

Marriage outside a Parish Church

When a marriage is celebrated in a location other than a parish church (e.g., a chapel or other sacred place of regular worship and with permission of the Bishop), the proper parish for the marriage record is the one in which that location stands. The only exception is when a marriage is celebrated with a dispensation from canonical form (e.g., when a Catholic receives a dispensation to marry a Protestant in the Protestant church). In that situation, the proper parish for the marriage record is the parish of the Catholic party or the parish where the couple prepared for marriage.

Validation

When a marriage is validated (e.g., when Catholics, who were "married" outside of the Church without a dispensation, now marry in the Catholic Church), the data concerning the validation are to be placed in the usual columns. The date, place and official of the original ceremony are to be noted in the "Notations" column.

Sanation

When a marriage is sanated by the Bishop or his delegate (e.g., when a marriage is validated without the renewal of consent), 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.

Previous Civil Marriage

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 validated or sanated. A notation concerning the marriage is to be placed in the person's baptismal record, in the "Notations" column. See the section above on RCIA and Reception into Full Communion regarding the Baptism Register.

Notation of Dispensations and Declarations of Nullity

When a dispensation is granted prior to marriage, or a declaration of nullity ("annulment") is granted after marriage, the date, diocese and protocol number, along with the type of dispensation (e.g., "Dispensation from Disparity of Cult") or "Declaration of Nullity", are to be noted in the "Notations" column. Any special recording directions that are contained in the dispensation or declaration of nullity document are to be followed.

Notification of the Church of Baptism

When the marriage of a Catholic is celebrated, validated or sanated, the pastor of the parish where the record of marriage is retained must notify the parish of baptism as soon as possible. This notification is to include the names of the spouses and the date and place of the wedding, validation or sanation; the names of the person who assisted and witnesses are not required.

PREMARITAL FILES

Contents

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. Also, the person who assisted at the marriage is to see to it that the marriage license is promptly filed with the County Register of Deeds. It is unlawful to make copies of the marriage license.

Location

Ordinarily, the premarital file for each couple should be retained by the parish where the marriage is recorded in the Marriage Register.

Filing

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

The premarital files are to be retained for seventy-five years. 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 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. 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 should be destroyed.

DEATH REGISTER

See canon 1182.

ENTRIES

Required Data

The following data should be entered in the Death Register:

- name of the deceased
- date of birth
- date of death
- date and place of funeral rites
- date and place of burial
- name of spouse, if applicable
- name of parents, if the deceased is a child

Source of Data

The data needed for the Death Register are ordinarily provided by the funeral director or the obituary. Entries in the Death Register are to be made for the funeral rites celebrated in that parish, not for funeral rites of a parishioner that are celebrated elsewhere.

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.

Notification of Church of Baptism

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

APPENDIX: SAMPLE PAGES FROM “HOLY SPIRIT PARISH”

(All Data Are Fictitious)

43 Baptism				
No.	Name of Person Baptized	Place and Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's Name Mother's Maiden Name
32	BROCKMAN Richard Mark	Dayton, OH March 4, 1950	Mar. 11, 1950	Robert J. Brockman Angela M. Torrini
33	MARTIN Teresa Ann	Dayton, OH Feb. 21, 1950	Mar. 18, 1950	Margaret S. Martin
34	THOMPSON Linda Susan Suzanne	Columbus, OH Aug. 8, 1949	April 13, 1950	Michael A. Thompson Gloria N. Quinn
35	FASSOUD Daniel Louis	Dayton, OH March 22, 1950	April 20, 1950	Emil Fassoud (Maronite) Marcia L. Dupage
36	LISTERMAN Andrew Astor	Omaha, NE Jan. 11, 1925	May 3, 1950	Quentin A. Listerman Rachel F. Astor
37	OVERMEYER (POKOWSKI) Leonard James	Dayton, OH April 25, 1950	May 10, 1950	Samuel Overmeyer (Karl J. Schaefer) (Nancy Pokowski) Margaret Klein
38	PLOCHMAN Isabella Marie	Cincinnati, OH Sept. 7, 1949	May 15, 1950	Earl R. Plochman Maria Valdez
	See THOMPSON (continuation of # 34 above)			

55 Baptism				
No.	Name of Person Baptized	Place and Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Father's Name Mother's Maiden Name
	See PLOCHMAN, #38 on page 43			

Register

43

Sponsors	Priest	Date of Confirmation	Notations
Philip Brockman Agnes Lippert	<i>John J. Farrell</i>	Oct. 23, 1961 St. Helen Dayton, OH	Married Janice Kennedy June 14, 1973, St. Gabriel, Glendale, OH Notation of Marriage (pp. 10, 19) Notation of Confirmation (pp. 10, 17)
Ralph Martin Ruth Martin	<i>John J. Farrell</i>	May 13, 1962 Holy Spirit	Perpetual Religious Profession, Sisters of the Sacred Heart, June 14, 1974, Detroit, MI Notation of Religious Profession (p. 10)
Thomas Quinn Andrea Quinn	<i>John J. Farrell</i>	May 13, 1962 Holy Spirit	Rite of bringing baptized child to the Church; Emergency Baptism at St. Joseph Hospital, Columbus, OH (continued below) Rite of Bringing Baptized Child to the Church (pp. 12-13)
Michael George Frances George (Christian Witness)	John J. Farrell	April 20, 1950 Holy Spirit	Ascribed as Maronite Ascription to Eastern Catholic Church, <i>sui iuris</i> (p. 15) Christian Witness (p. 15)
Steven Meyer	John J. Farrell	May 3, 1950 Holy Spirit	Received into full communion May 3, 1950. Baptized Sept. 30, 1938, Emanuel Lutheran, Omaha, NE. Married Jane Carswell, June 17, 1948, First Presbyterian, Dayton, OH Reception into Full Communion (p. 13)
Roger Antonelli Mary Jones (Proxy) Elizabeth Pokowski	<i>John J. Farrell</i>	April 23, 1963 St. Josaphat, Milwaukee, WI	Legally adopted, Jan. 10, 1951. Ordained transitional deacon, Nov. 1, 1975, Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Ordained priest, June 6, 1976, Archdiocese of Milwaukee Notation of Previous Marriage (p. 13) Notation of Holy Orders
Jesus Valdez Carmen Valdez	John J. Farrell	May 13, 1962 Holy Spirit	Legally adopted, April 7, 1950. Married Jose Gonzales, June 1, 1968, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Los Angeles, CA. See page 55. Proxy Godparent
			Married Randy Smith, Sept. 28, 1973, Our Lady of Mercy, Dayton, OH. Declaration of Nullity, Cincinnati, Oct. 5, 1984, Prot. No. 136-84. Notation of Declaration of Nullity (Annulment) (p. 19)
			Married Peter Ulrich, Feb. 3, 1985, Hyde Park United Methodist, (Records at Nativity, Cincinnati). Notation of Place Marriage and Place of Record, When Marriage is Celebrated with a Dispensation from Canonical Form (p. 18)

Register

55

Sponsors	Priest	Date of Confirmation	Notations
			Declaration of Nullity, Los Angeles, July 17, 1981, Prot. No. 356-81. Marriage with Jorge Gomez validated August 7, 1981, St. Cecilia, Los Angeles. This second marriage
			declared null, Sacramento, May 5, 1984, Prot. No. 151-84. Not to remarry without consulting the Tribunal.

