

III. GENERAL NORMS-CONFIDENTIALITY

A. 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.

B. 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, parochial administrator or pastoral coordinator can claim a right to direct access to the registers.

If a person is seeking his or her own record or has legitimate reason to request family records, the pastor, parochial administrator or pastoral coordinator or authorized staff will examine the registers and issue the required information either by mail or in the form of a written certificate.

C. 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.

D. Genealogical Research

Sacramental registers should not be made available to genealogical researchers. People who wish to conduct genealogical research may be referred to the Chancellor for access to any sacramental records that might be available for research.