IV.   GENERAL NORMS-ENTRIES

A.   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.

B.   Timeliness

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

C.   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.

D.   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".

E.   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]

F.   Index

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

G.   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".

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[1] For the sake of convenience this column will be referred to as the "Notation" column throughout the policy.

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.

H.   Printing/Ink
Entries are to be printed in fade-proof, water-proof black ink.

I.   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").

J.   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).

K.   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.