

## **II. GENERAL NORMS-REGISTERS**

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

### **A. 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.

### **B. 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.

### **C. Format**

Special registers, which are available from religious supply companies 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.

### **D. 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.

### **E. 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.

### **F. 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 Chancellor for recommendations on proper repair or preservation materials. The use of common tape or laminating materials to repair torn pages is discouraged.

**G. 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 repair, digital scanning, or microfilming by the Diocese or to be permanently stored in the Diocesan Archives.

**H. Reporting Loss or Destruction**

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

**I. 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.

**J. Parish Closure**

If a parish or mission closes, the sacramental registers of closed parish should be stored at the parish in which the parish has become a part of either through a merger or extinctive union (amalgamation) as indicated in the decree of the bishop.