Sacramental Records

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ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
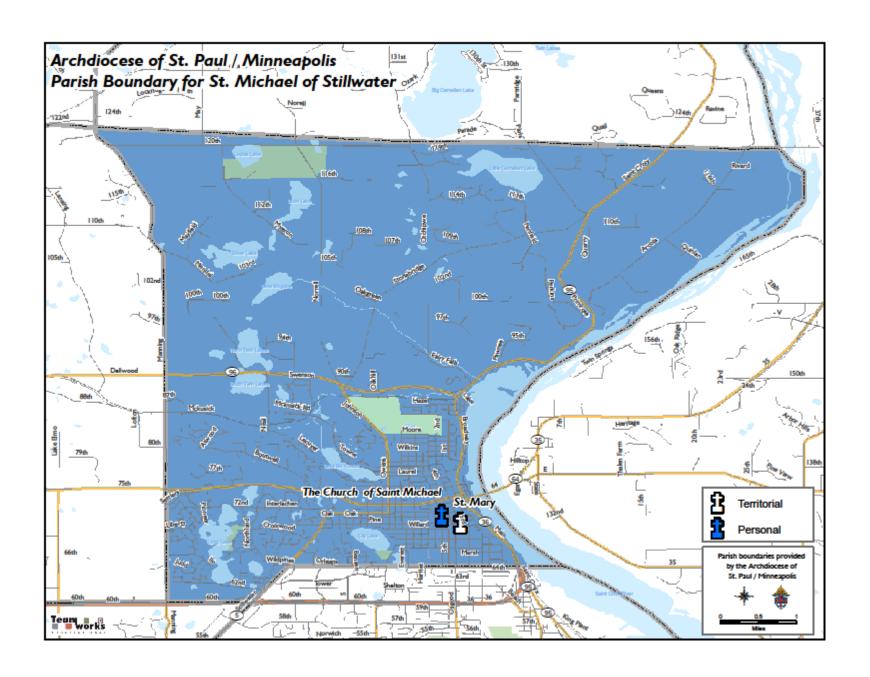MINNEAPOLIS

- <u>Each parish</u> must have a baptismal register, marriage register, and <u>death </u>register (c. 535, 1)
- Parish registers are <u>not </u>public registers. No information should be given over the phone except as outlined in the following pages
- Only parishes maintain sacramental registers and records, and territorial parishes have an obligation to do so. Other entities (i.e. hospitals) would need explicit permission from the local bishop.

Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
Parish Boundary Changes October 15, 2010

Archdiocese of St. Paul / Minneapolis
Parish Boundary for St. Michael of Stillwater

The Church of Saint Michael

St. Mary

Territorial

Personal

Parish boundaries provided
by the Archdiocese of
St. Paul / Minneapolis

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Miles

- Registers must always be retained as physical items.

- Electronic <u>copies</u> (LOGOS) are allowed but <u>cannot be the official register.</u>

- <u>Certificates cannot be issued with data from an electronic register.</u>

- Registers must be stored in a safe place (usually a fire-resistant or fire-proof safe or filing cabinet) where they can only be accessed by authorized personnel

- The loss, theft, or destruction of any sacramental register must be reported to the Chancellors' Department immediately

- The pages of the registers should be made of acid-free paper and the ink should be indelible

- Registers may never be destroyed, discarded, or leave the parish premises unless in an emergency or as authorized by the Chancellor's Department

Rules for Sacramental Certificates

- A certificate is an official document for internal church use which establishes that a particular individual has received a sacrament
- With the exception of cases of adoption, a certificate should be an exact duplicate of the <u>data in the sacramental register</u>. Certificates must be issued from the data in the register and not from LOGOS.
- All data contained in the register, except that which is marked confidential, should be included. If there is no data in the 'notations' column, 'no notations' should be printed on the certificate.
- Sacramental certificates are public ecclesiastical documents and therefore must be signed <u>by the pastor</u> (c. 1540, 1)

- Only the parish or location holding <u>the original record</u> may issue a certificate!
- The actual register should be used when producing certificates- again, not LOGOS.
- Certificates should have an official appearance and should be issued in a consistent format (typed, printed, or handwritten).
- Pre-printed forms are recommended

- Each certificate must have the name and address of the parish and be impressed with the parish seal.

- Parishes may not charge a fee for issuing a sacramental certificate. Parishes may suggest a donation, but it must be clear that payment is not a condition for the issuance of the certificate.

- In addition to diocesan or parish officials, the person to whom the record relates, the parents, and/or the guardian(s)- when the subject is a minor- have the right to request a certificate
- If the person is deceased, the previous spouse or an adult child also may request a certificate
- In cases of divorce, either parent (as listed in the sacramental record) may request a certificate
- Only the adoptive parents have the right to an adopted child's certificate

ALL OTHER REQUESTS MUST BE DENIED!

- Prior to releasing a certificate to a non-official, some proof of identity should be presented.

- Requests for a certificate coming from someone other than a diocesan or parish official should be submitted in writing.

- When a diocesan official or parish representative is requesting a certificate, no release is required but the certificate must always be mailed directly to the diocese or parish

- Information contained in sacramental records is always private

- The only individuals who may directly access the sacramental registers are the pastor (or those equivalent in law) and the pastor's designate, once that individual has received proper training in maintaining sacramental registers.

- Confidentiality restrictions apply to sacramental information in LOGOS as well as to what is in the registers. <u>The use of volunteers to enter data is prohibited!</u>

- The pastor is ultimately responsible for sacramental registers. In the future, a pastor can anticipate that pastoral visits by the Regional Vicars will include an inspection of the sacramental registers.

- <u>Current</u> sacramental registers should **never** be made available to genealogical researchers.

- Inquiries of this sort should always be referred to the Office of Archives and Records Management at the Chancery (<u>http://www.archspm.org/_uls/resources/Information-for-those-seeking-Sacramental-Records-2012-01-25.pdf</u>)

- Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event
- Sacraments administered in the parish church should be recorded in the parish register (baptism, marriage, confirmation)
- The proper parish for recording a sacrament that did not take place in the parish church is based on either territory or nationality (affiliation)
- Index entries according to a person's last name (printed or typed in upper case)

- Enter the data in the corresponding columns

- The 'notations' or 'remarks' column will have different references throughout the register

- If a single line is inadequate, another line may be used but it must be cross-referenced in the original entry and the index

- Entries should be made in neat PRINTING (no cursive)
- Confidential data should be marked as such (i.e. 'confidential- do not include on certificate')
- The actual minister of the sacrament does not need to sign the register if the person making the entry personally witnessed the event or has a signed document certifying the conferral. The minister's name should be printed in the register

- Once data is entered in a sacramental register, it is considered official and permanent

  – It should never be modified or changed

  – It is never to be scratched out, erased, blotted, obliterated or otherwise destroyed

  – When a minor change is required, the 'notations' field should be utilized

- Major additions, such as <u>recording an adoption after baptism</u>, may require a new entry
  - The original information should be reproduced excepting the changes, with a cross-reference to the original entry.
  - 'DO NOT ISSUE CERTIFICATE FROM THIS RECORD' should be printed clearly in the 'notations' column of the original entry

Correcting Data in an Entry

- Persons authorized to receive a certificate may also request a minor change due to error

- More significant changes require supporting documentation such as civil or ecclesiastical certificates

- When the error involves data pertaining directly to the celebration of the sacrament (i.e. wrong date, identity of godparents), it should be verified by documents or by the written or oral testimony of a reputable witness

- Once specific data has been changed in the register, the original data is not transcribed on certificates (i.e. names of biological parents after adoption)
- When the record is missing and there is no possibility that the sacrament took place elsewhere, canon 876 may be applied to add an entry

  - Only the data that can be vouched for with certainty should be added
  - The name of the witness, the date of his/her testimony, and the words, 'Based on the testimony of…' should be printed in the 'notations' column

- Certain events are always recorded or at least referenced in the baptismal register
- The source of data for the register should be the sacristy record taken by the person who did the preparation. However, it is important to have a clear procedure for transferring data. Use of a birth certificate is ideal and per [Archdiocesan policy](), required.
- No more than two sponsors may be listed; 'Christian witness' and proxies should be indicated as such. There must be at least one Catholic listed, otherwise there are no sponsors!

- Do not enter inaccurate information into LOGOS- this may be tempting, especially because of the categories. If you do not have the information, do not enter anything!

- In the case of emergency baptisms outside the parish church, the fact of the baptism is to be recorded in the <u>sacramental register of the territorial parish where the baptism occurred</u> (even if a hospital)
- The parish of the individual (or parents) should also be notified so the fact of the baptism can be included in the baptismal record
- This should be done by means of the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church

- Even though baptized in another church, an entry in the baptismal register is required
  - Original baptism data is placed in the appropriate columns
  - Data from Rite of Reception placed in 'notations'
  - If married, record the name of the spouse and date and place of marriage

- Follow canon 877, 2 regarding the name of the mother
- If no proof of paternity exists, including the statement of the father, than the name of the father is to be omitted
- The father's statement should be in writing, signed, dated, sealed, and witnessed by the pastor and another witness
- Proof of paternity should be kept in the 'Sacramental Records' file.
- The expression 'Father Unknown' should not be used in register or certificates

Adoption

- Means of recording is different if baptism takes place pre- or post- adoption
- See [USCCB Complementary Norm](#)
- Baptismal <u>certificate</u> should not reflect fact of adoption
- No copy of the final order for adoption and/or amended birth certificate are to be retained by parish. It must be submitted at the time the request for a change is made, but should be returned.

- Ascription is determined by the rite of the parents, not the rite in which the child was baptized

- Proper ascription should be investigated and noted in the 'notations' column

- Prior to administering the sacraments of initiation to an Eastern Catholic, or receiving into full communion an Orthodox Christian, consult the Chancery

- The names of godparents (sponsors) should not be removed even if the parents feel they are no longer suitable (or even if they have died). Parents should be instructed to ask someone else to fulfill this role, but no change should be made in the sacramental register and subsequent certificates should indicate the original godparents unless you have received instructions to the contrary from the Archbishop.

- All subsequent sacraments should be recorded, as well as when a sacrament is declared invalid

- Formal Defection from the Faith is also added as a notation, at the instruction of the Chancery

- Names, dates, places and protocol numbers are generally added to 'notations' column. This information is normally included on certificates

Confirmation Register

- Canon 535, 1, indicates that a parish is not required to keep a Confirmation register

- However, proof of Confirmation is required for ordination and, in some places, in order to serve as a sponsor

- Therefore, the event should either be recorded at the parish where the sacrament was conferred, or at the recipient's parish

- The Archdiocese does not maintain a Confirmation Register, and neither the Basilica nor the Cathedral is recording those confirmed at Archdiocesan celebrations. A recipient's parish is responsible for ensuring that the sacrament is recorded with the Church of baptism.

- The source of information is normally the premarital file compiled by the priest or deacon, but check for last minute changes

- Validations are recorded in the same manner as a marriage, but the date, place, and official of the original ceremony should be noted in the 'notations' column

- When the marriage is celebrated at a place other than the parish where its record is maintained, both places should be noted in the 'notations' column

- When a marriage is sanated, the data remains the same but the date, diocese, and protocol number of the sanation should be recorded in the 'notations' column

- The parish of baptism should be notified when a marriage is celebrated, convalidated, or sanated. Notification should include the name of the couple, the date and place of the wedding or convalidation, or the fact of the sanation

- Record the death of *parishioners*, even if the funeral does not take place in the parish church
- When a funeral takes place for someone who is not a parishioner, the parish of the deceased must be notified, not the parish of baptism
- With cremation, the entry should reflect the date and place of internment and not the date and place of cremation

Shared or Merged Parishes

- When a priest is pastor of more than one parish, separate registers must be maintained for each. They can be stored at a common location, but entries must be made in the appropriate parish register

- When parishes merge, the surviving parish retains the sacramental registers of the parishes that have been merged

- New baptismal entries will not be made in registers of merged parishes (remaining parish only), but additional sacraments will be added to baptismal register, as well as to the register for the remaining parish if the sacrament was administered there.

- Some parishes still give notice of First Communion, although this is no longer required

- Never create a record of reconciliation!!!

- When you are uncertain of what to do in regards to sacramental records, feel free to consult the Chancellors' Department

- The pastor of the parish is required to record Catholic sacraments (except Eucharist and reconciliation) administered in the territory of the parish! This may require outreach!

- Parishioners are <u>Latin rite</u> Catholics living in the territory of the parish or belonging to the ethnic/language group of the parish
- 'Members' may be used to refer to those who may be registered but are not canonically parishioners

- Statistical information should only include Latin rite Catholics.

- When an entry states "*defectio ab Ecclesia catholica actu formali*", no certificate may be issued. Contact the Chancery if you get a request for a record with this notation.

- According to canon law, a priest celebrating or concelebrating Mass is permitted to receive an offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention.

- In the Archdiocese, Mass intentions of parish priests become the property of the parish- they are not retained by the individual priest

- The suggested offering for a Mass is $7. A greater amount may not be requested, although it can be accepted if freely offered. Priests are encouraged to accept lesser offerings as well.

Mass Stipends

- Generally, each single offering should be fulfilled with a separate Mass.
- However, priests are permitted to accept several offerings for one Mass (a 'collective intention') provided:
  - The donors are informed of and consent to combining the offerings
  - The place and time of the Mass must be announced
  - This may be at most twice a week.
  - The celebrant may only keep the usual Mass offering, with the remaining amount sent to the Archdiocese.

Mass Stipends

- If a sum of money is offered for Mass intentions without indicating how many Masses it is requested are said, the number of Masses should be computed according to the set stipend amount ($7)
- No person (priest/parish) is permitted to accept more offerings for Masses than he can satisfy within a year.
- If a parish has more requests for Masses than can be celebrated, it is permitted for the Masses to be celebrated elsewhere (such as the missions) unless the donor has expressly indicated that the Mass is to be said in the parish.

- When Mass stipends need to be transferred, this should be done as soon as possible, and until the transfer has been accepted by the receiving party, the obligation still binds the original celebrant.

- Every priest/parish must note in a book which Masses have been accepted to celebrate, the offering, and when they have been satisfied. The same book should be used to indicate when Masses are entrusted to others

- When an intention is not honored within a year, the priest or administrator responsible for the obligation is to forward to the Archbishop the intention and the offering.

- On pastoral visits by Regional Vicars, they will request to see the Mass Offering books.

This presentation, along with a recording of the webinar and links to the documentation, is available at:

http://bit.ly/webinarSRT