



Joseph Cardinal Bernardin
Archives and Records Center
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CONTACTING THE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS CENTER

- If someone is getting married at your parish and their parish of baptism is closed, they can mail a request to the Archives and Records Center for their baptism certificate. A request form is available on our website.
- A parish employee can also email or fax the Archives and Records Center directly to request a certificate from a closed parish. These certificates will be stamped “For Canonical Purposes Only.”
- Please allow the Archives and Records Center two weeks to process any request for a certificate. We process requests for over 150 closed parishes.
- Please remember the Archives and Records Center does not have a centralized database that will allow us to look up a sacrament if the parish is unknown, but we can help in narrowing down the possible parishes.

If your books look like this, call us!



OUR MISSION

The Archives and Records Center is the official repository for the records of the Archdiocese of Chicago and gateway to its past. Our purpose is to identify, preserve, and make available archdiocesan records, which have long term value for local, national and international communities. These primary sources provide unique opportunities to examine our history, celebrate our unity as a Catholic community and confidently face the future.

CONTACT

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SACRAMENTAL RECORDS



“IN THE HISTORICAL
RECORDS YOU
CAN DISCOVER AND
VERIFY....”

— Ezra 4:15

POLICY BOOK IV, §900 SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

Sacramental records are unique to diocesan institutions and require specific care. Parishioners expect their records to be kept confidentially and accurately.

Archdiocesan Policy Book IV, §900 provides detailed information about:

- Creating the registers and their annotations
- Preservation of registers
- Access to records

The Archives and Records Center has also set professional standards to safeguard and preserve these records for posterity. If you have any questions about recording, correcting or maintaining sacramental records, please do not hesitate to call our office.

archives.archchicago.org
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WHEN RECORDING INFORMATION, REMEMBER:

- Registers are required for baptisms, first Communion, confirmations, marriages and deaths.
- Policy Book IV, §902 details exactly what information should be recorded for each sacrament.
- Always use black, ballpoint pen and print all information. Do not use cursive.
- Always request a birth certificate from the parents to ensure a baptism is entered accurately. If an entry needs to be changed, request an original birth certificate to verify all information.
- A database is not a substitute for a register, but it can be used for quick access to parishioner information.
- Make sure the registers are kept in a secure place, stored horizontally and away from light.

WHEN PROVIDING INFORMATION, REMEMBER:

- Never accept a request over the phone, or without a signature and photo ID.
- Only the pastor or “person in charge” should handle the records. Do not allow parishioners physical access to them.
- Anyone over age 18 should request their own certificate. Parents cannot request a certificate for their adult child.
- Remind genealogists that all pre-1916 sacramental records are available to view for free at the Archives and Records Center or online at FamilySearch.org.
- Always get information directly from the register, not a parishioner database.
- If you are unsure about who is an authorized recipient of a sacramental record, see Policy Book IV, §904.