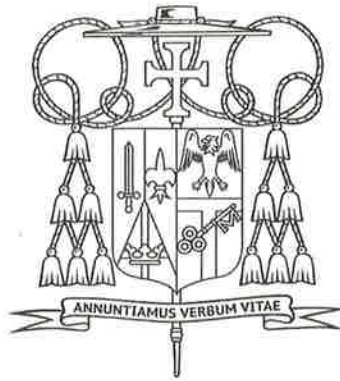


# JOHN STOWE, OFM, CONV.



BISHOP OF LEXINGTON


General Executory Decree Promulgating the  
**Sacramental Records Policy**  
as Administrative Directives for the Lexington Diocese

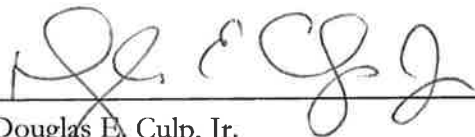
In virtue of my pastoral office as Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington in Kentucky, I hereby issue this General Executory Decree (c. 31) promulgating the **Sacramental Records Policy** as administrative directives of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, providing a set of standards of behaviors that govern conduct for those who act on behalf of the Church as Church personnel.

The **Sacramental Records Policy** is promulgated by its publication and in electronic format. The provisions of this policy shall become effective November 1, 2024, for purposes of implementation and binding January 1, 2025, for purposes of full compliance within the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, any particular legislation, directives, or instructions to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery, Lexington, Kentucky, this 15th day of October, 2024.

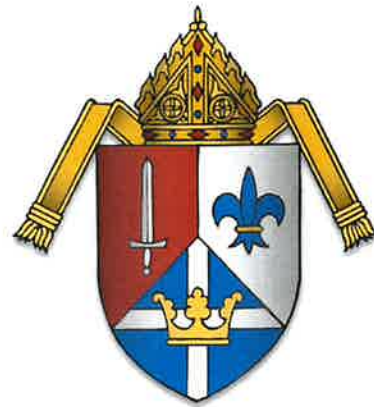


  
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Most Reverend John Stowe, O.F.M. Conv.  
Bishop of Lexington

  
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Douglas E. Culp, Jr.  
Chancellor

2024:AD002





CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF LEXINGTON

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington, KY

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Sacramental Records Policy

October 2024

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati pioneered an earlier version of this policy, and the Diocese of Dallas reworked it for its purposes followed by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. We are most grateful for the benefit of their experience as we have adapted it to circumstances in the Diocese of Lexington.

The *Canons* referenced in this handbook are taken from the Code of Canon Law as it appeared on the Holy See's website at [https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic\\_index\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html) on July 2, 2024. These *Canons* are presented in full in the Appendices.

## SECTION 1: SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS

1. Each parish is required to maintain records of Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, and Deaths.<sup>1</sup> Records of First Communion are optional.
2. Non-parochial institutions must obtain the express written approval of the Chancellor to maintain sacramental records and registers.<sup>2</sup>
3. Registers using **handwritten** entries are required. Parishes must retain Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death records separately in different registers or sections delineated within the same volume.
4. The pages of the registers should be made of acid-free paper.
5. Sacramental records may be duplicated on secure computers with no public access, and historical copies may be maintained electronically in a non-public format only.
  - a. A complete **handwritten** record must be maintained in the registers.
  - b. The registers are never to be destroyed or discarded.
  - c. The **handwritten** registers are considered the only authentic copy of sacramental records.
6. As registers become worn, they are to be rebound professionally. If a register is beyond repair, the records may be transferred to a new register. The original is to be retained in as safe a condition as possible.
7. Sacramental registers are to be stored in a locked place, preferably one that is fire-proof or fire-resistant.
  - a. Sacramental registers may be removed only by authorized personnel and only for legitimate purposes.
  - b. Sacramental registers may never be taken off the parish premises except for microfilming or electronic storage by the Office of the Chancellor.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> If a chapel operates under the authority of the local pastor, the official sacramental records are to be kept in the parish registers. The chapel may keep duplicate but unofficial records.

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

## **Section 2: CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. 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 include personal and confidential information.

2. The sacramental registers belong to the individual parish.

a. Sacramental registers are maintained for the good of the Christian faithful; but they are private, not public documents.

b. No one other than the pastor, the Ordinary, the Episcopal Vicar(s), the Deans, the parish life director, or their delegate(s) can claim a right to direct access to the registers or to any versions or copies of them in any format.

3. The pastor/parish life director is always and ultimately responsible for the care and confidentiality of the sacramental registers and any reproductions.

4. The pastor/parish life director may designate other persons to make entries in the registers and prepare certificates.

a. These may be employees or volunteers, but their number should be small.

b. These designated persons must be known well to the pastor/parish life director, capable of careful work and protecting confidentiality, and adequately trained to work with the registers.

c. Their work with the registers is not to exceed their mandate from the pastor/parish life director.

5. Direct access to sacramental registers is not available to genealogical researchers.

a. The pastor/parish life director or other regularly designated person may research information as requested and as time permits and make the information available on a separate paper.

b. Care must be taken not to disclose confidential information.

### Section 3: Entries

1. Only data required by Canon Law and other necessary data for the complete and accurate maintenance of sacramental records are to be entered in the sacramental registers.
2. Entries to be recorded should be made as soon as possible after the event.
3. In general, the proper parish for the recording of Sacraments and Death is the parish in which territory the Sacraments or Rites of Christian Burial were celebrated.
  - a. When funeral rites for a parishioner of one parish are only celebrated at a cemetery or columbarium in another parish's territory, a record should be made in the parishioner's parish and the cemetery record.
  - b. For other exceptions, see the individual register sections of this handbook.
4. Entries are to be made in chronological order. If the chronological order cannot be kept in a 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").
5. Minimally, the Baptismal Register is to have a column titled, "Remarks," "Notations," or some other similar title. Hereafter, this column will be referred to as the Notations Column.
6. Data is to be entered in the proper column of a given register.
7. Each entry is to be listed in the appropriate register's index according to the person's last name.
8. The last name of the entry's subject should be printed in upper case, e.g. "JONES." In cases when a person has two last names or a hyphenated last name, the complete name should be printed in upper case, e.g. GONZALEZ SANCHEZ or WILSON-JONES.
9. Printing the name of the month is preferred to using the month's number, e.g., "Aug" rather than "8".
10. In the event of inadequate space for all the data to be entered in a register, the excess data may be entered elsewhere on the same page or a different page of the register with clear cross-referencing (e.g. "See SMITH, bottom of page").
11. Discursive material is not to be written in sacramental registers.
  - a. Discursive material, such as civil records, correspondence, etc., is to be retained securely in a file marked "Sacramental Records" in the parish archives.

b. Discretion is to be exercised in determining what discursive material to place in this file as not everything is to be retained. Refer to the Record Retention Schedule in the Archives and Record Management Policy of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington.

c. Retained discursive material is to be noted in the Notations Column of the appropriate sacramental register.

12. Neat printing is preferred to script for entries in sacramental registers using fade-proof, waterproof ink.

13. Confidential data that is not to be included on certificates is to be so marked when entered in the appropriate register (e.g. "Confidential – do not include on certificate"). However, the provisions of Canon 535 §2 are to be observed.

14. The actual minister of a Sacrament does not need to sign the register if the person making the entry personally witnessed the event or has available a document (e.g. Sacristy Record of Baptism) signed by the minister that certifies the conferral of the Sacrament. In such cases, the name of the minister is printed in the register.

#### **SECTION 4: CERTIFICATES**

1. A certificate is an official document certifying that an individual has received a Sacrament. It is an exact duplicate of non-confidential data entered in a sacramental register.

2. Certificates of Sacraments are intended for internal church use, not civil purposes. Persons may request their own sacramental records or those of their minor children for immigration purposes.

3. Only the parish (or other location due to a parish closing or merger) retaining the original sacramental record may issue a certificate.

a. Only the actual register, rather than a microfilm or electronic reproduction, should be used in preparing a certificate.

b. Any microfilm or electronic reproduction must be compared with the actual register to ensure the copy corresponds exactly to the original.

4. The right to obtain a certificate of a Sacrament belongs to...

a. the person who received the Sacrament;

b. the parent(s) of a minor who received the Sacrament – regardless of separation, divorce, or legal custody;

- c. the legal guardian of the person who received the Sacrament;
- d. a bona fide pastoral minister at another Catholic parish; and
- e. a diocesan tribunal officer.

5. Requests for certificates should be submitted to the parish in person in writing with a valid photo identification of the person making the request. However, telephone requests from a Catholic parish or Catholic agency are acceptable.

- a. Written and telephone requests are to be logged and retained on file for one year.
- b. No information from a sacramental register should be accepted or provided by telephone or other electronic means except when dealing with a Catholic parish or Catholic agency.
- c. Care for the privacy and identity of persons is to be exercised in all cases.

6. Certificates are to have an official appearance and be issued in a consistent format.

- a. Parishes may obtain blank certificates from commercial vendors or produce them in-house.
- b. All certificates must bear the name and complete address of the issuing parish.

7. Certificates must be typed, printed by computer, or hand-printed in ink.

- a. Certificates must be signed by the pastor/parish life director or a delegate and impressed with the parish seal.
- b. Photocopies and fax copies of certificates are not considered authentic documents.

8. Certificates are to include all data contained in the sacramental register, except that which is marked confidential or is extraneous to the person's canonical status (e.g. name changes, adoption records as addressed in Section 5(2)(d), Section 5(3), and Section 6(11)(a,b).

- a. Data in the Notations Column is to be included.
- b. If no data is in the Notations Column, the words, "No Notations," should be printed on the certificate.

## 9. Missing Record

a. If no record can be found when a certificate is requested the person requesting the certificate should be encouraged to check the sacramental records of another parish or consult the diocesan archives by contacting the Office of the Chancellor if there is a possibility that the Sacrament may have been conferred in another parish.

b. If, after exhausting all search possibilities, a record is determined to be missing, Canon 876 and Canon 1573 from the Code of Canon Law may be applied.

i. Only that data that can be vouched for with certainty should be entered in the sacramental register, even when this may leave an incomplete entry.

ii. The name of the witness(es), the date of the testimony, and the words, "Based on the testimony of [witness(es) name(s)]," must be printed in the Notations Column of the sacramental register.

## SECTION 5: CHANGES TO ENTRIES

***NOTE:** Entries into a sacramental register are considered **official** and **permanent**. Data may not be modified except under the special conditions detailed in this section. Original data is **never** to be scratched out, erased, "whited-out," or rendered illegible.*

***NOTE:** As change requests are by nature particular to the specific situation, please contact the Office of the Chancellor to determine if the requested change is permitted and what proper authorization is required for the requested change.*

### 1. Minor Changes

a. Minor changes (e.g. correcting a misspelling) may be made directly to the original entry.

b. Minor changes may be corrected upon the request of those persons with a right to the certificate (see Section 4, number 4).

c. Minor changes are to be made by drawing a straight, simple line through the word, number, or letter to be modified and printing the change immediately above or below it.

2. Major Changes (e.g. recording an adoption after Baptism) may require a new entry to be created. In such cases...

a. the original entry is to be preserved without change;

- b. a new entry, with all the data from the original entry reproduced (except the relevant change(s)), is to be made in the same register as close to the original entry as possible;
- c. both entries, as well as listing in the index, are to be cross-referenced; and
- d. "Do Not Issue Certificate from this Record" is to be printed carefully across the face of the original entry without rendering the original entry illegible.
- e. Major changes require documentation such as an original, "raised seal" certificate from a civil or ecclesiastical office, court, agency, etc.
  - i. Record the issuing agency, date of the certificate, and any protocol number in the Notations Column of the register.
  - ii. When no external verifying documentation exists regarding an error on a sacramental record (e.g. date, identity of a godparent), the written testimony of a reputable witness will suffice.

3. Once specific data has been changed in the sacramental register, the original data is no longer to be transcribed onto certificates.

## **SECTION 6: BAPTISMAL REGISTER ENTRIES**

1. Basic process for a Baptism celebrated under normal circumstances

- a. Record the following information in the Baptismal Register per Canon 877 §1:
  - i. the name of the child as designated by the parent(s), or the legal name of the adult (always use the maiden name of a woman);
  - ii. the name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name);
  - iii. the date and place of birth;
  - iv. the name(s) of the sponsor(s);
  - v. the date and place of the Baptism; and
  - vi. the name of the minister performing the Baptism.

b. Ordinarily, the data used to create an entry for Baptism in a sacramental register is found on a Sacristy Record of Baptism signed by the minister celebrating the Baptism. A birth certificate is required to verify the date and place of birth information.

*(NOTE: If a birth certificate cannot be presented for inspection, an entry in the Notations Column must be made describing the source of the date and place of birth information.)*

## 2. Baptism of persons from more than one parish

a. When persons from more than one parish are baptized or received into full communion with the Catholic Church at a single celebration, the record for all persons is to be retained in the Baptismal Register at the parish where the Rites are celebrated.

b. Home parishes may keep an unofficial duplicate record.

## 3. Baptism outside the parish church

a. When Baptism is conferred solemnly (that is, with a cleric celebrating the full Rite of Baptism) in a chapel, hospital, or home (Canons 877 §1 and 878), the minister is responsible for ensuring the requisite data is transmitted in writing to the territorial parish in which the chapel, hospital, or home is located.

b. The Baptism is to be recorded in the Baptismal Register of the territorial parish in which the chapel, hospital, or home is located. NOTE: If unclear about the territorial parish, please contact the Office of the Chancellor.

## 4. Emergency Baptism

a. An emergency Baptism is to be recorded in the territorial parish of the hospital, prison, or other non-parish facility in which the Baptism occurs. This entry is the official entry for the Sacrament so certificates of Baptism may be issued only from this Baptismal Register.

i. After the conferral of the emergency Baptism, the minister of Baptism is to notify the territorial parish in which the Baptism occurs so that it can be entered into the Baptismal Register.

ii. If known, the minister of Baptism is to notify the pastor of the parish of membership so that the Baptism can be noted in the Baptismal Register of the parish.

b. Baptism conferred in an emergency, such as in a non-parish facility like a hospital or prison, may be accompanied by a ceremony at a later date. If a ceremony is supplied at a later date (cf. 1973 Rite of Baptism for Children #31.3), a notation should be made in

the margin of the baptismal entry of the territorial parish indicating the date and place of the ceremony.

#### 5. Conditional Baptism

- a. A sacramental register entry for a conditional Baptism is the same as for any other Baptism, except that "Baptized conditionally" is to be written in the Notations Column.
- b. The sacramental minister is reminded to observe the provisions of Canon 869 when deciding to administer Baptism conditionally.

#### 6. OCIA celebration of Baptism of an adult

The following information is to be entered in the Baptismal Register for the Baptism of a non-Baptized adult (OCIA) (Canon 877 §1):

- a. the given and/or Christian name(s) of the person (always use the maiden name of a woman);
- b. the name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name);
- c. the date and place of birth;
- d. the name of the sponsor(s);
- e. the date and place of the Baptism;
- f. the name of the minister performing the Baptism; and
- g. marginal notations of reception of Eucharist and Confirmation and marital status (either current valid marriage or the convalidation of the current marriage). Any declaration of invalidity (including where granted and protocol number) should be noted.

#### 7. Reception into full communion of baptized adults

- a. When persons are received into full communion with the Catholic Church after having been baptized previously in another Christian community that practices valid Baptism, an entry must be made in both the Baptismal Register and Confirmation Register.
- b. The following information is to be entered in the Baptismal Register:

- i. the given and/or Christian name(s) of the person (always use the maiden name of a woman);
- ii. the name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name);
- iii. the date and place of birth;
- iv. the name of the sponsor;
- v. the date and place of the Rite of Reception (note in the space provided for Baptism); and
- vi. marginal notations giving the date and place of the original Baptism, reception of Eucharist and Confirmation, and marital status (either current valid marriage or the convalidation of the current marriage). Any declaration of invalidity (including where granted and protocol number) should be noted.

#### 8. Bringing a baptized child into the Church

For already baptized children who are being received into the Catholic Church **before** age 7 (Canon 852 §1), the following information is to be entered in the Baptismal Register:

- a. the Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the parent(s), or the legal name of the adult (always use the maiden name of a woman);
- b. the name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name);
- c. the date and place of birth;
- d. the name(s) of the sponsor(s);
- e. the place and date of the ceremonies are supplied to effect formal reception in the Church (note in the space provided for Baptism); and
- f. data concerning the original Baptism (note in the Notations Column, especially the date and place (church and location)).

#### 9. Unmarried parents

- a. In the case of a child born to an unmarried mother, the name of the mother must be recorded in the Baptismal Register "if her maternity is established publicly or if she seeks it willingly in writing or before two witnesses." (Canon 877 §2)

b. The name of the father must be recorded in the Baptismal Register “if a public document or his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses proves his paternity.” (Canon 877 §2)

c. “In other cases, the name of the baptized is inscribed with no mention of the father or the parents.” (Canon 877 §2)

#### 10. Children of uncertain/unknown parentage

For a child whose parentage is uncertain, cannot be known (Canon 870), or is unknown (Canon 877 §2), the following information is to be entered in the Baptismal Register:

a. the legal name(s) of the child as designated by the mother or legal guardian(s);

b. the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name) if publicly known or requested by her before two witnesses;

c. the name of the biological father (first, middle if any, and surname) **only** if paternity is established by a legal document **or** the biological father makes a declaration before the pastor and two witnesses; otherwise leave blank;

d. the date and place of birth, if known, or of being found or placed under guardianship;

d. the name(s) of the sponsor(s);

e. the date and place of the Baptism; and

f. the name of the minister performing the Baptism.

#### 11. Baptism celebrated after adoption

a. For children baptized after adoption, no reference to the adoption or the biological parents is to be made in the Baptismal Register.

b. Any such data which has been recorded is to be treated as confidential and is not to be included on any certificate.

c. The following information shall be entered in the Baptismal Register:

i. the legal name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parents;

ii. the names of the adoptive father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the adoptive mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name);

iii. the date and place of birth;

- iv. the name(s) of the sponsor(s);
- v. the date and place of the Baptism; and
- vi. the name of the minister performing the Baptism.

## 12. Baptism celebrated before adoption

a. For children baptized before adoption, the following information shall be added in the Baptismal Register after the adoption is finalized (Canon 877 §3):

**NOTE:** No “white-out” or other means shall be used that have the effect of destroying any original information in the entry. See Section 5: Changes to Entries.

- i. a parenthesis ( ) shall be placed around the names of the biological parents;
- ii. the name(s) of the adoptive parents shall be added;
- iii. the child’s former surname shall also be parenthesized and the new surname added; and
- iv. a notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.

b. Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals should give the following information:

- i. the name(s) of the adoptive parents;
- ii. the child’s new legal surname;
- iii. the date and place of birth;
- iv. the date and place of Baptism; and
- v. the name of the minister who administered the Sacrament.

**NOTE:** The name(s) of the biological parent(s) and the sponsor(s) shall not be given. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

c. To avoid confusion, an entirely new entry can be made (with a cross-reference to the original entry in the index) with the following information:

- i. the new legal name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s);
- ii. the names of the adoptive parent(s);
- iii. the date and place of birth;
- iv. the date and place of the Baptism; and
- v. the name of the minister performing the Baptism.

**NOTE:** Certificates issued for this person are to be issued **only** from the record created **after** the adoption.

### 13. Number of Godparents

- a. No more than two (2) names may be entered in the Godparents or Sponsors Column of the Baptismal Register.
- b. If there are two (2) sponsors, then one must be male and one must be female (Canon 873).

### 14. Christian Witness

- a. A baptized non-Catholic Christian may serve as a Christian witness with a Catholic sponsor (Canon 874 §2).
- b. "Christian witness" should be entered after the witness' name in the Baptismal Register.

**NOTE:** The Ecumenical Directory (#98.b) allows a baptized Eastern Orthodox person to serve as a sponsor rather than as a Christian witness provided there is a second sponsor who is Catholic.

### 15. Proxy Godparent

When a godparent or sponsor appoints a proxy to participate in the Rite of Baptism, both names should be entered in the Baptismal Register. "Proxy" is to be written after the proxy's name.

### 16. Ascription to proper church *sui iurus*, or the proper rite (i.e. one of the Eastern Catholic Rites).

**NOTE:** Contact the Office of the Chancellor **before** scheduling a Baptism for a person who ascribes to an Eastern Catholic Church.

When a minister of the Latin Church baptizes someone who, by law, is ascribed to an Eastern Catholic Church, a notation is to be made in the Notations Column of the Baptismal Register.

#### 17. Registers for ritual use

- a. A register used as part of the Church's ritual life (e.g. Book of the Elect) is to be maintained separately from the regular sacramental registers.
- b. The data from a ritual register is to be transferred to the appropriate sacramental register after the conferral of Sacraments or the reception into full communion.

#### 18. Defection from the Church

A parish may receive a notification from an individual indicating that the person is no longer a Catholic and that he/she wants to be removed from the Church's records. However, **NO CHANGES** are to be made to sacramental records. A person's practice or affiliation with the Catholic faith does not impact sacramental records.

### **SECTION 7: CONFIRMATION REGISTER ENTRIES**

#### 1. Basic process for a Confirmation celebrated under normal circumstances

- a. Record the following information in the Baptismal Register per Canon 895:
  - i. the legal names of the child or adult (always use the maiden name of a woman);
  - ii. the name of the father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name);
  - iii. the date and place of Baptism;
  - iv. the name of the sponsor;
  - v. the date and place of the Confirmation; and
  - vi. the title and name of the minister performing the Confirmation.
- b. The place of Baptism should be notified of the Confirmation.
- c. In the case of a baptized person who was brought into full communion with the Church, the place of the person's reception is to be notified instead of the place of Baptism.

## 2. Emergency Confirmation

The record of an emergency Confirmation is to be retained in the territorial parish in which the Confirmation occurred.

## 3. Large Group of Recipients

When several persons are confirmed at the same ceremony by the same minister, the date of conferral and the name of the minister may be written only once in the sacramental register, so long as it is clear that the references apply to all the confirmed.

## 4. Recipients from more than one parish

When Confirmation is conferred upon persons from two (2) or more parishes at a single ceremony, all sacramental records are made at the parish where the Confirmation is celebrated with notification sent to the parish(es) of Baptism.

## 5. Baptismal certificate requirement

A baptismal certificate for each candidate for Confirmation should be obtained before the celebration of Confirmation to...

- a. satisfy the obligation of notifying the parish of Baptism about the conferral of Confirmation;
- b. establish the fact of valid Baptism;
- c. verify there has been no previous reception of valid Confirmation, especially in the case of Catholics baptized in Eastern *sui iurus* Churches;
- d. uncover any discrepancies between name and parentage provided in the Baptismal Register and given at the time of Confirmation; and
- e. identify the baptismal godparents (Canon 893 §2).

## 6. Baptismal data

It is recommended that the date and place of Baptism be noted in the Confirmation Register.

## 7. Notification of place of Baptism

- a. The pastor of the place of Confirmation is to notify the place of Baptism of the Confirmation as soon as possible.

b. Notification is to include the following:

- i. the name of the recipient;
- ii. the date of Baptism; and
- iii. the date and place of Confirmation.

c. The names of the minister, parents, and sponsor are not required.

d. When a person previously baptized in another Christian community is received into full communion and confirmed, the place of Baptism is **not** notified.

**NOTE:** Notification documents should include a turnaround document to verify notations have been recorded.

## **SECTION 8: MARRIAGE REGISTER ENTRIES**

1. For a wedding celebrated with recognition by the Catholic Church, record the following information in the Marriage Register (Canon 1122-1123):

- the legal names of the groom;
- the name of the groom's father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the groom's mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name);
- the legal names of the bride (always use the maiden name of a woman);
- the name of the bride's father (first, middle if any, and surname) and the name of the bride's mother (first, middle if any, and maiden name);
- the date and place of Baptism for the groom;
- the date and place of Baptism for the bride;
- the date and place (church and location) of the wedding;
- the names of the witnesses;
- the title/name of the assisting minister asking for and receiving the couple's vows; and
- the notation of any permissions, dispensations, and delegations obtained for the valid celebration of the wedding (including protocol number if existing).

## 2. Marriage outside a sacred space

When a marriage is celebrated outside a sacred space, the proper parish for the marriage record is the territorial parish in which that wedding takes place.

## 3. Convalidation

a. When a marriage is convalidated, data concerning the convalidation is to be placed in the usual columns of the Marriage Register.

b. The date, place, and assisting minister of the original ceremony are to be noted in the Notations Column.

## 4. Sanation

When a marriage is sanated, the Office of the Chancellor notifies the parish of Baptismal record so that a notation can be made in the Baptismal Register.

## 5. OCIA Catechumens and Candidates

a. Marriages of persons who are baptized or received into full communion with the Catholic Church are not to be recorded in the Marriage Register unless the marriage is now being convalidated or sanated (refer to Section 8 (3) and (4) above).

b. A notation concerning the marriage is to be noted in the Notations Column of the person's baptismal record.

## 6. Notification of place of Baptism

a. When the marriage of a Catholic is celebrated, convalidated, or sanated, the pastor of the parish where the record of the marriage is retained must notify the place of Baptism as soon as possible.

b. Notification is to include the names of the spouses and the date and place of the wedding, convalidation, or sanation; the names of the assisting minister and witnesses are not required.

## **SECTION 9: PRENUPTIAL FILES**

1. Each parish is required to maintain a file of the paper collected during the period of marriage preparation. The file will typically include prenuptial investigation forms, correspondence, notes, copies of civil marriage licenses (if applicable), and any dispensation documents.

2. Prenuptial files are to be retained by the parish where the marriage is recorded in the Marriage Register.

3. The file for each couple is to be kept in a unique envelope or folder, clearly marked with the parties' names and the date of the marriage. The files should be arranged in alphabetical or chronological order and be stored together in a locked file cabinet or safe. Refer to the Catholic Diocese of Lexington Archive and Record Management Policy for the retention schedule applicable to prenuptial files.

4. The original file is to remain in the parish's archive. Photocopies may be made and sent to an ecclesiastical tribunal with a legitimate request. Any copies that are returned to the parish should be destroyed.

## **SECTION 10: DEATH REGISTER ENTRIES**

1. For a funeral celebrated in a parish or within the parish boundaries, record the following information in the Death Register (Canon 1182):

- the legal name of the deceased person;
- the age of the deceased person;
- the full name of the nearest living relative;
- the residential address of the nearest living relative;
- the date of death; and
- the date and place of interment.

### **2. Cremation**

When a body is cremated, no reference to the date or place of cremation is made in the Death Register. However, the fact of cremation with the date and place of the interment of ashes is to be noted.

## APPENDIX A: CANONS ON SACRAMENTAL RECORDS IN GENERAL

**Can. 491 §1.** A diocesan bishop is to take care that the acts and documents of the archives of cathedral, collegiate, parochial, and other churches in his territory are also diligently preserved and that inventories or catalogs are made in duplicate, one of which is to be preserved in the archive of the church and the other in the diocesan archive.

**§2.** A diocesan bishop is also to take care that there is an historical archive in the diocese and that documents having historical value are diligently protected and systematically ordered in it.

**§3.** In order to inspect or remove the acts and documents mentioned in §§1 and 2, the norms established by the diocesan bishop are to be observed.

**Can. 535 §1.** Each parish is to have parochial registers, that is, those of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and others as prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop. The pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.

**§2.** In the Baptismal Register are also to be noted Confirmation and those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of marriage, without prejudice to the prescript of *Can. 1133*, of adoption, of the reception of sacred orders, of perpetual profession made in a religious institute and of change of rite. These notations are always to be noted on a baptismal certificate.

**§3.** Each parish is to have its own seal. Documents regarding the canonical status of the Christian faithful and all acts which can have juridic importance are to be signed by the pastor or his delegate and sealed with the parochial seal.

**§4.** In each parish there is to be a storage area, or archive, in which the parochial registers are protected along with letters of bishops and other documents which are to be preserved for reason of necessity or advantage. The pastor is to take care that all of these things, which are to be inspected by the diocesan bishop or his delegate at the time of visitation or at some other opportune time, do not come into the hands of outsiders.

**§5.** Older parochial registers are also to be carefully protected according to the prescripts of particular law.

**Can 876.** To prove the conferral of Baptism, if prejudicial to no one, the declaration of one witness beyond all exception is sufficient or the oath of the one baptized if the person received Baptism as an adult.

**Can. 894.** To prove the conferral of Confirmation, the prescripts of *Can. 876* are to be observed.

**Can. 1541.** Unless contrary and evident arguments prove otherwise, public documents are to be trusted concerning everything which they directly and principally affirm.

**Can. 1573.** The testimony of one witness cannot produce full proof unless it concerns a qualified witness making a deposition concerning matters done *ex officio*, or unless the circumstances of things and persons suggest otherwise.

## APPENDIX B: CANONS REGARDING BAPTISMAL RECORDS

**Can. 296 §2 (Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches).** In the register of baptisms, a note is to be made of the ascription of the baptized persons to a determined Church *sui iuris* in accord with the norm of *Can. 37*, of the administration of chrismation with holy Myron.... These annotations are always to be reported on the baptismal certificate.

**Can. 852 §1.** The prescripts of the *Canons* on adult baptism are to be applied to all those who, no longer infants, have attained the use of reason.

**Can. 869 §2.** Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community must not be baptized conditionally unless, after an examination of the matter and the form of the words used in the conferral of Baptism and a consideration of the intention of the baptized adult and the minister of the Baptism, a serious reason exists to doubt the validity of the Baptism.

**Can. 870.** An abandoned infant or a foundling is to be baptized unless after diligent investigation the Baptism of the infant is established.

**Can. 873.** There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.

**Can. 874 §2.** A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the Baptism.

**Can. 877 §1.** The pastor of the place where the Baptism is celebrated must carefully and without delay record in the Baptismal Register the name of the baptized, with mention made of the minister, parents, sponsors, witnesses, if any, the place and date of the conferral of Baptism, and the date and place of birth.

**Can. 877 §2.** If it concerns a child born to an unmarried mother, the name of the mother must be inserted, if her maternity is established publicly or if she seeks it willingly in writing or before two witnesses. Moreover, the name of the father must be inscribed if a public document or his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses proves his paternity; in other cases, the name of the baptized is inscribed with no mention of the name of the father or the parents.

§3. If it concerns an adopted child, the names of those adopting are to be inscribed and, at least if it is done in the civil records of the region, also the names of the natural parents according to the norm of §§1 and 2, with due regard for the prescripts of the conference of bishops.

**Can. 878.** If the Baptism was not administered by the pastor or in his presence, the minister of Baptism, whoever it is, must inform the pastor of the parish in which it was administered of the conferral of the Baptism, so that he records the Baptism according to the norm of *Can. 877 §1*.

**Can. 1682 §2.** As soon as the sentence is executed, the judicial vicar must notify the local Ordinary of the place in which the marriage was celebrated. The local Ordinary must take care that the declaration of the nullity of the marriage and any possible prohibitions are noted as soon as possible in the marriage and baptismal registers.

#### **APPENDIX C: CANONS REGARDING CONFIRMATION RECORDS**

**Can. 894.** To prove the conferral of Confirmation, the prescripts of *Can. 876* are to be observed.

**Can. 895.** The names of those confirmed with mention made of the minister, the parents and sponsors, and the place and date of the conferral of Confirmation are to be recorded in the Confirmation Register of the diocesan curia or, where the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a register kept in the parish archive. The pastor must inform the pastor of the place of Baptism about the conferral of Confirmation so that a notation is made in the Baptismal Register according to the norm of *Can. 535 §2*.

**Can. 896.** If the pastor of the place was not present, the minister either personally or through another is to inform him as soon as possible of the conferral of Confirmation.

## APPENDIX D: CANONS REGARDING MARRIAGE RECORDS

**Can. 1081.** The pastor or the priest or deacon mentioned in *Can. 1079 §2* is to notify the local Ordinary immediately about a dispensation granted for the external forum; it is also to be noted in the Marriage Register.

**Can. 1121 §1.** After a marriage has been celebrated, the pastor of the place of the celebration or the person who takes his place, even if neither assisted at the marriage, is to note as soon as possible in the Marriage Register the names of the spouses, the person who assisted, and the witnesses, and the place and date of the celebration of the marriage according to the method prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop.

**Can. 1122 §1.** The contracted marriage is to be noted also in the baptismal registers in which the Baptism of the spouses has been recorded.

**Can. 1123.** Whenever a marriage is either convalidated in the external forum, declared null, or legitimately dissolved other than by death, the pastor of the place of the celebration of the marriage must be informed so that a notation is properly made in the marriage and baptismal registers.

**Can. 1682 §2.** As soon as the sentence becomes effective, the judicial vicar must notify the local ordinary of the place in which the marriage took place. The local ordinary must take care that the declaration of the nullity of the marriage and any possible prohibitions are noted as soon as possible in the marriage and baptismal registers. As soon as the sentence is executed, the judicial vicar must notify the local ordinary of the place in which the marriage was celebrated. The local ordinary must take care that the declaration of the nullity of the marriage and any possible prohibitions are noted as soon as possible in the marriage and baptismal registers.

## APPENDIX E: CANON REGARDING DEATH RECORDS

**Can. 1182.** When the burial has been completed, a record is to be made in the Death Register according to the norm of particular law.

