

## **ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH**



## **SACRAMENTAL RECORDS**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Sacramental records are both public and private in nature. Baptisms, confirmations and marriages are recorded to document sacred acts, and as such they are private records. Sacramental records are also private because the information they contain is often confidential, and are created with the presumption of privacy. These records are not civil records, but in some cases, sacramental records are treated as public records because they are accepted as valid evidence when the appropriate civil record does not exist. The passage of time, however, affects the sensitivity of these records, and the need for restricting their use diminishes.

## II. REGISTER AND RECORDS CREATION AND MAINTENANCE

**SR 1. Each parish is required to have and maintain baptism, confirmation and marriage registers (*Can. 535*).**

**SR 2. If a parish is responsible for missions or stations, separate registers are usually kept for each mission or station. Exceptions are to be made only for a particular reason.**

2.a. These registers are to be clearly marked and kept at the parish church office, and not at the other communities.

2.b. In cases where mission or station sacramental records are incorporated into the parish register, the mission or station is to be clearly noted, and the register is to indicate the inclusion of such records.

**SR 3. The registers are to be maintained and preserved in such a way as to assure their reliability, permanence, accuracy, and authenticity.**

3.a. The front of the register is to specify the type of register, the name of the parish, mission or institution, the city, and the range of dates in the register.

3.b. An inventory of the registers is to be created (*Can. 535, §4*).

3.c. First Communion and sick call registers may be kept, but are not required by Canon Law.

3.d. The registers must be kept in a protected place such as a safe, vault, or locking fireproof filing cabinet.

3.e. The original registers are never to be destroyed. See also SR 52, below.

3.f. Closed or damaged registers may be transferred to the Archdiocesan Archives Office.

3.g. Entries must be recorded in the register as soon as possible after the event occurs.

**SR 4. Parishes are to utilize standardized forms and procedures for sacramental preparation in order to allow efficient postings of accurate information to the registers.**

4.a. The word “confidential” is to be added to all forms. Statements such as “a copy of the birth certificate is required for baptismal registration in order to assure the accuracy of the register”, or “please present a copy of your child’s baptismal certificate to verify this information”, are to be included.

4.b. Sacramental preparation forms are to reflect the cultural diversity of the parish population and, in many cases, are to be available in languages other than English.

4.c. Sacramental preparation forms are not considered a permanent record and should be destroyed no later than one year after posting to the register.

**SR 5. The entries must be legible; it is recommended that black ink and block letters be used.**

5.a. The entries are to include full names. The last and first names are to be spelled out, and at least the middle initial is to be included.

5.b. The month is to be spelled out.

5.c. Abbreviations, “nicknames” or other informalities are not to be used.

5.d. The entries are to be recorded in the vernacular of the parish.

**SR 6. The signature of the priest or his delegate authenticates the entries in the register.**

6.a. If the minister or witness of the sacrament is the individual completing the entry, then his signature is required.

6.b. If someone other than the minister completes the entry, the name of the minister who officiated at the service must be indicated.

**SR 7. In cases of minor mistakes at the time the record is created, a single or double black line is to be drawn through the entry and a new record on a new line is to be created.**

“White Out”, erasures, or other cosmetic changes to the registers must never be made. (For further information, see section IV, “Changes to a Register”, below.)

**SR 8. Certain entries or notations to sacramental records require legal documents which serve as evidence. These documents are to be kept permanently.**

8.a. These documents are not to be kept in the register itself, nor are they to be stapled, taped or glued to pages in the register.

8.b. These documents are to be kept in separate files and placed in the parish archives.

8.c. The files are to correspond to the appropriate register, and to include the name of the individual(s) and page and register entry number on which to find the record.

Notations on the register should refer to this permanent file.**SR 9. Each register is to**

**include a complete index that is arranged alphabetically by last name, which may be computerized.**

The index may contain cross-references to other registers and other appropriate notations.

**SR 10. When a parish closes or merges, the sacramental registers of the subsumed community are closed on the date the “new” parish begins.**

10.a. The closed registers are to contain a narrative at the appropriate space in the volume outlining what has occurred and at which parish the subsequent records can be found.

10.b. The closed registers are to be placed in the Archdiocesan Archives Office rather than kept with the newly formed parish or faith community.

### III. ACCESS AND CERTIFICATION

**SR 11. Access to sacramental records created 75 years prior to January 1 of the current year is unrestricted.**

**SR 12. Access to sacramental records created within the last 75 years is granted only to the individual to whom the record pertains.**

12.a. Every individual has the right to obtain an official certificate of his or her own sacramental record.

12.b. Information that is public in nature and relates to a person’s status in the Church (*Can.* 487, §2) is to be transcribed from the register and onto a certificate.

12.c. Official certificates are issued only to the individual requesting his or her record or to the person who has a legal reason for requesting a family record (e.g., the parent of a minor child).

**SR 13. Physical access by researchers to the registers themselves is not allowed even when the record is no longer restricted.**

**SR 14. Commercially published certificates or those created electronically using desktop publishing programs must include a place for notations and a place for the parish seal.**

14.a. The certificates are to be printed on paper that honours the formality of the sacrament.

14.b. The signature on the certificate is to be original, not a stamp.

**SR 15. The certificate must duplicate the information as it appears in the register.**

15.a. If the register is in Latin or another language and the certificate is issued in English, a notation attesting to the translation is to be included on the certificate.

15.b. If the register is incomplete, the certificate should indicate that such is the case by using the words “not given” or a dash rather than by leaving the space blank.

15.c. A certificate is to be issued based on information from the register, and not, for example, from an old certificate presented by an individual.

**SR 16. The certificate is to be legible and authenticated; that is, it is to be issued in the vernacular, signed by the priest or his delegate, and stamped with the parish seal (*Can. 535, §3*).**

The certificate form may be purchased or generated by individual parishes, but it must contain the appropriate fields for all the information that is necessary for a given certificate.

**SR 17. Government-issued identification is necessary in order to release a record.**

17.a. Requests made in writing, and signed by the individual requesting the record, are allowed.

17.b. Authorized recipients of a sacramental record include the party or parties named in the record as having received the sacrament, that is: the Roman Catholic cleric(s) or his delegate involved in canonical procedures; the parents of the subject, if the subject is a minor; and government agencies who present a signed release from the person whose record is requested.

**SR 18. Routine requests for records between parishes and other dioceses, and from chancery offices (e.g., the Tribunal) for canonical purposes can be completed without permission of the individual.**

18.a. The bottom of the certificate should reflect that it is for informational or canonical purposes only, and not include a parish seal.

18.b. If the person seeking information from the register is a civil authority (law enforcement agent, court official, lawyer, etc.) requesting information for civil or legal purposes, the priest/administrator should immediately contact the Archdiocesan Office.

18.c. In general, without the express consent of the subject in writing, requests may be validly declined for sacramental and legal purposes.

18.d. It is important to note that the incorrect release of sacramental records may put the parish or diocese in legal or financial jeopardy.

**SR 19. Requests for a significant number of records created at least 75 years ago (such as in the case of genealogical research) are to be handled in writing and to comply with the procedures in place at individual parishes.**

19.a. A parish may respond to these requests by transcribing the information into letter format rather than by issuing individual certificates.

19.b. It is appropriate for parishes to charge a nominal fee for this service.

**SR 20. Photocopies of the register pages must not be made in lieu of a certificate or letter.**

The registers themselves are not open to examination by outside parties.

#### IV. CHANGES TO A REGISTER

**SR 21. The original entry is never altered, with the exception of a simple correction.**

21.a. New entries are to be made when appropriate, and the index is to include any cross-references or notations as necessary.

21.b. Emendations are to be made in the notations column of the register and to include an authorizing signature.

21.c. Supporting documentation must be kept permanently in separate files in the parish archives, and include a notation regarding the location of the record.

**SR 22. A simple error, such as a spelling mistake, is corrected drawing a single or double line through the incorrect word and by printing it correctly in the remarks column. A notation is to be made along with the date and signature of the person authorizing the change.**

**SR 23. Changes of a substantial nature are to be made only with authenticating evidence (e.g., civil records).**

23.a. A single or double black line is to be drawn through the incorrect entry.

23.b. A new entry is to be created, and the new entry number placed in the index.

23.c. Notations are to be made along with the date and signature of the person authorizing the emendation.

23.d. Copies of the evidentiary documentation are to be kept in the permanent files of the parish archives and a cross-reference placed in the notations of the entry and on the file.

**SR 24. If an individual has received a sacrament but the event was not recorded, the record can be re-created with appropriate proof.**

24.a. Appropriate proof includes:

- copies of the civil and/or canonical certificates
- completed affidavits from the individual or the witnesses (see appendixes)
- an affidavit or letter from the presiding cleric (see appendixes).

24.b. Photographs or videos may be used as valid evidence when other evidence is not available or sufficient.

24.c. In the case of the baptism of an adult, the oath of the individual or declaration of a single witness is all the evidence required (*Can. 876*).

24.d. The entry is to be created and indexed.

24.e. Notations are to be made along with the date and signature of the person authorizing the newly created entry.

Supporting documentation is to be kept in the permanent files of the parish archives and a cross-reference included in the notations of the entry and on the file.

**SR 25. If an individual chooses to leave the Catholic Church by a formal act, it must be done so in writing.**

25.a. A notation is to be made in the baptismal register, indicating that the individual has “formally withdrawn from the Catholic Church”, the date of this event, and a reference to the written document.

25.b. Supporting documentation is to be placed in the permanent files of the parish archives.

25.c. If a certificate is issued in the future, it is to include the notation of withdrawal.

## V. SACRAMENTS

### Baptism

**SR 26. The baptismal record is the primary record of a person’s status within the Church (*Can. 535, §2*). The baptismal record is to include:**

- full name as found on birth certificate
- date and place of birth as found on birth certificate
- full name of father and baptismal status (for Catholics, indicate Rite)
- full name of mother (including maiden name) and baptismal status (for Catholics, indicate Rite)
- full name of minister of the sacrament
- full names of the sponsors or witnesses and their baptismal status
- date and place of the conferred baptism (*Can. 877, §1*)
- names of proxies as they apply.



**SR 27. Notations of the reception of other sacraments are also to be included in the baptismal register. Even if these sacraments are conferred at the same parish, the notations are to be recorded in the baptismal register.**

**SR 28. Additional notations to the register include those regarding religious profession, conditional baptisms, rites supplied, annulments, laicizations, change of Rite, and dispensations from vows.**

**SR 29. Certificates are to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.**

29.a. A routine baptismal certificate is to include all information of a public nature, but may not include any confidential notations (such as references made to adoption or legitimacy).

29.b. An official baptismal certificate is to be signed, dated, and sealed.

29.c. A notation on the certificate regarding the entry number of the record in the register should be included.

29.d. Entering information into the baptismal register based on verbal statements alone is not allowed.

**SR 30. The baptised individual may have two sponsors, one of whom must be Catholic (*Can. 874, §3*).**

30.a. In some cases, it is customary for the baptised to have multiple godparents. When this occurs, the original certificate issued may list all godparents, but the register itself is to list only two sponsors or witnesses.

30.b. The parents of the baptised are to choose the sponsors who are to be listed in the register, keeping in mind that at least one sponsor must be Catholic (*Can. 874, §1*).

30.c. In cases when parents of the baptised request new godparents after the baptism has taken place, the register is not to be changed. Parents may choose anyone to assist them with the faith development of their children, but that does not alter who witnessed the baptism.

Baptism: Profession of Faith

**SR 31. A profession of faith is to be recorded in the baptismal register.**

31.a. When confirmation has been received, the name of the person making the profession is to be recorded in the confirmation register.

31.b. A certificate is issued as soon as possible after the event.

### Baptism: Unwed Parents

**SR 32. The name of the mother is to be entered in the register if there is public proof of her maternity (e.g., the birth certificate) or if she states this in writing or before two witnesses (Can. 877, §2). The name of the father is to be inserted only if there is public proof (e.g., the birth certificate) or by his own sworn declaration before the priest and two witnesses.**

32.a. If no public proof is available, the name of the father or the mother is not recorded. The phrase “father unknown” or “mother unknown” is to be used. The certificate issued from this entry will record the appropriate phrase. The word “illegitimate” is not to be used.

32.b. Supporting documentation is to be kept in the permanent files of the parish archives and to include the appropriate cross-references.

### Baptism: Adoption

**SR 33. Baptism should not take place until after the child is formally adopted and the birth certificate is issued. The entry in these cases should include the following:**

- full name of the child as designated by the adopting parent(s)
- full names of the adopting parent(s)
- date and place of birth
- names of the sponsors
- name of the minister performing the baptism.

**SR 34. Should a baptism occur prior to adoption, the notation made in the original entry is to include the statement “Adoption: Do not issue from this record. See entry X, page X”.**

34.a. The new entry is to list the legal name of the individual, the names of the adopting parents, and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament.

34.b. The new entry will not include the names of the witnesses or sponsors of the baptism.

34.c. The certificate issued from this record is to include only the names of the adopting parents, the child’s legal surname, the date and place of baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament.

34.d. The names of the sponsors and any notated remarks are not to be entered on the certificate.

34.e. Supporting documentation for the new entry would include a copy of the revised birth certificate issued by the state and the adoption decree. These documents are to be kept in the permanent files of the parish archives and are to include references to the appropriate register and entry number.

34.f. If the original baptismal record was made in a parish other than the adopting parents’ parish, an entry is to be made in the register of the adopting family’s parish

citing the location of the original record, and listing only the names of the adopting parents and date and place of birth. The certificate is to be issued from this entry.

#### Baptism: Emergencies

**SR 35. When baptism occurs in an emergency situation, either at home or in an institution such as a hospital, notification is to be sent to, and the register is to be completed at, the parish of the parents of the baptised (in cases of infant baptism) or at the parish in which the individual resides (in cases of adult baptism).**

35.a. The register is to be completed as outlined for ordinary baptisms.

35.b. In cases when rites are supplied at the proper parish in the future, the date of baptism to be listed in the register is the date the “emergency” baptism took place.

The words “rites supplied” and the date of the completion of the celebration are to be listed in the remarks column.

35.c. If parents are not registered in a particular parish, the baptism is to be recorded at the parish in which the institution is located, for example, baptisms performed at St John of God Hospital Subiaco are recorded at St Joseph’s Parish, Subiaco.

#### Baptism: Other Circumstances

**SR 36. When a same-sex couple presents a child for baptism, the record is to indicate the word “parent”, rather than “mother” or “father”.**

36.a. A state birth certificate or legal adoption record is to be used as supporting documentation for the baptismal record.

36.b. The information given in the state birth certificate or legal adoption record regarding the birth and the adopting or surrogate parents is to be recorded in the notations.

**SR 37. In cases of gender reassignment, the original entry is not changed.**

37.a. A notation is made in the remarks column.

37.b. A certificate may be reissued with the new name. This is not done as a moral judgment, but instead as recognizing a change in the civil order.

#### Reconciliation

**SR 38. The sacrament of reconciliation pertains exclusively to the internal forum, and therefore registers for these records are never created.**

## First Communion

### **SR 39. The First Communion register if kept is to include:**

- full name of the first communicant as found on his or her baptismal certificate
- date and place of the reception of First Communion.

39.a. A current copy of the baptismal certificate is required as supporting documentation.

39.b. A certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.

## Confirmation

### **SR 40. The confirmation register is to include:**

- full name of the confirmed as found on his or her baptismal certificate
- age
- confirmation name
- full names of parents
- full name of sponsor
- date and place of the event
- name of minister (*Can.* 895).

40.a. A notation regarding the date and place of baptism should be placed in the remarks column.

40.b. A copy of the baptismal certificate is always required as supporting documentation.

40.c. A confirmation certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded in the register.

40.d. In cases of joint celebrations, each parish or faith community that sends candidates is responsible for the completion of its own register, which is to include the name of the parish in which the celebration took place.

40.e. Notification of the reception of this sacrament is to be sent to the place of baptism. A copy of the confirmation certificate should be included with the notification.

40.f. The date and place of the reception of this sacrament is to be noted in the baptismal register **even if the sacrament took place in the same parish.**

## Marriage

### **SR 41. The Marriage Register**

The marriage register used in the Archdiocese of Perth is supplied by the Registrar General. It must be filled in according to the instructions given.

### **SR 42. The prenuptial file or marriage data envelope created for the marriage is to be retained in the permanent files of the parish archives.**

42.a. The outside of the file may indicate the correlating register entry number.

42.b. Supporting documentation in the prenuptial file or must include:

- current (dated less than 6 months prior to request) baptismal certificates for baptised parties
- completed prenuptial forms, civil marriage licence, civil marriage certificate (in cases of a radical sanation or a convalidation)
- death certificate (when necessary)
- documentation providing necessary dispensations, permissions, or delegations, Tribunal documents (when necessary)
- a copy of a rescript (when necessary)
- additional prenuptial forms or documentation required by the parish (e.g., engaged encounter certificate).

### **SR 43. The celebrant must promptly file any and all civil documents with the Registrar General.**

43.a. The sacramental certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the marriage has been recorded.

43.b. Notification of the marriage is to be sent to the place(s) of baptism of the Catholic party(parties) by the party responsible for marriage preparation.

43.c. The date and place of the reception of this sacrament is to be recorded in the baptismal register(s) of the Catholic parties, even if the place of baptism is the same parish or faith community as the place of marriage.

## Marriage Notations

**SR 44. There are several notations that may be used in the marriage register. The most common of these include: dispensations from impediments, permissions, decrees of dissolution or nullity, convalidations, and sanations. The recommended format for the notations is as follows:**

- dispensation from disparity of cult granted, date
- permission for a mixed marriage granted, date
- dispensation from canonical form granted, date
- dissolution granted, date; protocol number, diocese of tribunal
- decree of nullity granted, date; protocol number, diocese of tribunal
- declaration of freedom to marry granted, date; protocol number, diocese of tribunal
- convalidation
- radical sanation, date.

## Marriage: Place of Record

**SR 45. Marriages are to be recorded in the register of the parish at which the ceremony takes place.**

45.a. In cases where the ceremony occurs in the chapel of an institution, such as Trinity College Chapel, the marriage is to be recorded in the register kept at the chapel.

45.b. In cases where a wedding is celebrated with dispensation from canonical form, the marriage is recorded in the register at the parish in which marriage preparation took place and dispensation was requested, as well as at the diocese granting the dispensation (*Can.* 1121, §3). The prenuptial file is to be kept at the parish in which preparation took place.

45.c. All papers for marriages to be celebrated overseas should be sent through the Office of the Archbishop, via the Vicar General, to the diocese where the marriage is to be celebrated.

## Holy Orders

**SR 46. A certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the event is recorded, and notification of ordination is to be sent to the place of baptism.**

46.a. The date and place of the ordination, and the name of the ordinary conferring the sacrament are to be noted in the baptismal register.

46.b. The ordination register is kept and maintained by the Archdiocese at St Mary's Cathedral.

## Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

With the promulgation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults the creation and maintenance of a new register relating to catechumens was required. This is the *Book of the Elect*.

### **SR 47. The Book of the Elect lists the names of the catechumens who have gone through the Rite of Election.**

47.a. The Archdiocesan Book of the Elect is the register that is signed by the catechumens during the Rite of Election at the cathedral. This is considered the official register, although parishes may also keep their own register.

47.b. The Book of the Elect is to include:

- full name of the individual
- name of the sponsor(s)
- name of the minister of the rite
- date and place of the rite.

47.c. If for serious pastoral reasons a catechumen is unable to attend the Rite of Election at the cathedral, such as sudden illness, military transfer, or a death in the family, and permission was received to hold a separate Rite of Election at the parish, then the record of the catechumen is entered onto a page from the official Archdiocesan Book of the Elect and sent to the Liturgy Office.

### **SR 48. The names of those individuals who have been received into full communion with the Catholic Church are entered into the baptism and/or confirmation registers.**

### **SR 49. Catechumens have a right to celebrate marriage according to the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church.**

49.a. Marriages involving catechumens are noted in the marriage register in the usual way.

49.b. To ensure that proper permissions and dispensations have been granted, the register should clearly indicate which parties are catechumens.

## Death

### **SR 50. The death register if kept is to include:**

- full name of the deceased
- date of death
- name of the minister
- date and place of burial.

50.a. The register should clearly indicate whether the deceased was a catechumen. For those whose names appear in the register of catechumens a suitable cross-reference should be made.

50.b. Notations may include additional information such as next of kin, cause of death, or the name of the funeral home.

50.c. In cases when a priest presides at the burial of a non-Catholic, an entry may be made in the parish's death register, and include notations relating to the religion of the deceased and the services provided.

## Electronic Records

### **SR 51. Electronic records must not replace sacramental registers.**

**N.B.** Parishes may utilize electronic records or databases to store and manipulate demographic data, membership lists, sacramental information. Technology complements the registers, but does not replace them.

## Fees

### **SR 52. Every individual has the right to an official certificate of his or her sacramental record.**

52.a. There must be no charge for certificates issued at the time of the event.

52.b. Fees for additional certificates must not be excessive and must be waived in cases of financial hardship.

52.c. A fee may be charged for genealogical research.



## Institutions

**SR 53. Sacramental records of Catholic hospitals, or institutions such as jails which are located within the boundaries of particular parishes, are to be maintained at the parish in which the institution is located, and not at the parish of the chaplain or other minister of the sacrament.**

53.a. If a Catholic institution has already established a program for sacramental registers, the procedures of this manual are to be followed.

53.b. All necessary permissions, notations, and notifications are to be completed as outlined in this manual.

## Military Ordinariate

**SR 54. Sacramental records for members of the Armed Forces and their families are kept at the office of the Military Ordinariate in Canberra.**

54.a. Contact Chancery Office PO Box 63, Campbell ACT 2612.

## Eastern Catholic Churches

**SR 55. Special attention should be paid to situations involving members of Eastern Catholic Churches, who are subject to the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.**

55.a. Whenever Roman Catholic ministers lawfully celebrate the sacraments for Eastern Catholics, these sacraments are entered in the appropriate registers of the Roman Catholic parish as outlined in this manual.

55.b. The name of the particular Eastern Rite (e.g., Ukrainian, Melkite) is to be noted in the remarks column. A notation in the index as to the Rite may also be made.

## Personnel

**SR 56. The individual responsible for the creation, maintenance, and preservation of the sacramental registers is the parish priest (*Can. 535, §1*).**

56.a. In cases where this responsibility is delegated to others, these individuals must become familiar with these procedures.

56.b. Those responsible for sacramental registers are legally and canonically bound to ensure that the information placed in the registers is accurate, reliable, and protected, and that any certificates issued reflect the public record.

**SR 57. Parish personnel are also bound neither to disclose information of a confidential nature nor to grant access to individuals who do not have a legal or canonical right to such records.**

## Religious Profession

**SR 58. Records relating to the profession of perpetual vows are maintained by individual Congregations.**

58.a. Notification of the profession of perpetual vows is to be sent to the place of baptism.

58.b. The date and place of profession, and the name of the witness to the vows are to be noted in the baptismal register.

## Sick Calls

**SR 59. The creation and maintenance of sick call registers is recommended, but not required by Canon Law.**

Parishes may transfer closed sick call registers to the Archdiocesan Archives Office.

## Archives

**SR 60. When sacramental registers are closed, deteriorating, or are of historic value, parishes should contact the Archdiocesan Archives Office. Parishes may transfer completed or deteriorating sacramental registers to the Archdiocesan Archives Office for preservation and research purposes.**

60.a. The Archdiocesan Archives Office is available to answer questions concerning the creation, maintenance, and disposition of sacramental records.

## APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

### Publications

*The Code of Canon Law: In English Translation*, by the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in association with the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Canadian Canon Law Society. Published by Collins Liturgical Australia, Sydney, 2001.

### Binding

In most cases, rebinding sacramental registers is not recommended. If you wish to preserve these kinds of registers, it is recommended that you store them in archival boxes or transfer them to the Archdiocesan Archives Office.

If sacramental registers are rebound it is important, however, to ensure that the new binding does not interfere with the information in the entries. For further information, please contact the Archdiocesan Archives Office.

### Registers

The registers are permanent records, and must be created using acid-free or permanent paper.

Registers may be obtained from Griver House, 249 Adelaide Terrace, Perth WA 6000.

## APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**Canonical Form:** The means of celebrating marriage in the Catholic Church by which a man and a woman exchange their consent according to the prescribed ritual, before two witnesses, in the presence of the competent minister of the Catholic Church (*Can.* 1108).

**Catechumen:** A non-baptised person who has “manifested a willingness to embrace faith in Christ”, and who, therefore, prepares through suitable instruction and liturgical rites to celebrate the sacraments of initiation in the Church (*Can.* 788).

**Candidate:** See: Reception into Full Communion.

**Conditional Baptism:** Baptism celebrated “if there is a doubt whether one has been baptised or whether baptism was validly conferred” (*Can.* 869).

**Confirmation:** One of the sacraments of initiation by means of which the baptised Christian is “enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church. Through it the person is strengthened to witness to Christ” (*Can.* 879).

**Convalidation:** A legal remedy by which the original consent of a man and a woman, invalid in some way, is subsequently made valid through observance of canonical form. The two types of convalidation are (1) renewal of consent, and (2) radical sanitation (*Cann.* 1156–1165).

**Decree of Nullity:** The declaration by a tribunal of the Catholic Church which, after the completion of the prescribed process, affirms that the consent given in the marriage in question was in fact invalid.

**Delegation:** The means by which the power to govern or perform an act is granted to a qualified person by someone who has the power by virtue of his office. In the context of this document delegation refers to the act by which power to witness a marriage is given to a specific person (*Cann.* 1111–1114).

**Disparity of Cult (or Worship):** An impediment to contracting a valid marriage in the Church, which arises because one of the parties is not baptised (*Can.* 1086).

**Dissolution:** The means by which the Church through one of its tribunals dissolves a valid bond of marriage for a just cause. There are usually only three causes considered: (1) a marriage never consummated (*Can.* 1142), (2) when one of two non-baptised parties to a marriage wishes to be baptised in the Catholic Church and the other party departs (*Cann.* 1143–1147), or (3) in favour of the faith when, in the marriage of a baptised person and a non-baptised person, either becomes a Catholic or wishes to marry a Catholic.

**Express Permission:** Required of the competent authority for the licit celebration of marriage between a Catholic and a baptised Christian not in full communion with the Catholic Church (*Can.* 1124).

**First Communion / First Eucharist:** One of the sacraments of initiation by which a baptised person participates for the first time in the Eucharistic Sacrifice (*Can. 897*) or Eucharistic Banquet (*Can. 899*).

**Holy Orders / Ordination:** The sacrament by which men are “constituted sacred ministers” in the Church and “deputed to shepherd the people of God” (*Can. 1008*).

**Lack of Form / Defect of Form:** The term used to describe a marriage which, when so required, failed to follow the prescribed canonical form for its valid celebration. When a petitioner submits documentary proof and other required information, a tribunal can issue a declaration of freedom to marry.

**Marriage:** The sacrament by which a man and a woman “establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life” through consent that is freely given (*Can. 1055, 1057*).

**Mixed Marriage:** The term employed by the Catholic Church to describe the union established between a Catholic and a baptised non-Catholic (*Can. 1124*).

**Professed Religious / Vowed Religious:** A man or woman who is incorporated into a religious institute by means of public vows, which oblige the observance of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience (*Can. 654*).

**Profession of Faith:** See: Reception into Full Communion.

**Radical Sanation:** A means by which competent ecclesiastical authority renders an invalid marriage valid without the renewal of consent. Through this process the marriage consent is made valid from the time it was given, the impediment that had made the consent invalid is dispensed, and all canonical effects of a valid marriage are applied retroactively to the beginning of the union. The presumption is that the consent given from the start is still enduring (*Can. 1161*).

**Reception into Full Communion:** Usually, the means by which an already baptised person affirms through a credal formula the truths of the Catholic Church and thereby becomes a member of the Catholic Church. [use for term "profession of faith"]

**RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of an Adult):** The process by which an adult is received into the Catholic Church, usually through reception of the three sacraments: baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

**Rescript:** An administrative act issued in writing by competent executive authority by which through its very nature a privilege, dispensation, or other favour is granted in response to someone’s request (*Can. 59*). An example of this is permission for a priest to be returned to the lay state.

**Rites Supplied:** The completion of baptism – usually in the parish church – for infants already baptised when in danger of death.

APPENDIX C: MEANINGS OF LATIN TERMS

**Adnotatio:** Notation or remark

**Adoptio:** Adoption

**Confirmatio recepta:** Confirmation received

**Convalidatio matrimonii:** Convalidation of marriage

**Declaratio nullitatis concessa:** Declaration of nullity granted

**Defunctus:** Deceased

**Delegatus:** Delegated

**Diaconatus:** Deacon

**Dispensatio a tribus bannis:** Dispensation from the three banns

**Dispensatio consanguinitatis:** Dispensation from consanguinity

**Dispensation affinitatis:** Dispensation from affinity

**Extra matr. natus:** Born outside wedlock

**Filius illegitimus:** Child is illegitimate

**Impedimentum:** Impediment

**Ubrum infirmorum:** Book of the Sick

**Matrimonio contraxit cum \_\_\_\_\_:** Contracted marriage with \_\_\_\_\_

**Pater ignotus:** Father unknown

**Patrini:** Sponsors

**Patrinus:** Sponsor

**Presbyteratus:** Priesthood

**Presbyter:** Priest

**Procurator:** Proxy

**Professio solemnis:** Solemn profession (in a religious order of men or women)

**Prohibitio:** Prohibition

**Proles:** Offspring

**Sacerdos:** Priest

**Sacrum ordinem presbyteratus receptum:** Sacred order of priesthood received

**Sacrum ordinem subdiaconatus receptum:** Sacred order of subdiaconate received

**Subdiaconatus:** Subdeaconate

**Testes:** Witnesses

**Testis:** Witness

**Validatio matrimonii:** Convalidation of marriage

**Ritus suppleti:** Rites supplied

APPENDIX D: AFFIDAVIT FOR A PERSON BAPTISED AS AN ADULT

I, \_\_\_\_\_

was baptised into the Roman Catholic Church

on the \_\_\_\_\_ day

of \_\_\_\_\_

in the year \_\_\_\_\_

at the Church of \_\_\_\_\_

in \_\_\_\_\_,

with \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

as witnesses.

The minister of baptism was \_\_\_\_\_

Signature and date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness and date:

\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX E: AFFIDAVIT FOR A PARENT OR GODPARENT OF A BAPTISED CHILD OR FOR A WITNESS TO A BAPTISM

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

attest that \_\_\_\_\_

was baptised into the Roman Catholic Church

on the \_\_\_\_\_ day

of \_\_\_\_\_

in the year \_\_\_\_\_

at the Church of \_\_\_\_\_

in \_\_\_\_\_,

with \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

as witnesses.

The minister of baptism was \_\_\_\_\_

I know this because I am:

\_\_\_\_\_ a parent

\_\_\_\_\_ a godparent

\_\_\_\_\_ a person who was present at the ceremony

\_\_\_\_\_ the minister of baptism

Signature and date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness and date:

\_\_\_\_\_