



POLICY FOR ACCESS OF SACRAMENTAL RECORDS - PERSONAL

Sacramental records are both private and public in nature.

Private nature of sacramental records:

- They are intended to document an individual's status within the Church.
- They were originally created in circumstances presumed to be private and confidential.

Public nature of sacramental records:

- They will stand in civil law as valid and authentic evidence when an appropriate civil record does not exist.

It is important to understand that, although these records are public in that *they stand in civil law*, they are *not open to immediate examination and inspection by anyone for whatever reason* in the way civil records are made public. For example, civil records of birth are public records restricted from use for long periods of time. It is the same with the sacramental records of the Church. Restrictions on access may therefore be legitimately imposed without violating the essential private and public nature of the records.

Access to sacramental records is affected by the passage of time. More recent records generally require greater restrictions on access than older records. As current events become historical events, the need for withholding them from use is reduced and, in some cases, may eventually disappear. Therefore, limited access is granted to sacramental records created **90 years prior to January 1 of the current year**. This policy is based on Federal Census Guidelines and is consistent with the recommendations of the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists.

Entries made at the time events took place are *sacramental records* – not vital statistics used in civil records. The Archives of the Diocese of Burlington cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information recorded in the registers.

Personal records access:

All current sacramental registers are retained at the parish where the sacrament took place. **An individual seeking certified copies of one's own record from an active parish should contact that parish.** For contact information for the active parishes of the Diocese of Burlington, visit the [parish directory](#). Should an individual be unsure of the parish where the sacrament took place, contact the diocesan Archives.



PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

Please review and follow these steps when contacting the Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington for personal records requests.

1. Sacramental information may be requested by mail or by completing a request form.
2. **Should an individual be unsure of the church where the sacrament(s) took place**, please contact the Diocesan Archives by phone or completing the request form. Requests should include as much specific information as possible such as: **Surname, given name, maiden name (when applicable), date, best guess regarding location of ceremony, and record type (baptism, wedding, or confirmation)**. Additional information helpful in determining the location of the record(s): **parents' names and address at the time of the ceremony** (approximate location of dwelling, if specifics are unknown).
3. Certified transcriptions (certificates) are only when the requestor plans to continue with the sacraments in the Catholic Church. Certificates are issued in English and include all pertinent family information.
4. Entries made at the time events took place are *sacramental records* - not vital statistics used in civil records. The Archives of the Diocese of Burlington cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information recorded in the registers.
5. To ensure the privacy of the requestor or person on whose behalf a record is requested, **a valid government-issued copy of identification** (passport, driver's license, military ID) **is required with the request form**. If the request is made on behalf of someone who is unable to make the request for him/herself, proof of guardianship or power of attorney is required.



SACRAMENTAL RECORD REQUEST FORM – PERSONAL RECORDS

For use only when the Church of Baptism is unknown

Date request submitted: _____

Purpose of request (copy of photo ID is required):

- I would just like my personal records.
- I am continuing with the sacraments (*First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage*).
- I have been asked to be a sponsor (*Baptism, Confirmation, RCIA*).
- Other: _____

Name on record: _____

Record type: Baptism _____ Marriage _____ Other _____

Date of sacrament (if known): _____

Date of birth: _____

City or Parish where sacrament(s) took place (if known): _____

Parents' full names (if known): _____

Requestor's name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime phone: (____) ____ - ____ E-mail: _____

I, _____, have read the **Policy for Access of Sacramental Records**.
(print name)

I agree to hold harmless the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington, its subordinate Parishes, Bishops, clergy, and their successors in office, the aforesaid parish, and all other persons and institutions connected with them from any liability for releasing this information pursuant to my request.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For legal guardians requesting sacramental records on behalf of living individuals born after 1935, please state the name of the person on whose behalf this request is being made and enclose a copy of documents of legal guardianship or power of attorney.

I, _____, verify that I am the legal guardian of _____.
(print name) (print name)

Please mail this completed form and all supporting documents to:

**Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington
55 Joy Drive
South Burlington, VT 05403**