

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.

Due to limitations in staffing at the Archives, requests are reviewed and researched once per month. Please allow 6 – 8 weeks for research results. The Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington only houses original records for a small number of parishes as well as a full collection of transcribed editions of sacramental registers of baptisms, marriages, and some burial records dated before 1935.

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

1. Sacramental information may be requested by mail or by completing a request form. Due to staffing limitations in the Archives, requests are reviewed and researched once per month. Therefore, for genealogy research requests, please allow 6 – 8 weeks for notification of research results.
2. Requests should include as much specific information as possible such as: **Surname, given name, maiden name** (when applicable), **date, location of ceremony, and record type (baptism, marriage, or funeral)**. Additional information helpful in determining the location of the record(s): **parents' names, birth dates, and address at the time of the ceremony** (approximate location of dwelling, if specifics are unknown).
3. ***Certified transcriptions (certificates) are not issued for genealogical requests.*** Rather, research results will include all pertinent family information except for confidential marginal notes made at the time the record was created (legitimacy, race, or nationality may be such notations, although they *are not permitted* to be included when a record is created).
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.

Sacramental Record Request Form – Genealogical/Historical Records

Date request submitted: _____

Requestor's full name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime phone and E-mail: _____

Name of individual on record: _____

Relationship to individual: _____

Record type requested: ☐ Baptism ☐ Marriage ☐ Burial ☐ Other (specify): _____

Date (or approximate) of sacrament: _____

Date (or approximate) of birth: _____

City or Parish of sacrament(s): _____

Parents' full names (if known): _____

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: _____

Submit this form in any of the following ways:

1. Print, complete, and this form to: **Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington**
55 Joy Drive
South Burlington, VT 05403
2. Print, complete, and scan this form to: archives@vermontcatholic.org
3. Complete, save, and email this form to: archives@vermontcatholic.org