



ARCHIVES

OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

ACQUISITION POLICY

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This statement is designed to delineate the parameters of what archival records and other materials the Archives of the Archdiocese of Seattle will acquire and the conditions or terms which affect their acquisition. By providing direction for making appraisal and acquisition decisions, this policy will enable the selection of comprehensive archival holdings in a systematic manner, serving as a reference for staff when assessing potential acquisitions and for outside donors looking for a suitable repository for their records or artifacts.

2 ROLE AND MISSION

- 2.1 The Archives is responsible for identifying, preserving, and providing appropriate access to records which document the history of the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle.
- 2.2 The holdings of the Archives are preserved to maintain memory of our ministerial and corporate activities, enabling continuity in decision making and policy formation and facilitating historical research.
- 2.3 The Archives also oversees the management of current Chancery records and assists churches and schools in the development and administration of their own records programs.

3 LEGAL MANDATE

- 3.1 The Archives of the Archdiocese of Seattle is subject to and operates in accord with canons 482 and 486-488 of the *Code of Canon Law* of the Roman Catholic Church.

4 SCOPE OF ACQUISITION

- 4.1 The acquisition strategy of the Archives is to preserve records of enduring value which were produced in the course of Archdiocesan ministry and operations. More specifically, the Archives will acquire inactive records that memorialize the key pastoral and business functions of the Archbishop of Seattle and the local Church, as well as other significant aspects of their history, culture, and identity.

4.2 The Archives may refuse any transfers of materials not included in the scope of this policy. Acquisitions outside the stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances and only after due consideration by the Archbishop of Seattle, the Chancellor, and the Archdiocesan Archivist.

4.3 ***Chancery records***

The Archives is the official repository for permanent records of the Archbishop of Seattle and the Archdiocesan Chancery. The Chancery is understood to include all offices and sponsored programs that operate within the central agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle.

4.4 ***Records of Archdiocesan agencies***

4.4.1 Parishes, faith communities, and schools are to administer their own archives in accordance with Chancery policies and guidelines.

4.4.2 The Archives will not normally obtain the records of Archdiocesan agencies except in cases of closure or when appropriate custody and care cannot be assured. In such cases, agency administrators may, with the consent of the Archbishop, Chancellor, or Archdiocesan Archivist, transfer their permanent records into the holdings of the Archives. These records may not be withdrawn or physically removed from the Archives, although they can be accessed in the Archives reading room according to the rules set forth in our *User Guidelines* and *Use and Access Restrictions Policy*.

4.4.3 Administrators of parishes, faith communities, and the chapels of schools and hospital may also deposit non-current sacramental records in the Archives with the understanding that they cannot be withdrawn or physically removed. The information contained in them will be made available to pastors and their delegates through notarized certificates.

4.5 ***Records of councils, committees & boards***

The Archives is the official repository for administrative records and meeting materials of Archdiocesan councils, committees, boards, and ad hoc groups when such records are created and maintained.

4.6 ***Records of separately incorporated affiliates***

The Archives will not accept the records of separately incorporated Catholic affiliates operating in the Archdiocese of Seattle except in the case of the closure of a separately incorporated Archdiocesan school or at the directive of the Archbishop.

4.7 ***Records of the Washington State Catholic Conference***

Although the Washington State Catholic Conference is a separately incorporated institution, the Archives may serve as a repository for their permanent records because of their unique relationship with the Archdiocese of Seattle.

4.8 ***Private records***

4.8.1 The Archives will not generally accept records of clerics, employees, or members of religious communities that are not associated with the conduct of Archdiocesan pastoral or business affairs or the duties of the employee.

4.8.2 Similarly, the personal papers of members of the Catholic faithful will generally not be acquired by the Archives.

4.8.3 Exceptions to these rules will apply to the records of individuals (clergy and lay) who have played a significant role in forging a local Church identity or who represent profound scholarship, leadership, and ministry.

4.8.4 The Archives will not normally accept the fonds of tenured faculty members if the college has agreed to acquire and make these records accessible as part of an archival program.

4.9 ***Artifacts***

4.9.1 The Archives may acquire select objects of lasting historical significance to the Archdiocese of Seattle, including instruments of liturgy and worship, vestments, church ornaments and furnishings, and original works of art.

4.9.2 Artifacts offered to the Archives will be considered on the basis of their uniqueness, condition, intrinsic and monetary values, and suitability for exhibition.

4.9.2A Office of the Archbishop

The Archives will accept transfers of objects from the Office of the Archbishop that reflect or symbolize in a meaningful way the episcopacies of the bishops of Seattle. This includes episcopal regalia and objects that memorialize significant aspects or events of bishops' ministries, as well as Archdiocesan history, culture, and identity. In general, the Archives cannot accept gifts, souvenirs, or other personal belongings of the bishops, which are too numerous to preserve and are usually of limited historical value.

4.9.2B Clerics & Religious

Personal effects of priests, deacons, and men and women religious are not accepted into the holdings of the Archives except when they clearly represent significant aspects or events of Archdiocesan history, culture, or identity.

4.9.2C Archdiocesan Agencies

The Archives may acquire liturgical objects, altar stones, and other artifacts when a parish or faith community closes or refurbishes its plant. The Archives may also accept other objects with an obvious connection to the history, culture, or identity of our parishes and faith communities.

4.9.2D Private sources

Artifacts are not generally acquired from private sources except when they are directly related to diocesan history, culture, or identity and possess significant financial or artifactual value.

4.10 **Published materials**

Books and published materials are not accepted by the Archives unless they are produced by the Archdiocese of Seattle, document the history of the Catholic Church in the Northwest, or there exist special or compelling reasons for them to accompany acquired archival records.

5 METHODS OF ACQUISITION

5.1 Records and artifacts will be acquired through transfers, donations, and bequests, which will be confirmed in writing and signed by appropriate individuals. All acquisitions will be made by prior agreement, and the Archives may refuse ad hoc transfers or gifts.

5.2 **Records Transfers**

All transfers of records to the Archives will adhere to the requirements set forth in the *Records Transfer Procedures* checklist. Transfers of Archdiocesan records from the Chancery, parishes, faith communities, and schools will be accompanied by a *Records Transmittal Form*. These forms are available from the Archdiocesan Archivist.

5.3 **Gifts and Bequests**

Acquisitions of records from approved outside donors will be formalized through a *Deed of Gift* form, signed by the donor or executor of estate and the Archdiocesan Archivist.

5.4 **Tax receipts**

Tax receipt letters for gifts and bequests will be issued for donations that are accompanied by current monetary appraisals by qualified professionals. The Archives will not conduct or fund monetary appraisals in any cases.

6 DEACCESSIONING

6.1 The purpose of the Archives is to preserve records which document the key functions of the Archbishop of Seattle, the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle, and its agencies. In some cases, records already held by the Archives may not adhere to this policy and may need to be removed from our custody (deaccessioned). Only materials that clearly fall outside the scope of the Acquisition Policy will be considered for deaccessioning.

- 6.2 Materials which do not meet benchmark requirements for permanent preservation as set forth in this policy will be transferred to more suitable repositories, destroyed in keeping with normal archival practice, or, in the case of artifacts, sold. Any sale of such items will be used by the Archives to fund operations unless otherwise designated by the Archbishop.

7 ACQUISITION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The Archbishop of Seattle is the sole and final arbiter of the acquisitions policies, priorities, strategies and practices developed by the Chancellor and the Archdiocesan Archivist.
- 7.2 The Chancellor provides strategic oversight and supervises the Archivist in the administration of the archives program. In terms of acquisition policy, the Chancellor approves strategies developed by the Archivist, reviews acquisition plans or proposals for significant deviations from existing policies, reviews all deaccessioning proposals brought forward by the Archivist, and procures any required approval from the Archbishop.
- 7.3 The Archdiocesan Archivist is responsible for the carrying out the following acquisitions activities:
- Developing acquisition strategies and carrying out the acquisition policy
 - Managing transfers of records of enduring value to the Archives from the Archbishop, Chancery departments, and appropriate parishes, faith communities, and schools
 - Negotiating with potential outside donors for the acquisition of materials that have a bearing on the history of the Archdiocese of Seattle and bringing these acquisition proposals to the Chancellor
 - Providing advice on the preservation implications in the development of acquisition strategies and plans, and on the acquisition of individual records
 - Serving as the primary resource for any other issues relating to archival acquisitions

Approved by Archbishop Alexander Brunett, August 12, 2009.

Appendix A

DEFINITION OF TERMS

archdiocesan record(s)

Any record(s), regardless of format, made or received through the practical activities of the Archdiocese of Seattle and its agencies, clergy, and employees. This includes records generated through the administration of those parishes, missions, chapels, and Archdiocesan schools run by members of religious institutions.

archival record(s)

Record(s) created or received by an organization or physical or juridical person in the conduct of their affairs that is preserved because of the enduring value of the information it contains or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of its creator.

artifactual value

The usefulness or significance of an object based on its physical or aesthetic characteristics, rather than its intellectual content. An item may have artifactual value because it is a particularly good example of the class to which it belongs.

deaccessioning

The process by which an archives formally removes material from its own custody.

electronic record(s)

Data or information that has been created, captured, or fixed for storage and manipulation in an automated system and that requires the use of the system to render it intelligible by a person. Electronic records include those created in electronic format (born digital) and scans of records in other formats (born analog). Electronic records can include e-mails, word processing documents, databases, spreadsheets, websites, and digital photographs, video, and sound recording.

enduring value

Measure of the ongoing evidential, informational, legal, fiscal, or historical importance of a body of inactive records that justifies their permanent retention.

episcopal regalia

The ecclesial paraphernalia associated with Catholic bishops: mitre, crozier, pectoral cross, ring, and liturgical vestments.

evidential value

The capacity of archival records to provide evidence of their creator's origins, functions, and activities.

fiscal value

The capacity of archival records to provide financial information that is necessary to conduct current or future business or that serves as evidence of financial transactions.

inactive records

Records which are no longer needed for ongoing business; records that are no longer regularly maintained and used by their creator.

informational value (also *reference value* and *research value*)

The capacity of archival records to provide information about the persons, places, and subjects of which they speak.

legal value

The capacity of archival documents to serve the current and future needs of legal business and/or serve as evidence of it.

operational record(s)

Record(s) relating to the substantive functions of an institution.

permanent record(s)

See *archival record(s)*

record(s)

Any document(s), regardless of format (including text on paper or in electronic formats, photographs, motion pictures, videos, sound recordings) made or received in the course of a practical activity.