



SACRAMENTAL RECORDS POLICY

Version 2.0 (October 25, 2023)

1. Archival Holdings

Sacramental registers are the official record of Catholic baptism, first communion, confirmation, marriage, and death. The Archives holds registers from selected churches in Western Washington, although most are maintained at the originating parishes. An inventory of the Archives' collection is available [here](#).

2. Privacy and Security

The Archives recognizes the sensitive nature of sacramental records and is committed to ensuring their confidentiality and preservation. Measures are in place to safeguard records from unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, and destruction. Staff are trained in privacy protocols, and access to records is restricted to authorized personnel involved in the certification process.

3. Access Restrictions

Direct access to records is not allowed due to privacy and preservation concerns, and photocopies and digital scans of entries are not provided. Individuals may request official certificates from the Archives in accordance with the following policies.

3.1. Records within the Last 90 Years

Certificates for records created within the last 90 years are issued exclusively to the individual, parent/legal guardian of a minor child, power of attorney, and approved Church personnel (clerics, Chancellor's Office, Tribunal, and parish administrators).

3.2. Records 90 Years Ago or More

Requests for records created 90 years ago or more are open to anyone, provided the subject of the record is deceased. Proof of death, such as a civil death certificate, obituary, funeral home paperwork, etc., may be required.

3.3. Indigenous Records

The Archives holds sacramental records from the missionary era (1840s-1900s) of Native communities within the Archdiocese of Seattle. To respect tribal control over access to their information, certificates are provided to researchers who can substantiate their family or tribal ties with the individual of record or who have written authorization from the tribe's archives or cultural resources office. Please [contact our staff](#) for more information.

4. Accuracy and Corrections

Certificates issued by the Archives are exact copies of the data contained in sacramental registers, and staff cannot guarantee the accuracy of the original entries. If errors are found in certificates, individuals are encouraged to notify the Archives.

In certain cases, original entries can be updated based on evidence provided by the requester. This includes copies of civil records, witness affidavits, or other relevant documentation. When individuals provide extensive or complex documentation, Archives staff and/or canonists will review and weigh the evidence within available time constraints.

5. Request Process

Requests for records are submitted through the [Sacramental Record Request Form](#). Individuals without internet access may request a paper form by contacting the Archives at (206) 382-4352. As a privacy precaution, staff may, at their discretion, ask for a requester's government-issued ID.

Spanish speakers may request support from a translator at make.gallitelli@seattlearch.org or (206) 382-4846.

6. Language of Certificates

While early sacraments in the Archdiocese of Seattle were often recorded in Latin and other languages, certificates are transcribed in English.

7. Fulfillment Time

Requests for copies of records are generally handled within one week. Extensive genealogical requests are fulfilled based on staff availability.

8. Apostilles

Archives staff function as ecclesiastical notaries, authenticating documents used within the Catholic Church. Although some civil authorities accept Church certifications as valid evidence, the Archives is not authorized to issue apostilles. It is the responsibility of individuals using sacramental records for citizenship purposes to verify and comply with the specific notarial requirements of that country.