

## PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFER OF PARISH ARCHIVE MATERIAL TO THE ARCHDIOCESAN ARCHIVES

The Regional Auxiliary Bishop will examine sacramental records of the parish before its canonical suppression (closure) or merger. At that time, in consultation with the pastor (administrator) or delegated parish staff member, the Chancellor's representative from the Archdiocesan Archives will make arrangements with the parish, regarding collection of pertinent archival records for the Archdiocesan Archives. The following materials, where possible, should be placed in labeled boxes:

1. All **sacramental registers** (baptism, marriage, death, confirmation, first communion) and any indices or lists that pertain to them.
2. All **sacramental files** pertaining to the celebration of the sacraments, especially marriages; e.g., all pre-nuptial files ("A" forms, etc.).
3. **Sunday bulletins**, chronologically ordered and bound, where possible.
4. All parish administrative or legal office files that have been kept, as well as any **office files** of historical significance. For example, all correspondence with diocesan offices; files on the construction of parish buildings; annual reports; membership lists; any materials having to do with a school (past or present); correspondence with religious communities, etc.
5. Records of **parish committees** (e.g., parish committees, parish council, and commissions) and records of **parish organizations** (e.g., rosary-altar society, sodalities, etc., past and present). Of greatest importance are constitutions, minutes of meetings, reports, membership lists, financial reports, souvenirs of event, etc.
6. Any books, photographs, photo albums, audio or video recordings -- anything that bears witness to the ongoing life of the parish over the years.

## OVERALL GUIDELINES

### Identify the materials

- In every instance above (1-6), it is very important to remember that records will be of historical interest and value only if they are identifiable and someone is able to explain them. The most obvious case is a photograph. If no one knows who is in the picture, what the picture depicts, or when it was taken, it can become worthless. The same principles also apply to files. Any identification information should be done in pencil. If possible, please give the name, address, and phone number of the person(s) who best knows the contents in case questions arise in the future.

### Respect the order (or disorder) that exists

- Collect the records as they are, without trying to separate what is important from what appears to be unimportant. Eventually the Archdiocesan Archives will discard some things, but the operating principle is that records are best understood in their original order or context.

### **Try to assemble a complete picture**

- Ask yourself: Of all the records that exist at this moment, whether in the rectory, among parish organizations, or with private individuals, what can be saved to present as well-rounded and complete a picture as possible of the parish's life from beginning to end?

Although the closing of a parish can be painful for its members, especially for the more active parishioners, these members can help the Archdiocesan Archives fulfill its function of permanently preserving the memory of their parish for history. Any artifacts in their possession (e.g., photographs, souvenirs of parish events, etc.) can be of great value. Parishioners of long standing can also be helpful in identifying photographs, etc. For this reason, parishioners should be invited to assist in preparing their parish archives for transfer to the Archdiocese.

When in doubt, ask the Archdiocesan Archivist for advice (313-237-5846) if there are any questions about preparing the records. When the records have been collected in one place, please let the Archivist know so that arrangements can be made for the transfer of the records.