



ARCHIVES

OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

55 Joy Drive • South Burlington, VT • 05403

Policy for Access of Sacramental Records

Genealogy Records Access:

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.

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 1930.

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.