Associated Archives at St. Mary's Seminary & University

Archdiocese of Baltimore, St. Mary's Seminary & University,
and the U.S. Province of the Society of St. Sulpice
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SACRAMENTAL RECORDS RELEASE POLICY

The following policy has been adopted by the Associated Archives at St. Mary's Seminary & University with regard to the release of sacramental records. The policy is designed to protect the privacy of those individuals named in the records.

AUTHORIZED RECIPIENTS OF SACRAMENTAL RECORDS:

1. According to the policy approved by the Archbishop of Baltimore, access to records of Baptism shall coincide with access to Federal Census records (current year minus 70 years). Records less than 70 years old are sealed to the public. No restrictions apply to records of First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Death, Interment, or Burial.

2. Individual(s) who have legal access to Baptismal records less than 70 years old include:

    a. The person named in the record (if over age 18 or an emancipated minor).
    b. A parent or legal guardian of the person named in the record (if the person is under age 18 or incapacitated).
    c. Other parties as designated in writing by person (A) or (B) above.
    d. If person (A) is deceased, their children or heirs may have access to the records after supplying the Archives with an official copy of the death certificate and an official birth, baptismal, or marriage certificate proving that they are the next of kin. If originals are not available, notarized copies are acceptable. All documentation will be returned.

3. Other parties as designated or permitted by court order, subpoena, summons, or State or Federal statute.

PROCEDURES TO REQUEST SACRAMENTAL RECORDS:

Please follow the guidelines listed below when requesting information from sacramental registers. Keep in mind that the Archives does not maintain a central registry or index of names of those persons that have sacraments in the Archdiocese. Records must be searched by parish, year, and sacrament.

1. Ask for no more than five (5) specific persons to be researched at a time.
2. Provide the complete name(s) of the person(s) to be researched whenever possible.
3. Designate specific sacramental record(s) to be searched (ex., baptism or marriage).
4. Provide the approximate date(s) for the person(s) to be researched.
5. Designate the ethnic group(s) (ex., German, Irish, Polish) when possible.
6. Provide the name of the town, county, or region of the Archdiocese where the person resided.
7. Provide the name of the parish when possible.
8. Please do not submit a second request until you have received a reply to your first request. Requests usually take four to six week to answer.

FEES:

1. Research fees are charged on an hourly rate. The charge is $30.00 for the first hour and $30.00 for each additional hour. A check or money order for $30.00 made payable to "Associated Archives at St. Mary's

Seminary & University" must accompany the research request. The hourly fee will cover research on any number of ancestors an individual wishes to research. **NOTE: Do not send more than $30.00 with the initial request.** If the request requires more than one hour to complete, the researcher will be billed for any additional fees. If you wish to place a time limit on the amount of time spent researching your request, please indicate such information in the initial request. The normal response to genealogical inquiries is either an abstract from the register or a photocopy of the record. Genealogical copies of sacramental certificates are available for $5.00 per certificate. If the Archives does not possess the parish's registers on microfilm, the fee will be returned and contact information for the parish in question will be provided. [See attached.]

2. If the researcher has the name of the individual and the place and date of the sacrament at the time of the request, there is a charge of $10.00 per individual to request a copy of the record. There is an additional charge if a genealogical copy of a sacramental certificate is requested of $5 per individual.
3. There is no charge for duplicate copies of sacramental certificates for the individual named on the certificate. This service is provided only to those individuals whose parish has been closed and its sacramental registers transferred to the Archives (St. Andrew, St. Bernard, St. James the Less, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Monica). All other requests for duplicate copies of sacramental certificates must be sent to the parish directly. Contact information for all of the Archdiocese's parishes, including those that have been closed, can be found on its website: www.archbalt.org.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

1. The Associated Archives **only** has the records for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore, St. Mary's Seminary and University, and the U.S. Province of the Society of St. Sulpice. We **do not** have government records (such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, death certificates, etc.), records from other Catholic dioceses or religious orders, or records from other religious denominations. Also note that we only have records for the parishes within the current boundaries of the Archdiocese of Baltimore (Baltimore City, Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Howard, and Washington Counties) from the establishment of the Archdiocese in 1789. All records for parishes that now comprise the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, and Diocese of Wilmington, DE, must be accessed through those respective dioceses. Individuals interested in the sacramental records that have survived from the colonial and Revolutionary periods will need to contact the Special Collections Division of Lauinger Library at Georgetown University, where the Archives of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus are housed. The Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, was the religious order in charge of the mission to Catholics in the British colonies of North America.
2. The Catholic Church does not issue death certificates. This right is reserved to the state alone. Parishes maintain death or burial registers, which record the date of death, date and place of burial, and cause of death. A copy of the information recorded in a death or burial register is not recognized as an official record of death. To request a copy of a death certificate, you will need to contact the Maryland State Division of Vital Records (post-1969 at 410-764-3038 or 800-832-3277) or the Maryland State Archives (pre-1969 at 410.260.6429) to request a death certificate.
3. The Archives does not have any records relating to annulments. All records of annulments are held by the Marriage Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, 320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD, 21201, 410/576-6920. **Records of the Marriage Tribunal are not available for genealogical investigation under any circumstances.**
4. The Archives does not have any student records for the elementary and secondary schools operated in the Archdiocese. Individuals interested in school records should contact directly either the school itself if it is still open or, if it has been closed, the Catholic Schools Office (320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; 410/547-5443). Contact information for schools can be found on the Archdiocese's website: www.archbalt.org.
5. Student records for St. Charles College and St. Mary's Seminary and University are closed
6. Individuals interested in orphanage or adoption records, including the records for St. Mary's Industrial School, will need to contact Associated Catholic Charities directly for their policy (Records, Center for Family Services, Associated Catholic Charities, 2601 N. Howard St, Ste 200, Baltimore MD 21218).
7. Both the Maryland State Archives and the Maryland Historical Society have microfilm copies of the sacramental registers for many of the Archdiocese's parishes. For information on what records the State Archives and Historical Society have, how to access the holdings or request reference services, please contact: Maryland State Archives, 350 Rowe Boulevard, Annapolis, MD 21401; MD toll free (800) 235-4045 or 410-260-6400; fax: 410-974-3895; email: archives@mdarchives.state.md.us; web site: www.mdarchives.state.md.us or Maryland Historical Society, 201 W. Monument Street, Baltimore MD 21021-4674, (410) 685-3750, www.mdhs.com.