

Sacramental Record Keeping and Parish Records Management



Deacon Rick Wells, JCL, Chancellor
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Archives & Records

Overview: Sacramental Records

- o Sacramental Records are the footprints of our sacramental journey with Christ. They trace the powerful presence of God's grace in our lives as individuals and communities.
- o The Christian faithful have the right to expect accurate, well-preserved sacramental records. Thus, all those who have responsibility for creating and maintaining sacramental records, especially the pastors of parishes, should exercise great care in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Most Reverend Daniel E. Pilarczyk
Archbishop Emeritus, Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Canon Law Regarding Sacramental Registers

- o Each Parish is to have Baptism, Marriage and Death Registers as well as other register books and others required by the Conference of Bishops or by the Diocesan Bishop
- o The Pastor [or his delegate] is to ensure that these registers are accurate.

Code of Canon Law, can. 535, §1

Required Sacramental Registers

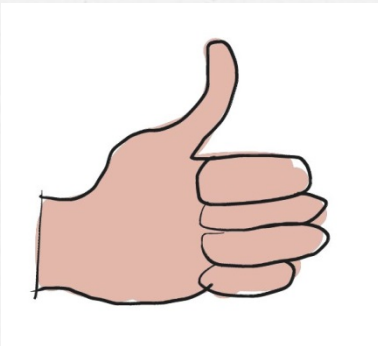
Per Canon Law (c. 535)

- o Baptisms
- o Confirmations (per c. 895)
- o Marriages (Should also include Convalidations and Radical Sanations)
- o Deaths/Funerals
- o Book of Catechumens (per c. 788)



Recommended Sacramental Registers

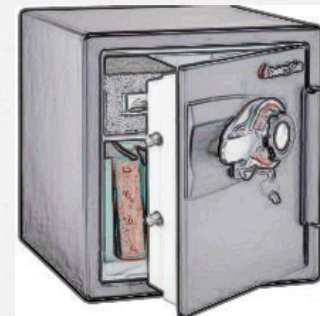
- o First Communions
- o Sick Calls
- o Book of Elect
- o Receptions Into Full Communion



Highly
Recommended

Storage of Record Books

- o Each parish is to have a safe storage area for its sacramental registers. Special items such as letters from bishops and vital parish documents which need to be preserved should be kept in the same place (cf. can. 535, §4).
- o Older parish books should also be carefully preserved in the same place (cf. can. 535, §5).



Electronic Reproductions of Records

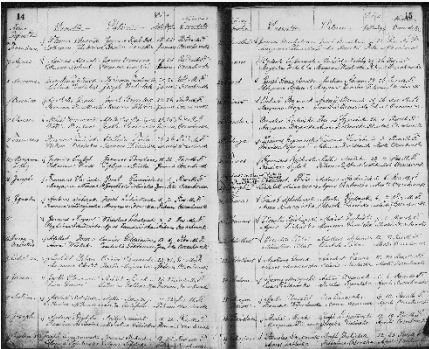
- o Sacramental records may be duplicated on computers.
- o However, a complete hand-printed record must be maintained in the registers, and the registers themselves are never to be destroyed or discarded.
- o The registers are considered the only authentic copy of sacramental records.

Entries

- o **Type of data:** All and only that information required by canon law and otherwise necessary for the complete and accurate maintenance of sacramental records is to be entered in the sacramental registers.
- o **Timeliness:** Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event to be recorded.

Entries

- Entries should be made in order of date. If the chronological order cannot be kept in some particular case, a small note should be made in the proper chronological location in the register cross-referencing the actual entry (e.g., “See JONES, page 37”).



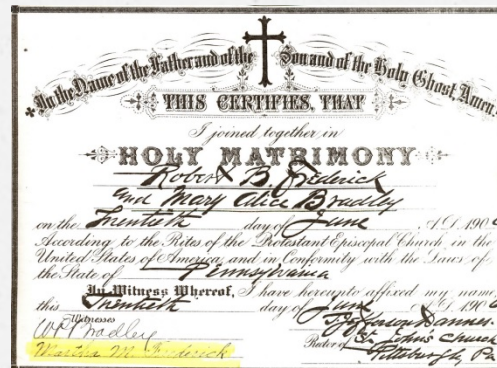
Alphabetical Index

- o Indexed by last name
- o Reference to page number and line number

E	
Egan, Sarah	20-2
F	
G	
H	
I	
J	
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M	
N	
O	

Certificates

- o A certificate is an official document certifying that an individual has received a sacrament. It is an exact duplicate of data already entered in a sacramental register.
- o Only the parish or other location holding the original sacramental record may issue a certificate.



Certificates

- o If a certificate is requested at a later time, only the actual register, rather than a photocopy or electronic record, should be used in preparing certificates.
- o A computer-generated certificate may be used for a certificate provided that the computer copy corresponds identically to the original.

Certificates

- o Certificates must be typed, printed by computer or hand-printed in ink.
- o They are to be signed by the pastor or pastoral administrator and impressed with the parish seal. Photocopies of certificates are not considered authentic.

925

Certificate of Baptism

I hereby certify, that Jose Octaviano Abita
Son } of Severino Abita and M^{re} de la Encarnacion Baldez
Daughter }
was born in San Lorenzo de los Rios on the 21 day of March 1963
and was Baptized according to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church
on the 29 day of March 1963 by Rev. Jose L. Gaffys
the Sponsors being Alonso Ortega and M^{re} Ramona Sanchez
as appears in the Register of the Church.

Dated Apr. 19 1962
James Clarke Church Goods House, Denver, Colo.

Rev. Fr. L. J. Schneider Pastor
[Seal]

ParishSOFT Entries

- o Check the sacramental register before printing certificates from ParishSOFT.
- o Add notations from registers to ParishSOFT.
- o A quality control check should be made to ensure that data entries made by volunteers are correct.

Changes to Entries

- o Once entered into a sacramental register, data is considered official and permanent. It may not be modified except under special condition.
- o Original data should never be scratched out, erased, “whited out” or otherwise destroyed or obliterated.

Changes to Entries

- o Minor changes (e.g. correcting a misspelling) may be made directly to the original entry.
- o Such changes are to be made by drawing a straight, simple line through the word, number, or letter to be changed and printing the change immediately above or below it.

Example of a Minor Change

3	34	THOMPSON	COLUMBUS, OHIO		MICHAEL A. THOMPSON
		LINDA SUSAN SUZANNE	AUG. 8, 1943	APR. 13, 1950	GLORIA N. QUINN

Major Changes to Entries

- o **Major changes** (e.g., to record an adoption after baptism) may require that a new entry be created. In these cases:
 - o The original entry is to be preserved without change,
 - o A new entry with all the data from the original reproduced (except the relevant change or changes) is to be made in the same register as close to the original entry as possible;
 - o Both entries, as well as listings in the index are to be cross referenced.
 - o “Do Not Issue Certificate from This Record” is to be printed carefully across the face of the original entry.

Example of a Major Change

Major Change,
Termination of the
Original Entry

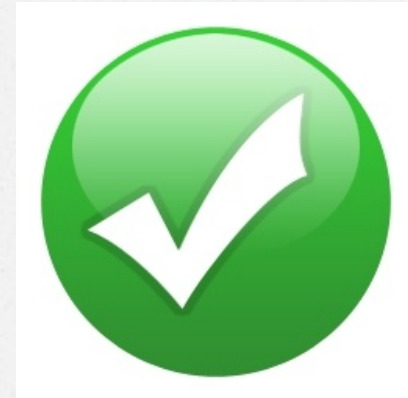
43				
Baptism				
No.	NAME OF PERSON BAPTIZED	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF BAPTISM	FATHER'S NAME MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME
32	BROCKMAN	DAYTON		ROBERT J. BROCKMAN
	RICHARD MARK	MAR. 4, 1950	MAR. 11, 1950	ANGELA M. TORRINI
33	MARTIN	DAYTON		
	TERESA ANN	FEB. 21, 1950	MAR. 18, 1950	MARGARET S. MARTIN
34	THOMPSON	COLUMBUS, OHIO		MICHAEL A. THOMPSON
	LINDA SUSAN SUZANNE	AUG. 8, 1943	APR. 13, 1950	GLORIA N. QUINN
35	FASSOUD	DAYTON		EMIL FASSOUD (MARONITE)
	DANIEL LOUIS	MAR. 22, 1950	APR. 20, 1950	MARCIA L. DUPAGE

43				
Register				
SPONSORS	PRIEST	DATE OF CONFIRMATION	Record of Marriage, Religious Profession or Sub-Diaconate. Remarks	
PHILIP BROCKMAN AGNES LIPPERT	John J. Farrell	OCT. 23, 1961 ST. HELEN DAYTON	MARRIED JANICE KENNEDY, JUNE 14, 1973, ST. GABRIEL, GLENDALE	
RALPH MARTIN RUTH MARTIN	DO NOT John J. Farrell FROM THIS	ISSUE CERTIFICATE RECORD	SEE LONERGAN PG. 45	
THOMAS QUINN ANDREA QUINN	John J. Farrell	MAY 3, 1955 HOLY SPIRIT	RITE OF BRINGING BAPTIZED CHILD; BAPTIZED AT HOME BY GRANDMOTHER, OCT., 1943; PER GRANDMOTHER'S TESTIMONY (CONT'D. BELOW)	
MICHAEL GEORGE FRANCES DUPAGE (CHRISTIAN WITNESS)	JOHN J. FARRELL	NOV. 15, 1960 ST. PATRICK SYRACUSE NY	ASCRIBED AS MARONITE	

Testimony of a
Witness Verifying
the Reception of a
Sacrament

Changes to Entries

- o Permitted changes include:
 - o correct name
 - o correct date
 - o correct spelling
 - o new legal name
 - o adoptive parent(s)



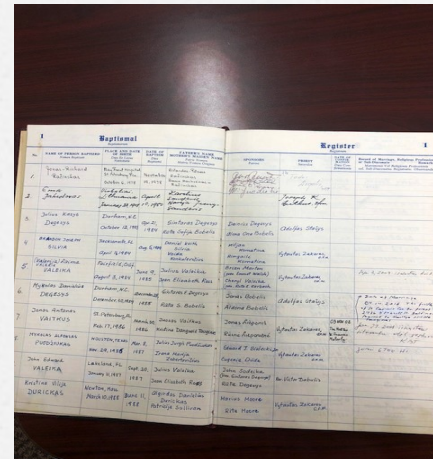
Changes to Entries

- o Non-permitted changes include:
 - o Non-adopting step-parents or foster parents
 - o Customary name or nickname
 - o Name of Sponsor/Godparent



Changes to Entries

- o The baptism record is the primary sacramental record for Catholics. It serves as a log for all the significant, public developments in one's relationship with the Church. As a result, most changes will be made in the **Baptism Register**.



Notations

- o The following items are to be listed under “Notations” in the Baptism Register:
 - o Confirmation
 - o Marriage/ annulments/ convalidations/ sanations
 - o Adoption
 - o Reception of Holy Orders
 - o Perpetual Profession in a Religious Institute
 - o Change of Rite

- o Except for adoption information, these items are to be included in the “notations” section on copies of one’s baptism certificate (cf. can. 535, §2).

Baptism Register

- o The Pastor of the place where the Baptism is celebrated [or his delegate] must carefully and without delay record in the Baptismal book the names of those baptized making mention of the Minister, Parents, Sponsors, Witnesses, if any, and the place and date of the conferred Baptism, together with an indication of the date and place of birth (Can. 877, §1).



Baptism Register

- o Ordinarily data used originates on a “Sacristy Record”
- o The Sacristy Record is filled out either by the parish office at the time the baptism is scheduled, by a member of the baptism preparation team or by the minister of the baptism at the time of the baptism.
- o It should be reviewed by the parent or guardian for accuracy before being entered.
- o It should be signed by the minister performing the baptism.
- o It should be entered into the register as soon as possible after the baptism is performed.

Baptism Register

- o **Number of Godparents:** No more than two names may be entered in the ‘Godparents’ or ‘Sponsors’ column, even if other witnesses are present.
- o **Proxy for Godparent(s):** When a godparent or sponsor appoints a proxy to participate in the rite of baptism both names should be entered in the register with ‘Proxy’ written after that person’s name.

Confirmation Register



- o The names of the confirmed, the minister, the parents, sponsors, place and date of the conferral of Confirmation are to be noted in the Confirmation Register (cf. can. 895).
- o The pastor of the confirmand must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of Confirmation so that notation be made in the baptismal register (Can. 535 §2). Notification should also include the recipient's date of baptism, along with the place and date of confirmation.



Marriage Register

- o After a marriage has been celebrated, the pastor of the place of celebration should as soon as possible note the following in the marriage register:
 - o Names of the spouses
 - o Priest/deacon/layperson who assisted (“officiated”)
 - o Names of the two witnesses
 - o The place and date of the marriage celebration
(Can. 1121, § 1).

Marriage Register

- o The marriage is also to be noted in the baptism register in which the baptism of the spouses has been inscribed (Can. 1121, §1)
- o Whenever a marriage is convalidated, is declared null or is legitimately dissolved other than by death the pastor of the place where it was celebrated must be informed so that a notation can be duly made in the marriage register (Can. 1123), and so he can notify the place of baptism of the event.

Marriage Register

- o **Radical Sanations:** When a marriage is sanated, the data concerning the original ceremony are to be placed in the usual columns. The date, diocese and protocol number of the sanation are entered in the “Notations” column.
- o This is sometimes referred to by its Latin title *sanatio in radice* (“healed at the root”).

Marriage Register

- o **Notation of Dispensations or Annulments:**
When a dispensation is granted prior to marriage or an annulment is granted after marriage the date, the diocese and protocol number along with the type of dispensation (e.g. “Dispensation from Disparity of Worship”) or the word “Annulment” are to be noted in the “Notations” Column. Special recording directions in the dispensation or annulment document are to be followed.

Death Register

- o After a burial has been completed, an entry is to be made in the death register in accord with the norm of particular law (Can. 1182).
- o Information on the deceased is usually provided by the funeral director.
- o No notification needs to be sent to the church of baptism.

Additional Books as Required by Canon Law

o Book of Catechumens:

- o This is a book of unbaptized persons (per can. 788, §1) formally accepted into the catechumenate, through the Rite of Acceptance.
- o Why is this important? Canon Law recognizes catechumens as having “various prerogatives which are proper to Christians” (Can. 206).
- o Also, should a catechumen move to another parish for some reason, there would be a record of his/her acceptance into the catechumenate, should he/she desire to continue toward full initiation into the Catholic Faith.

Additional Books as Required by Canon Law

- o **Book of Catechumens (cont.):**
 - o The following should be included in this register:
 - o Name of Catechumen
 - o Name of Sponsor
 - o Minister of the Rite of Acceptance
 - o Date and Place of Celebration of Rite of Acceptance



Helpful Idea

- o It is best to have at least 2 persons who are properly trained to enter information in the sacramental records.
- o While it is best that one person is responsible for records entry (for the sake of consistency), a second and even a third person provide the backup which might be necessary if the main person is unable to perform this function for some reason.

Confidentiality

- o **Genealogical Research:** Sacramental registers should never be made available to genealogical researchers. The pastor or other regularly designated person may research information as requested and time permits and make the information available on a separate paper. Care must be taken not to disclose confidential information.

CLASSIFIED



Archiving and Records Retention



Lisa Mobley

Associate Director of Archives and Records

*Our Lady of the Archives – by
Msgr. Francis J. Weber (portions
reprinted from the Tidings)*

*Because of the Church's ancient
role as "preserver of culture," it
was thought the Our Lady's
patronage for this vital function
should be dramatized by
depicting her as "Our Lady of the
Archives."*

*This 6 x 11 foot ceramic tile
portrayal was designed by Isabel
Piczek and is affixed to the
building housing the Archival
Center for the Archdiocese of Los
Angeles.*



Confidentiality and Access to Registers

- o The Sacramental registers belong to the individual parish. They are maintained for the good of the Christian faithful and are both private and public:
 - o **Private** because they were created in circumstances presumed to be private and confidential.
 - o **Public** in that they will stand in civil law as valid and authentic evidence.
- o However, they are not open to examination and inspection by anyone for whatever reason.

Proper Storage of Books

- o Store books HORIZONTALLY in a climate-controlled environment. If in a filing cabinet, upright on their spine. If too large, no more than 3 stacked upon one another.
- o Ideal temperature: 68° F, with a relative humidity of 45%.
- o Avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight or artificial light.



Proper Storage of Books

- o **Highly Recommended:** Fireproof, water-resistant safes are best for storage of books and other highly important documents.



Proper Storage of Books

- o Please avoid the following:
 - o Storing books and documents near overhead water pipes or steam pipes, or near other sources of water.
 - o Storing books and documents on the floor.



Security of Books and Documents

- Records should be **secured and locked** at all times.



Restoration of Parish Record Books

- o Please consult the Diocesan Archivist before any rebinding or restoration work is done on your parish registers.



Copies of Sacramental Registers

- o As a way of protecting and “backing up” your sacramental books, you may use several means for doing so:
 - o Professionally digitized
 - o Transcripts
 - o Photo-reproduction
 - o Microfilm
 - o Computer (including databases, spreadsheets and scanned files)



Preservation of registers

- o Bindings and paper should be of a “permanent quality,” durable and acid-free.
- o Entries should be neatly printed (no cursive). Ink should also be of a permanent quality.
- o Have appropriate building maintenance performed.
- o Find sources of leaks and move your registers away from them.





Diocesan Sacramental Records Handbook

Revised 2019

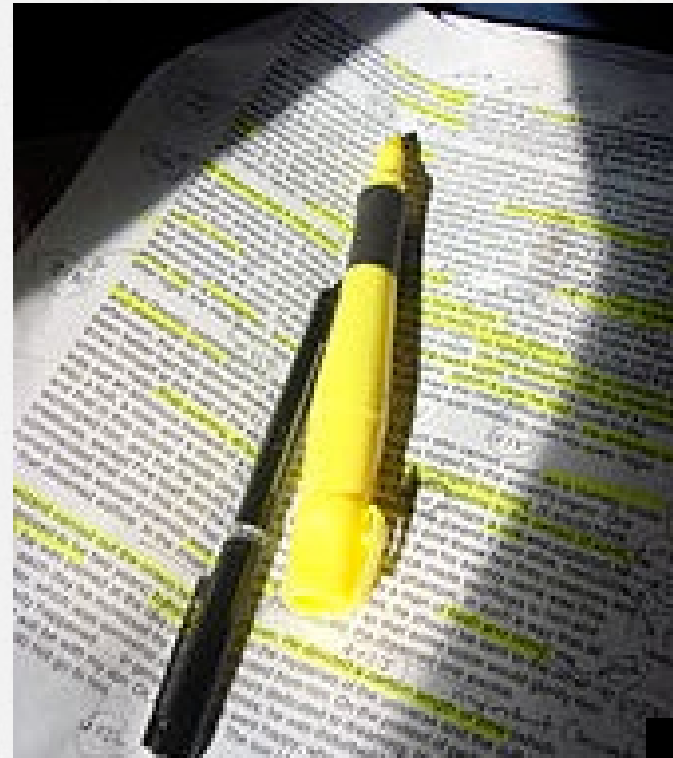
- o The Handbook is available in PDF format on the DOSP website. Additional copies may be printed from the PDF document
- o Parishes will be notified when updates are made to the website version.

PARISH AND SCHOOL RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY
Effective July 1, 2021



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE POLICY

- o RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE FOR PARISHES & SCHOOLS
- o A BASIC GUIDE TO ARCHIVAL PRESERVATION
- o RECORDS TO SAVE FOREVER
- o WEEDING RECORDS
- o PACKING RECORDS



RECORDS

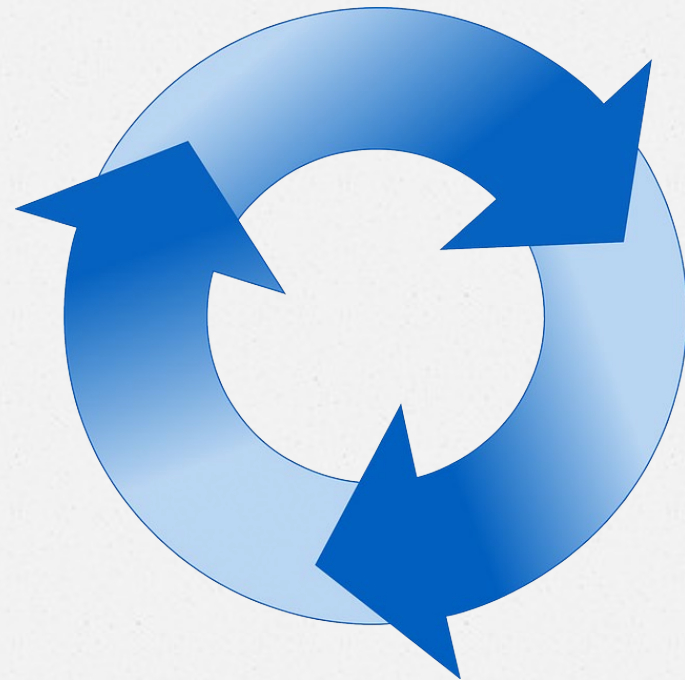


- o What is a record?
- o Who owns records we create at work?
- o What is a records lifecycle?

- **RECORD** - any information received as part of doing business at our parishes and schools.
- **FORMS OF RECORDS** – an Email, Voice mail, handwritten note, electronic file, formal document.
- **Outside of work we all have records** – paycheck, credit card, drivers license.
- **Legal requirements** - should be followed for records w/personal information.

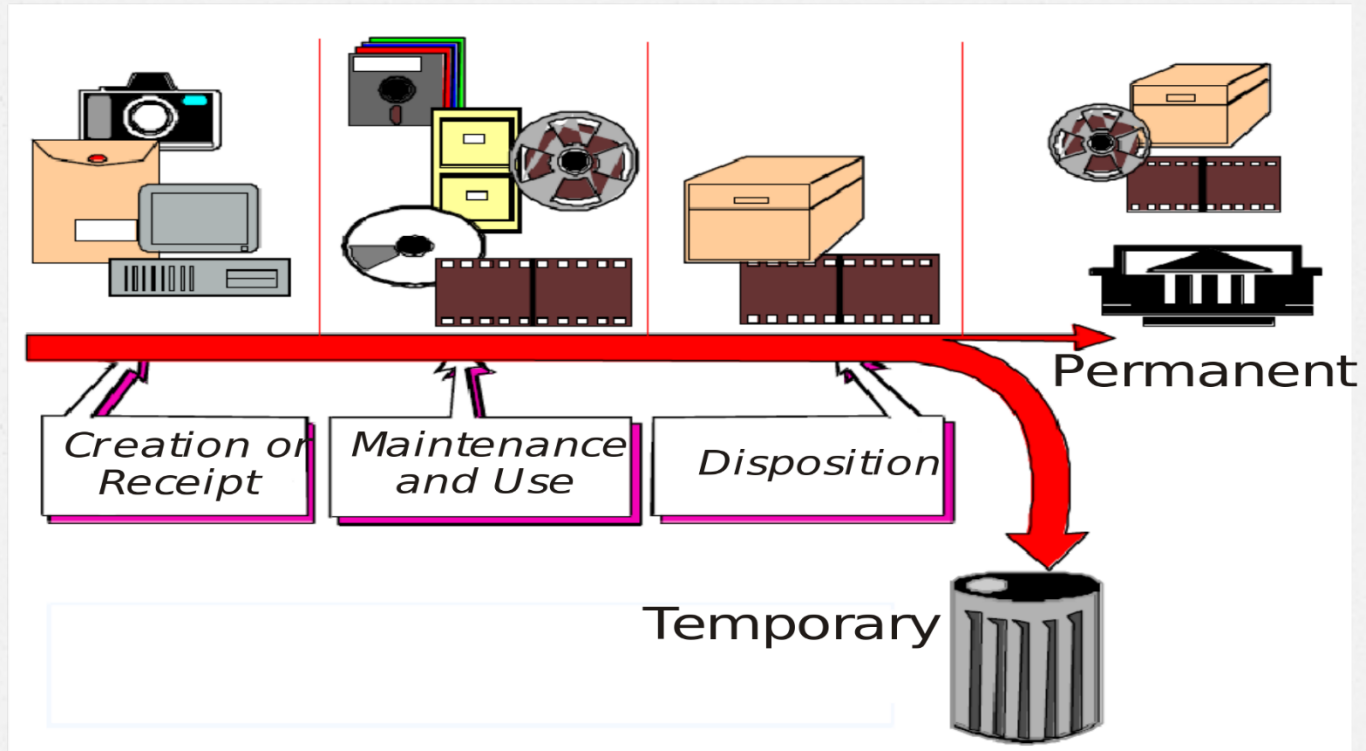
The life cycle of records

- o **CREATION** – Minutes of meetings document decisions that were made.
- o **MANAGEMENT** – A retention schedule is a tool that takes guesswork out of how long to retain.
- o **RETAIN** – Retaining records just in case is costly.
- o **DESTROY** – per legal requirements & retention schedule.



SUMMARY

RECORDS MANAGEMENT LIFE CYCLE



MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RECORD RETENTION CAN BE FOUND HERE:

Pastoral Center Records Retention Policy and Records Retention Schedules

<https://www.dosp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Records-Retention-Policy-Schedule-Updated-6-2019-1.pdf>

Finance Office - Financial Guidelines and Policies Manual for Parishes, Schools and Early Childhood Centers

<https://www.dosp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DOSPGuidelines.pdf>

NARA – National Archives and Records Administration

<https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/training>

University of British Columbia - Records Management 101: Policy and responsibility

<https://youtu.be/TtCr5ygjxSE>



QUESTIONS?



Please contact:

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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY!