

POLICY 2.2.3 Registering Apostasy

In Catholic Church law and practice, baptised members are deemed to be always members of the Church, unless by a formal act they renounce and repudiate their faith. Simple laxity of practice or participation in the life of the community or participation in the life of another faith community does not of itself constitute a departure from the Catholic Church. (cf. Canon 124)

It does happen, however, that we receive formal notice from persons previously baptized or received into the Church, stating that they wish to renounce their baptism or have their baptism struck from our records, usually giving as reasons that they have adhered to another religious family or that they no longer believe in the Christian faith or in some or many of the teachings of the Church. (Cf. Canon 751).

Because one's baptism is an historical and true fact, and it leaves an indelible mark on the soul, in no circumstances should a validly entered register of baptism be erased or obliterated from the record.

Persons wishing to renounce their faith may do so in writing, or orally in the presence of two witnesses. When the notice of renunciation of the faith is first made known at the parish where such person was baptized:

- an annotation is to be made in the baptismal register,
- a copy of the notice of renunciation of the faith is to be sent to the archdiocesan chancery office, and
- the original notice is to be held on file at the parish.

If the notice of renunciation of the faith is first made known to the chancery office:

- an annotation will be made in the archived baptismal registers,
- a copy of the notice of renunciation of the faith will be sent to the parish where the baptism took place, so that an annotation can be entered in the parish baptismal register, and
- the original notice will be held on file at the chancery office.

Concerning the restitution of those who return after the renunciation of their faith, see Policy 2.2.3.1 Act of Re-Admission.