

**SECTION SIX -  
Clerical Life and Ministries**

## **POLICY 6.1      Parochial Registers and Archives**

*Please refer to **Directive 6.1** for specific guidance and more details regarding the maintenance of parish archives.*

An important role for the parish priest is the maintenance and administration of parish registers and archives. The *Code of Canon Law*, can. 535 §1, says “Each parish is to have parochial registers, that is, those of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and others as prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop. The pastor [parish priest] is to see that [parochial] registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.”

The nature of contemporary society and parishes makes it imperative that parish priests are diligent and conscientious about creating, updating, and ensuring the accuracy of these records for individual Christian faithful. This policy has been created to assist and remind priests of what are the canonical and diocesan requirements for sacrament records in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan.

### **Parish Records of Sacraments**

Every parish, quasi-parish and mission of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan use standard sacrament registers, produced by the Archdiocese beginning in 2014. There are four registers, one each for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and marriage and one for Christian burials.

Some of the parishes of the Archdiocese use Parish Friendly software, where they also record sacraments administered there.

- **Creating records**

Parish priests must ensure that the sacrament records, both electronic and paper, are accurately inscribed. The mobility of both parishioners and priests makes it unwise to rely on community memory and relationships to make up for poor penmanship, misspelled names, and partial dates. It is incumbent on the parish priest to get the details of the records’ data absolutely correct.

The cleric (or layperson, as applicable) who administers any sacrament, and baptism in particular, must ensure that names are spelled correctly, that dates are correct, and that all required information is inscribed in the register.

**Note:** The required information for paper registers and Parish Friendly records is different.

- **Sacrament Registers**

The parish sacrament registers must always be secured in the premises of the parish, quasi-parish or mission to which they belong, if there is a resident priest. If there is no resident priest, the registers must be secured in the premises where the assigned parish priest resides.

Parish priests are responsible for ensuring that the information recorded in the sacrament registers is accurate, complete and legible. The Archdiocese recommends that all but the required signatures be clearly printed (i.e. do not use cursive writing).

Annually, as early as possible in January, parish priests will ensure that photocopies are made of all the records created in the registers in the preceding year and forward the copies to the Archives of the Archdiocese.

- **Parish Friendly**

Parish Friendly creates separate records for the following sacraments: Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, Confirmation and Marriage; Deaths are recorded in the “Family” section.

The sacrament records created in the preceding year are provided by email or a file sharing program to Archdiocese’s Archivist (archives.agm@outlook.com) each January.

- **Certificates for sacraments** (cf. Policy 7.4.1)

Parish priests are responsible for ensuring that individuals receive a certificate that records the sacrament received with pertinent details, e.g. name, date, place, parents, godparents, priest’s name, parish name. The preference is that the priest, or other person who administers the sacrament, provides the certificate at the time of the sacrament. If that is not possible, then another mutually agreeable time is acceptable.

**For duplicate certificates:** parish priests are responsible for approving all requests for duplicate certificates. The requests **must be made in writing by the person named in the certificate** (as recipient of the sacrament). Form 7.4.1.a may be used for this purpose. The Archdiocese recommends that parishes charge a fee of \$10 for duplicate certificates, except those issued for ecclesial purposes (e.g. a baptism certificate in view of marriage or to confirm a baptism of an individual seeking full initiation into the Church).

Parish Friendly can also be used to create certificates for the individual(s) receiving the sacrament(s).

Can. 535 §3 states that “Each parish is to have its own seal. Documents regarding canonical status of the Christian faithful...are to be signed by the pastor [parish priest] or his delegate and sealed with the parochial seal.” In the Archdiocese, all parishes, quasi-parishes and missions are to have their own seal. The Finance Section can assist a parish priest to acquire the seal if one is needed. The seal may be a dry seal (i.e. impresses a mark on the document) or a wet seal (an inked stamp).

- **Notification of change in canonical status**

To assure the accuracy and completeness of an individual’s record of canonical status, parish priests are responsible for notifying a person’s parish of baptism whenever that status changes (e.g. when sacraments of confirmation, ~~and~~ marriage, and holy orders and religious profession are administered).

### **Other canonical and civil law requirements**

- **Marriages**

Parish priests are responsible for creating the canonical file for marriages (cf. Policy 2.7.1 and Policy 2.7.3) for couples who reside in the parish, regardless of where the marriage is to be solemnized.

The original canonical file is retained in the parish for marriages solemnized in the parish.

The parish priest will ensure that the appropriate portion of the provincial marriage license document is attached to the canonical file and that the entire record is filed for safekeeping with other similar documents. The marriage license document can be destroyed after one year but the canonical file must be retained in perpetuity.

The parish priest is responsible for sending the properly completed marriage license to Alberta Vital Statistics within 48 hours of the marriage being solemnized. This responsibility extends to assuring that the presiding minister of the marriage has properly completed and returned the marriage license to Alberta Vital Statistics as required.

- **Burials** (cf. Policy 7.5)

A burial permit, issued by an authorized person, as defined in the governing legislation, is required before human remains can be buried in a cemetery. The parish copy of the burial permit is filed in the parish office and kept in perpetuity.

- **Parish Archives**

Can. 491 §1. The diocesan bishop is to see to it that the acts and documents of the archives of cathedral, collegiate, parochial and other churches in his territory also are diligently preserved.

Can. 535 §4 and §5 stipulate that parishes must properly safeguard their “parochial registers...along with letters of bishops and other documents which are to be preserved for reason of necessity or advantage...Older parochial registers are also to be carefully protected according to the prescripts of particular law.”

Therefore, in each parish of the Archdiocese there should be a proper and secure place where archive documents and artifacts are stored. Quasi-parish and mission archives should also be stored properly at the main parish centre of which they are a satellite, or with the Chancery.

In most places, storage will be limited to a filing cabinet drawer for paper archives and a cupboard for artifacts. In other places, a fire-proof safe or vault or secure place where archival material and documents can be stored is available. Larger artifacts may need to be stored in closed boxes and placed in a secure place for storage.

Identification information or number should accompany each artifact. An identification number might be placed on the artifact and information kept in a record book. Care should be taken for the good preservation of all historical items and documents.

**Furthermore, with continual evolution in electronics, care should be taken for the preservation of electronic files on parish computers by creating external backups and by ensuring that backup files are constantly updated and accessible. Creation of hard copies of documents, letters, speeches and other written materials as well as photographs should be created and filed properly for preservation.**

Directive 6.1.1 provides more detailed information about how and when to archive the following records:

- Legal documents
- Ceremonial and liturgical documents
- Sacramental records (not included in parochial registers)
- Records of ministers and ministries
- Recording apostasy
- Administration documents
- Financial documents

- Parish bulletins and other publications
- General interest documents
- Artifacts
- Annals

- **Provincial privacy legislation** (cf. Policy 7.4.1)

PIPA limits the release of documents containing personal information to the individual named in the document, except: (1) if the record that contains the information has been in existence for more than 100 years; (2) if the individual identified in the record has been dead for at least twenty years; or, (3) the individual identified in the record has given consent to the disclosure.

Promulgated by the College of Consultors on 22 Jan 2019

## **POLICY 6.2      Selecting Lay Ministers**

The past few generations in our society have given rise to disturbing practices and deep questions concerning the very nature of marriage. Yet the Church's position remains consistent. We must do all in our power to promote the Sacrament of Marriage among our people who are engaged in quasi-marital relations. Whenever Catholics have been living common-law or married outside the Church, we must make every effort to encourage them to sacramentalize their commitment. If they have been previously married, our concern must be to find a just and compassionate solution, which may entail recourse to the marriage tribunal.

In the meantime, we must avoid encouraging our people in such irregular marriage situations to exercise leadership in a ministry that would highlight the discrepancy between their lifestyle and the Church's teaching. This is especially true of some liturgical ministries (such as reader or Eucharistic minister) and catechetical ministries (RCIA and sacramental preparation of children). The list below may be helpful to you in trying to apply these norms.

### Ministries and services open to those in irregular situations:

Usher  
Greeter  
Music (singer or accompanist)  
Visits to hospitals and shut-ins (but not Communion)  
Aid to the needy  
Occasional Reader (as at weddings or funerals)

### Ministries and services not open to those in irregular situations:

Regular Reader at Mass  
Extraordinary minister of Communion (at Mass, or to the sick)  
Committee or council member  
Catechist (in RCIA or sacramental preparation of children)

## **POLICY 6.3      Complaints about the Pastoral Ministry of a Priest**

[\(top\)](#)

As a Christian community where persons can grow spiritually and morally, we must promote mature and respectful relationships. Consistent with Jesus' own advice on the process for correcting a brother or sister (Matt. 18:15-18), comments and complaints within any parish should be handled in such a way as to uphold both the search for truth and the exercise of charity. Pastors are often called upon to mediate interpersonal conflicts and attempt to restore harmony to the home or other relationships.

Occasionally, the parish priest himself is one of the players in a conflict in the parish. Those who bring forth a conflict with their parish priest should know that the handling of such cases will be dealt with in the following manner:

### **➤ Complaints of a criminal nature**

If the incident in question is or appears to be a crime, the person who brings forth the complaint will be immediately directed to the administrator of the archdiocesan misconduct policy. The terms and procedures of this policy will then be in effect.

### **➤ All other complaints**

1. The complainant should bring the complaint to the Vicar General or the Chancellor, who will normally refer the matter to his Curia to determine the most appropriate way to deal with it. While the complaint may initially be done in a phone call, the complainant will be asked to detail the situation in a letter to the archbishop. The complainant may also present the written testimony of other parishioners, bearing on the same or similar situations. The complainant(s) must realize that a copy of such letter(s) will be given to the priest in question, and the matter discussed with him. (The form which accompanies this policy may be used in lieu of a letter.)
2. The Archbishop will follow up with a letter addressed to the complainant and copied to the priest.

**COMPLAINT REPORT OF THE PASTORAL MINISTRY OF A PRIEST**  
**Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan**

Name of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of priest about whom this complaint is being filed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident (if more space is needed, use Supplementary Page):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses

(1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, names of those who have an issue with the same person:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

***For Office Use***

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Investigation Initiated: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Investigation Concluded: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received by Archbishop: \_\_\_\_\_



## **POLICY 6.4      Death of a Member of the Clergy**

On the notice of the death of a bishop, priest or deacon of the Archdiocese, the Vicar- General will undertake to share the notice with all members of the clergy presently ministering in the Archdiocese and all retired incardinated clerics.

In the spirit of fraternity, we shall honour the members of our clergy, meaning clerics who are ministering in the Archdiocese at the time of death, all incardinated clerics, whether in the Archdiocese or outside, active and retired, and emeritus archbishops, at the time of their death in the following ways:

- Every priest and deacon ministering in the Archdiocese will make a sincere effort to attend the funeral Mass of a bishop, priest or deacon of the Archdiocese.
- While respecting the wishes of the deceased bishop, priest or deacon concerning the place of the funeral Mass and burial, if these do not happen in McLennan, there will be a memorial Mass at the cathedral at the first opportunity which the clergy of the Archdiocese will make every effort to attend.
- Upon the direction of the archbishop, each priest, at his first opportunity, will celebrate a Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased bishop, priest or deacon who has ministered in the Archdiocese, making every effort to celebrate this Mass with the people of his parish(es).

Further to this,

- At the Chrism Mass each year, the Archbishop will acknowledge by name the members of the clergy and the Religious women, who have ministered in the Archdiocese, who have died since the previous year's Chrism Mass. Members of clergy include those incardinated to the Archdiocese, those incardinated to another diocese, and members of a Religious congregation who ministered at some time in their lives in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan.
- On November 11<sup>th</sup> of each year, the feast day of the Archdiocese's patron St. Martin of Tours, each priest in the Archdiocese will say a Mass for all the deceased members of the clergy who have ministered in the Archdiocese.

Accepted by the College of Consultors on 28 May 2013  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 31 May 2016  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 11 June 2019

## **POLICY 6.6**

## **Incardination of Clergy**

The Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan does not seek to incardinate clergy who have been ordained outside of the Archdiocese. However, while honoring the provisions for such as laid down in Canons 267 – 272 and Canon 693, clergy who have performed ministry in the Archdiocese may ask to be incardinated.

In such case, the Archdiocese will enter a process of discernment that will include the following steps:

1. The priest must have ministered in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan for at least five full years before the application to be incardinated is initiated. This requirement may be waived by the Archbishop.
2. The priest must have established permanent resident status in Canada before the act of incardination is completed. The Archdiocese will pay once for the priest to take the language test required by Immigration Canada. If he fails this test, subsequent language tests are at the cost of the priest.
3. The priest's bishop or religious superior must agree in writing to the cleric's incardination in this Archdiocese.
4. The priest must request in writing to be incardinated in the Archdiocese of Grouard McLennan. This letter must indicate his free willingness to comply with the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese, and to offer religious obedience to the Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan.
5. If the applicant is an international priest, he must have attended the enculturation program conducted by Newman Theological College in Edmonton, or a similar program.
6. The priest must request in writing a true copy of his personnel file to be sent directly from the chancery office of his former bishop or religious superior to the Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan.
7. The priest will undergo a series of psychological tests administered by a psychologist, agreed to by both the Archbishop and the priest. The priest must agree to release the psychologist's report to the Archbishop. This requirement may be waived by the Archbishop.
8. The priest will undergo a medical examination, providing the physician with a form from the Archdiocese for that purpose. The priest must agree to release the complete results of the examination to the Archbishop.
9. The chancery office will conduct a thorough examination of the priest's ministry in all the parishes where he has served in the Archdiocese. This will include collecting the testimony of other priests, parish staff, parish pastoral council members and other parishioners, school principals and teachers.
10. The final decision to incardinate a priest will be made by the Archbishop, having received the counsel of the Curia.

## **POLICY 6.7 Ministerial Faculties and Approvals**

This policy has been established to ensure that the Archbishop and the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan can assure the faithful of the Archdiocese that all clergy celebrating Mass and the sacraments of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese are canonically, and otherwise, able to do so.

- **Priests with Archdiocesan Faculties Wishing to Exercise Ministry Outside the Archdiocese**

The Archdiocese provides a celebret, as described in canon 903, to all incardinated and fidei donum priests with faculties in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan who are in good standing with the Archbishop. This celebret is valid for one year and is renewed as long as the priest remains in the Archdiocese and in good standing.

In recent years, it has become the practice in Roman Catholic dioceses in Canada and internationally to request a “letter of suitability” for visiting clergy. This letter is sent by the visiting priest’s bishop to the bishop of the diocese being visited in advance of the priest’s arrival. Incardinated and fidei donum priests with faculties in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan who wish to exercise ministry outside of the Archdiocese, for a single event or a temporary period, should contact the Vicar General to obtain a letter of suitability, at least six weeks in advance of the arrival date in the diocese being visited.

- **Visiting Priests to the Archdiocese**

- **Wishing to Exercise Ministry during Personal Visit**

Priests from outside the Archdiocese who are visiting a parish, quasi-parish and/or mission of the Archdiocese and wish to celebrate private Mass are permitted to do so, if the parish priest of the parish, quasi-parish or mission is certain there is no canonical impediment and the priest is in good standing in his diocese or religious congregation.

- **Wishing to Exercise Ministry for a Public Celebration**

Priests from outside the Archdiocese who are invited to preside at a public Mass or public celebration such as a baptism or a wedding must provide a letter of suitability from their bishop or superior (or his delegate) to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan at least two weeks in advance of coming to the Archdiocese. Please use the sample letter in Appendix A or provide a letter that includes the following information about the priest:

- he is in good standing in his diocese or religious congregation;
- he has no record of any canonical, criminal, behavioural, sexual, financial or other issues;
- he has full faculties in the location of his current assignment;
- he has been screened under a policy of his diocese or religious institute that is equivalent to Policy 5.1.1 of this manual; and,
- he is authorized to be present in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan for the particular event where he will preside.

**If the event is a marriage**, the invited priest and/or the parish making the invitation must notify the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan at least **six weeks in advance**, to allow for the Chancellor to obtain the requisite provincial clergy registration. The invited priest must provide the personal details needed for the application.

- **Providing Pastoral Assistance during the Absence of a Priest of the Archdiocese**

It is the responsibility of the priest issuing the invitation to a priest from outside the Archdiocese to provide pastoral assistance to ensure that the Vicar General of the Archdiocese receives a letter of suitability (as above). It is also the inviting priest's responsibility to inform the Chancellor of the Archdiocese if the visiting priest will need a clergy registration for the period of pastoral assistance.

Promulgated by the College of Consultors on 12 June 2018

**Appendix A            Sample Letter of Suitability**

**[(Arch) bishop/Eparch's NAME]**

**[Address]**

Dear (Arch) Bishop N.N.:

In light of the provisions of canon 903 *CIC* and canon 703 §1 *CCEO*, I write to inform you that Rev. [NAME] is an incardinated priest of the [(Arch) diocese/Eparchy] of [LOCATION], who currently resides in [PLACE OF RESIDENCE]. He will be exercising ministry at [NAME OF THE CHURCH OR INSTITUTION] in [LOCATION OF THE CHURCH OR INSTITUTION] in your diocese, on [DATE].

In regard to Rev. [NAME], I am able to make following statements:

- he is in good standing in his diocese or religious congregation;
- he has no record of any canonical, criminal, behavioural, sexual, financial or other issues;
- he has full faculties in the location of his current assignment;
- he has been screened under a policy of his diocese or religious institute that is equivalent to Policy 5.1.1 of the *Policy Manual of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan*; and,
- he is authorized to be present in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan for the particular event where he will preside.

Respectfully in Christ,

---

**[Name of the (Arch) bishop/Eparch]**

---

**[Title]**

---

**[Date]**