

CHANCERY
ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES/RESEARCH & INFORMATION DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE

1408 CARMEL DRIVE
LAFAYETTE LA 70501
(337) 261-5639 – (337) 261-5667
www.diolaf.org/archives

ARCHIVES GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH POLICY

GENERAL POLICIES:

- Genealogical Research Requests are accepted for records at least dated 100 years or older.
- Great care should be taken not to give records indiscriminately to persons who have no legitimate right to them. If the person requesting the record is unable to provide proof of identity at that time or if he or she lives in another city or state, the certificate can be mailed to that person's *parish, where he or she will be asked for proof of identity before receiving a certificate.
- Individuals who have legal access to Baptismal records less than 70 years old include:
 - The person named in the record (if over age 18 or an emancipated minor).
 - A parent or legal guardian of the person named in the record (if the person is under age 18 or incapacitated).
 - Other parties as designated in writing by person named in the record.
- If person is deceased, their children or heirs may have access to the records after supplying the Archives with documented proof of kinship.
- Other parties as designated or permitted by court order, subpoena, summons, or State or Federal statute.
- In the case of sacramental records that may concern an adoption, the Archives cannot reveal the names of the natural/biological parents. No certificate issued by either the Archives or any individual *parish will contain this information. The Diocese adheres to state guidelines that give priority to the privacy rights of the natural parents.

AUTHORIZED RECIPIENTS OF GENEALOGICAL RECORDS:

- The ordinary request for a sacramental record from church parish to church parish or from a diocesan office (e.g. Tribunal, Chancellor's Office) presents no problem. The record is mailed directly to the church *parish or diocesan office, without requiring a signed release.
- Generally, certificates are issued only for current records and/or legal purposes. The sacramental registers are not open to examination by anyone except authorized church *parish or chancery personnel, as these records may contain confidential information:
- ***Sacramental records are private in that they are created in circumstances presumed to be personal and confidential, and are not available for public viewing. They are public in that, legally, they will stand as valid, authentic evidence when an appropriate civil record does not exist.***
- *Parishes may provide certificates for non-sacramental purposes to genealogists/researchers if time permits but may also elect to refer them to the Diocesan Archives. However, this does not mean that church parish Sacramental Registers are available for public viewing.

PROCEDURES TO REQUEST GENEALOGICAL RECORDS:

The Archives Staff *does not research general family lines*. The staff conducts research for a *specific individual's record only* and, when possible, issues documentation of the information listed on an entry for a specific record.

- Each request should contain as much known information as possible; including:
 - Listing the complete name(s) of the person(s) to be researched whenever possible.
 - Designate specific sacramental record(s) to be searched (ex., baptism or marriage).
 - Provide the approximate date(s) for the person(s) to be researched.
 - Provide the name of the town, parish, or region of the diocese where the person(s) resided.
 - Any additional information such as parents' names, birth date of first child, place of residence, the name of the priest officiating at the sacramental ceremony can be very helpful when an exact date or specific Parish church is not known
 - Notations from Rev. Donald J. Hebert's *Southwest Louisiana Records* are helpful in confirming the correct record. However, this does not necessarily expedite results due to records not being searchable by volume and page number.
- **Tips for finding records:**
 - Assuming you are looking for your baptismal certificate, did you ever receive First Communion, Confirmation, or Matrimony in the Catholic Church? Parishes celebrating these other sacraments are required to send that information (a notation only, not the certificate) back to the parish of baptism. Please note that the parish of baptism cannot give you your certificate for First Communion, Confirmation, etc.; it would just have a notation that you received that sacrament (elsewhere).
 - Where were your sisters and brothers baptized? Sometimes siblings were baptized together or at least at the same parish.
 - At what address did you live when you were baptized? We can check and see in what parish that address belongs geographically.
 - Do you know the priest's or deacon's name that baptized you? If so, we can check the clergy records and see where he was stationed at the time.
 - Was it in the city or a rural area?
 - Were you baptized or married on a U.S. military base, either in the U.S. or abroad? If so, your records are probably at the Military Archdiocese:
 - Sacramental Records Department, Archdiocese of the Military Services, U.S.A, P.O Box 4469, Washington, DC 20017-0469
 - Phone: (202) 719-3600 / Fax: (202) 269-9022
 - E-mail: info@milarch.org or website: www.milarch.org
 - Please send a written request to the Military Archdiocese. Forms are available at <http://www.milarch.org/sacramental-records/> It takes two to six weeks to receive the certificate.

****Church Parish Policy***

Please note that while it is the policy of our diocese that the actual (physical) sacramental registers (books) of church parishes of the diocese are recorded and kept at the particular church parish wherever the sacramental act takes place, church parishes are separate entities whose policies, procedures, and schedules of fees regarding research may be different from our own.

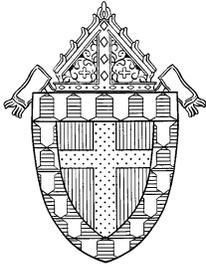
For a complete listing of the church parishes of our diocese and their contact information, please log onto our website: www.diolaf.org/churchparishes

FEES

- The Diocese of Lafayette charges a fee of \$25.00 per individual genealogical record request. This fee covers up to one hour of research per record request. A copy of the digitized record will be provided for each request. Certificates are not issued for genealogical purposes. No request will be accepted without proper payment. Please submit no more than four (4) specific requests.
- Payment for mail-in requests is accepted by personal check or money order, only, made payable to: **DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE**

Please forward postal inquiries to: **Archives/
Research & Information Diocese of
Lafayette
1408 Carmel Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501**

Please allow 12-16 weeks for processing requests.



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- The Diocese of Lafayette charges a fee of \$25.00 for each individual genealogical record request. This fee covers up to one hour of research for each record.
- Each submission should include no more than four (4) specific record requests.
- A copy of the digitized record will be provided. If the record is not found, we will notify you. The Archives does not issue sacramental certificates.
- Exact fees should be made, as the Archives does not provide refunds. Excess fees will be considered a donation. No request will be processed without proper payment.

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.
ssimon@diolaf.org or (337) 261-5667