



## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

HIS EXCELLENCY

Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless

By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See

Bishop Of Sioux City

### DECREE PROMULGATING POLICIES REGARDING SACRAMENTAL RECORDS IN THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF SIOUX CITY.

Canon 535 §1 of the Code of Canon Law establishes that all parishes are to have parochial registers of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and others prescribed by the episcopal conference and the diocesan bishop.

It is my duty as diocesan bishop to make sure that acts and documents in parishes are properly preserved (c. 491 §1). Therefore, in accord with canon 8, §2, I hereby establish and promulgate as particular law for the Diocese of Sioux City the following *Policies regarding sacramental records in the parishes of the Diocese of Sioux City*, effective May 1, 2024.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Sioux City on April 23, 2024.

*R Walker Nickless*

Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless  
Bishop of Sioux City



*Rev Mark J Stoll*

Reverend Mark J. Stoll, JCL  
Chancellor



# DIOCESE OF SIOUX CITY

## PARISH REGISTER BOOKS

[cc. 535, 876, 894]

- I. The recording of the sacraments in official record registry books is vital in the life of the Church. Even if celebrations of the sacraments are recorded in secure digital databases, **the official recording of the sacraments by the parish remains the official record registry book.**
- II. Every parish is to have the following register books [c. 535]:
  - a. **Baptism Record Register Book**
  - b. **Confirmation Record Register Book**
  - c. **First Eucharist Record Register Book**
  - d. **Marriage Record Register Book**
  - e. **Death Record Register Book**
- III. In addition to the above-named books, if a parish has its own cemetery, the parish ought to have a record book that records the plots available in the cemetery, the plots that are occupied, dates of burials, and a record of when and the persons who have purchased rights to each plot.
- IV. All record registry books need to be kept in a safe and secure place in the parish office with limited access, that is to the pastor and other delegated staff. These books ought not leave the parish office without the knowledge and permission of the pastor.
- V. As is noted in the Diocese of Sioux City's Safe Environment Code of Conduct [2023, page 10]:
  - a. *6.4 Sacramental records shall be regarded as confidential. When, for valid church reporting or parish statistical purposes, information from these records is made public, great care must be taken to preserve the anonymity of individuals.*
  - b. *6.5 Except for information regarding adoption and legitimacy, sacramental records older than 70 years may be made accessible to the public. A trained staff member who is authorized to locate the requested information or supervise the use of such records shall handle requests for more recent records.*
- VI. In the **Baptism Record Register Book** [cc. 874, 877, 878] is recorded every celebration of **Baptism** that takes place in the parish church building or in the hospital within the parish boundaries. The record must include the full name of the child, date and place of birth, date of Baptism, name of parents with the mother's maiden name, names of the godfather and godmother, name of the baptizing minister

[priest or deacon], and any notations [i.e.: ‘permission granted by proper pastor’ if the child and parents live in another parish]. If the person was validly baptized in another faith community and is received into the Church through RCIA/RCIC, their Baptism information is recorded in this book with a notation about the Rite of Reception, Confirmation, First Eucharist, and marriage [if the person is married].

- VII. In the **Confirmation Record Register Book** [cc. 894, 895, 896] is recorded every celebration of **Confirmation** that takes place in the parish church building whether done by the bishop, or by a properly delegated priest, or if the person joins the Church through RCIA/RCIC via Baptism/Confirmation/First Eucharist or Rite of Reception/Confirmation/First Eucharist with a notation of RCIA or RCIC. The information recorded includes name, place and date of Baptism, parents’ names, sponsor, Confirmation name, date of Confirmation, and confirming minister. If the person is confirmed in another parish church building, the celebration is recorded in the other parish’s Confirmation Record Register Book. The person’s baptism record is updated with the important sacramental moment as a notation. If the person was baptized in another parish, the parish of baptism is notified of this event so this important sacrament may be recorded on the person’s baptism record.
- VIII. In the **First Eucharist Record Register Book** is recorded every celebration of **First Holy Communion/Eucharist** that takes place in the parish church building including persons who join the Church through RCIA/RCIC via Baptism/Confirmation/First Eucharist or Rite of Reception/Confirmation/First Eucharist with a notation of RCIA or RCIC. The information recorded includes name, place and date of Baptism, parents’ names, date of First Eucharist, and presiding minister. If the person is First Communicated in another parish church building, the celebration is recorded in the other parish’s First Eucharist Record Register Book. Because this celebration does not change the status of the person, as does Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, or Matrimony; it is not necessary to enter this event on the person’s baptism record. However, a notation on the person’s baptism record may be added or sent to the parish of baptism for a more complete record including ease of issuing proof of baptism and other sacramental celebrations.
- IX. In the **Marriage Record Register Book** [cc. 1121, 1122, 1123] is recorded every celebration of **Matrimony** that takes place in the parish church building. The information recorded include names, places and dates of baptism, parents’ names, witnesses’ names, date of the wedding, and officiating minister. If the person is married in another parish church building, the celebration is recorded in the other parish’s Marriage Record Register Book. The person’s baptism record is updated with this important sacramental moment as a notation. If the person was baptized in

another parish, the parish of baptism is notified of this event so this important sacrament may be recorded on the person's Baptism record.

- X. In the **Death Record Register Book** [c.1182] is recorded every death that occurs in the parish.
- a. This book is sometimes confused with a **Funeral** or **Burial** or **Cemetery** record book. Please note:
    - i. this is not the parish's Cemetery Plot or Burial Record Book which records who has purchased rights to plots and who is buried in each plot.
    - ii. in previous years our Vital Stats reporting has asked for number of funerals and for a Burial Register Report for a listing of burials. This misnomer has been corrected and the Vital Stats report will now ask for a list of deaths in the parish to match the parish's Death Record Register Book.
  - b. Most often, the recording of deaths is done for registered parishioners soon as possible after the death of registered parishioners. This recording is to be made as soon after the time of death or knowledge of the death even if the funeral and/or burial is delayed and/or if the funeral takes place in the parish church building, cemetery, funeral home, other location within the parish, or in another parish.
  - c. If the person was not a member of the parish [that is the person was an unregistered member] yet lived within the parish boundaries, the death is to be recorded as soon after the time of death or knowledge of the death even if the funeral and/or burial is delayed and/or even if the funeral that takes place in the parish church building, cemetery, funeral home, other location within the parish, or in another parish.
  - d. If the person was not a member of the parish [that is the person was an unregistered member] and lived outside of the parish boundaries whose celebration of a funeral and/or burial takes place in the parish church building, cemetery, funeral home, or other location within the parish boundaries that is celebrated by a priest or deacon their death is NOT recorded in the parish Death Record Register Book as the person's parish of registration and/or residence is to record this death. However, if the person is most likely not a registered member of any parish and/or was unknown to the parish in which they resided, it would be wise to record their death the record book of the parish in which the funeral was celebrated.
  - e. The information recorded is to include the full name of the deceased, date of death, date of internment, cemetery of internment, and presiding minister. Other notations can include next of kin, age, whether anointed, name of funeral home, cause of death, if cremated, and if the deceased was a catechumen.

- f. While the death and funeral of a person is not a Sacrament, this information is recorded in the parish record book and reported on vital statistics reports to note an important moment in a person's life, their entrance into eternal life.
  - g. The significance of properly recording deaths in the parish is that the Official Catholic Directory and the Vatican does not ask for number of funerals or burials but requires each diocese to report the number of deaths that have occurred each year in the Diocese. The proper recording and reporting of deaths is needed to complete these annual reports.
- XI. Notations may be added to a person's baptism record if it affects or clarifies a person's status in the Church including:
- a. The celebration of First Eucharist [which may or may not be recorded]
  - b. The celebration of Confirmation
  - c. The celebration of Matrimony
  - d. The celebration of Holy Orders [diaconate, priesthood, episcopacy]
  - e. The profession of vows for consecrated life.
  - f. Notion of an invalidly celebrated Sacrament including:
    - i. Baptism
    - ii. Confirmation
    - iii. First Eucharist
    - iv. Marriage
- XII. Proper, concise, accurate, and timely recording and reporting of these moments in a person's life is an important tradition and ministry in the Church for good of souls because the moments identify persons' significant moments in the life a person in the Church.