

## **ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS**

### **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Archives and Library of the Diocese of Fresno is to collect, preserve, and make available for research the official records of the Diocese and those ancillary records which reflect the work of the Church within the Diocese. The archives is erected in accordance with canon 482, which charges the Chancellor with the responsibility for the archives. Additionally, the Chancellor is responsible for the diocesan library.

The Diocesan Archives and Library seek to promote an understanding of the origins, aims, and goals of the Diocese as reflected in the workings of the official diocesan agencies, institutions, and offices. Official diocesan records are defined as:

*All recorded information, regardless of media type or characteristics, made or received and maintained by a diocesan agency, institution, or office in pursuance of its legal obligations or in the transaction of its business.*

The Diocesan Archives and Library also seek to collect, preserve, and make available for research those records of individuals and organizations engaged in work which is reflective of the work of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese. The Diocesan Archives and Library maintains a research reference library of historical collections concerning the Church and Western United States civilization. The library holdings are available for research by scholars, students, teachers, diocesan staff and other researchers; however, access is predicated upon an application and use agreement being received and approved by the Chancellor or Archivists. Pastoral Center staff is excluded from the application requirement and is invited to utilize the library materials during hours of operation.

### **Archive and Library Collection and Development Policy**

Records of the official agencies, institutions, and offices constitute the core collection of the archives. Offices are the administrative units designed to assist the bishop in the administration of the Diocese maintaining a reportorial relationship to the bishop. Agencies and institutions are considered those administrative units that perform specific functions and maintain an operational and functional relationship to the bishop. Such agencies and institutions may be operated by religious orders of men and/or women, but remain under the rubric of the Diocese. The parishes and diocesan elementary and high schools of the Diocese are considered agencies and institutions of the Diocese within the context of this archive policy.

Those ancillary records of individuals and organizations engaged in work, which is reflective of the work of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese constitute the additional collections of the archives. The archive library books, journals, and periodicals consist of historical and contemporary collections on subjects of interest to Catholic scholars, students of religious studies and those researching Western United States civilization. The library holdings are the result of a blending of several Diocese institution and private libraries. Donations of libraries, both institutional and private, are accepted.

## Guidelines for Access to Archives and Library

### *General Access Policy*

The Archives and Library of the Diocese of Fresno exist to collect, preserve and make available the records of enduring value which pertain to the experience of the Church in this region. As such, they play an integral part in the information system of the Diocese. Although its main function is to serve the administrative needs of the bishop and the Diocese, it also seeks to ensure a documentary heritage and a basis for scholarly research in keeping with the moral and historical precepts of canon law and the democratic values and civil law of the United States of America. Access policies to the archives are based on the following principles:

- As authorized by canon law, the Chancellor is the diocesan archivist, serving as the bishop's representative and liaison in the establishment of archival policies. The archivist is authorized to establish library policies and practices. Associate archivists/librarians serve under the Chancellor and may be delegated duties and responsibilities deemed appropriate by the Chancellor.
- As supported by the National Council of Catholic Bishops' 1974 A Document on Ecclesiastical Archives and the Guidelines for Access to Diocesan Archives of the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists, access to the archives and library is open to all responsible and qualified researchers by appointment only following the approval of a research request and use agreement by the Chancellor or Archivists. The guiding principle is equal access for responsible approved researchers with legitimate interests in the documentation.
- Archive access policies are developed with sensitivity for the principles of both right-to-know and confidentiality, as well as responsible research practices. This is to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal legislation and archival practices to help guarantee the longevity and existence of materials for future researchers.
- Few collections are permanently restricted. Some materials, however, may be sequestered from common viewing for a certain period of time; these may include, but are not limited to, medical, orphanage, sacramental, personnel, student, and other records. They will be made available in a scheduled manner in keeping with professionally appraised criteria and canonical requirements. Other obligations also arise as a result of contractual stipulations through deeds of gift, wills, or sales arrangements.
- As a general principle, no archive materials may be removed from the facility (canon 488). While most library holdings are for reference only, some may be loaned on a short-term basis.
- Questions on access policies to individual archive collections or series or library holdings may be directed to the Archivists.
- Access is granted to researchers as a contractual matter in which use of the

material is subject to the rules of the archives, including the acceptance of normal policies and procedures and execution of a use agreement. Researchers with access problems or complaints should first speak of their concerns to the archivist. Any unresolved difficulties should be pursued along the chain-of-command to the bishop as the ultimate source of authority.

### **Access and Utilization Agreement**

The following rules as may be amended or supplemented by the Chancellor, shall apply to the use of the Archives and Library.

The Diocese of Fresno welcomes users to the Archives and Library and enlists user support and cooperation in order to protect and preserve its vital records, books and collections.

#### ***Access***

- Anyone wishing to use the Diocesan Archives and Library must first complete an application in advance for every project, establishing their identity and purpose. This application will be an aid to locating materials and might be used to develop statistical and topic summaries. Pastoral Center Staff is excluded from this requirement.
- Access and use of certain archive and library holdings may be restricted by canon law, the bishop, the Chancellor, statute, the office of origin, or the donor. For example, sacramental records dated January 1, 1940, or later, are not available. Holdings, which are not yet arranged, are being processed, or are exceptionally valuable or fragile, or are confidential in nature, are not available to the public.
- Access to documents of religious orders requires the advance written consent or recommendation of the order.

#### ***Utilization***

- Upon acceptance of his/her application, the researcher can make an appointment (or visit the Archives and Library during hours of operation).
- At the Archives and Library, the researcher will work within the established procedures for security of the collections in a designated area. Staff will store personal belongings, such as briefcases, purses, backpacks, etc.
- Researchers will be responsible for all material brought to the reading area. They are not allowed in the library stacks. Requested items will be utilized in limited quantities, in the following manner:
- All holdings must be handled with utmost care and without alteration by pen or pencil markings, erasures, folding, tracing or rubbing for reproduction. The user may be required to wear gloves when handling some items.
- Federal and State copyright laws govern the duplication and citation of that

which has been previously published, as well as unpublished manuscripts. Compliance with all pertinent laws is required.

- Permission to view materials at the Archives and Library does not constitute permission to publish them. A separate application for such publication permission must be made on the designated form.
- No materials are to be removed from the Archives and Library. If photocopies, reproductions or photographs are permitted, these can be done on the premises or arranged for by the Archives and Library staff. Fees will be required for such services.
- As a security measure, the Archives and Library reserves the right to inspect all bags, clothing, containers, briefcases brought into the Archives and Library, as well as all articles used at the reading tables. Mutilation, destruction or theft of any materials from the Archives and Library will be prosecuted.

### **Pastoral Center Vault Archives**

Access to the Pastoral Center vault archives is restricted to the bishop, Vicar General, Chancellor and their secretaries and the Pastoral Center receptionist. The Chancellor may authorize access by others on a case-by-case basis.

### **Parish Historians**

Each parish has a rich historical patrimony deserving of organized attention to its recording and preservation.\* Parish sacramental records are at the very core of the historical documents, while old altar pieces, tabernacles, hangings, leaded windows, paintings, carvings, mosaics, statuary, musical instruments, grottos and possibly the church building itself may constitute parish historical art. Additionally, some parishes may have libraries, photographs, yearbooks, anniversary or special event publications, and/or anecdotal records made by priests or religious or lay ministers. There may also be unpublished manuscripts having to do with religious themes in the parish record holdings. These items compose the parish official records and cultural heritage and, as such, it is imperative that each be recorded and cataloged so that present and future members of the parish, the priest(s), religious, lay ministers, and the bishop and his staff will be cognizant of the existence, content and significance of each item or collective. The method employed in cataloging is at the discretion of each parish; however, the inventory style selected must have a finding aid element understood by anyone needing pertinent information concerning some aspect of the parish collection, whether it is records, art or of historical interest.

A parish historian, appointed by the pastor, would best be able to accomplish the task outlined in the above paragraph. Each parish is surely gifted with one or more talented parishioner(s) who possibly even now fulfills the role of parish historian, *sine scrinium*. This person may have already led the parish in preparing a year- or anniversary book and be well steeped in parish history and possibly even parish art or property of historical

significance. Other parishes may have paid or volunteer staff who are the current “record keepers,” one of whom the pastor considers the best qualified to carry out the more expansive role of parish historian. Some parishes may have a pastor who is, in fact, the parish historian and who would wish to appoint himself as the official parish historian. All persons designated as the parish historian should share a common interest in parish history, the rigor to pursue it further and, more importantly, have instilled in them the desire to see that the cultural patrimony of the individual parish is identified, recorded and preserved.

There is an added value in having a designated parish historian. This person would likely lead or assist in gathering material for year and anniversary publications. They would be contact persons for individuals outside the parish requesting parish information of a historical nature. Also, they would carry out surveys and assessments implemented at the diocesan level. Each should receive training adequate to the task asked of them.

\* Ref. Circular Letter of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, *“The Pastoral Function of the Church Archives,”* dated Vatican City, February 2, 1997, by Archbishop Francesco Marchisano, President.