

For Catholic Parishes

Diocese of Yakima – Inspection of Parish Registers



**Corporation of the Catholic Bishop of Yakima
5301-A Tieton Drive
Yakima, Washington 98908**

**Please direct your questions and/or concerns to the
Bishop's Office at (509) 965-7117.**

MEMO

TO: Priests, Diaconate Community, Religious Women and Men

FROM: Bishop Carlos A. Sevilla, S.J.

DATE: October 28, 2005

cc: Parish Secretaries

As many of you know, every parish (and parish mission, if applicable) in the Diocese of Yakima is obliged, either by Church or diocesan law, to possess updated, carefully preserved parish books called Registers which record information about the baptisms, confirmations, first Eucharists, marriages and deaths (funerals) in the parish.

The 1983 Code of Canon Law for the Latin Church prescribes that these registers be inspected every year by the diocesan bishop. The bishop can delegate this duty to one or more from among the clergy of the diocese.

By this memo, I delegate each priest member of the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, who represents a particular geographical region in our diocese, to inspect the registers named above in the parishes of his Region.

While conducting his inspection, the delegated priest should, below the last entry of each register of the parishes assigned to him, sign his name and indicate the date of his inspection.

At the completion of the calendar year, and before the end of January of the following year, the delegated priest should then mail to the Bishop's office a copy of the Inspection Form found at the end of this document.

The priests of the diocese, at our Convocation earlier this month, reviewed the contents of this document and expressed their satisfaction that its contents be implemented as described.

Thank you.

#

DIOCESE OF YAKIMA
INSPECTION OF PARISH REGISTERS

[According to the Code of Canon Law for the Latin Church (1983)]

I. General Instructions

- A. Canon 535, paragraph 1: Each parish is to possess a set of parish books including baptismal, marriage, and death registers as well as other registers prescribed by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan bishop; the pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved.
- B. Canon 535, paragraph 2: In the Baptismal Register are also to be noted the person's confirmation and whatever affects the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of marriage, with due regard for the prescription of Canon 1133, adoption, reception of sacred orders, perpetual profession in a religious institute, and change of rite; these notations are always to be noted on a document (certificate), which certifies the reception of baptism.

Note: Canon 1133 describes a file for secret marriages which is kept in the bishop's office. These cases are extremely rare. The Diocese of Yakima has never had such a case and, therefore, at present, there is no such file in the bishop's office.

- C. Canon 535, paragraph 3: Each parish is to possess its own seal; documents which are issued to certify the canonical status of the Christian faithful as well as all acts which can have juridical importance are to be signed by the pastor or his delegate and sealed with the parish seal.
- D. Canon 535, paragraph 4: Each parish is to have a Register or archive in which the parish books are kept along with episcopal letters or documents which ought to be preserved due to necessity or usefulness; all these are to be inspected by the diocesan bishop or his delegate during his visitation or at another suitable time; the pastor is to take care that they do not come into the hands of outsiders.
- E. Canon 535, paragraph 5: The older parish books are also to be carefully preserved in accord with the prescriptions of particular law.
- F. Canon 877, paragraph 1: The pastor of the place where the baptism is celebrated must carefully and without delay record in the Baptismal Register the names of those baptized, making mention of the minister, parents, sponsors, witnesses, if any, and the place and date of the conferred baptism, together with the indication of the date and place of birth.
- G. Canon 877, paragraph 2: If it is a question of a child born of an unmarried mother, the name of the mother is to be inserted if there is public proof of her maternity or if she asks this willingly, either in writing or before two witnesses; likewise the name of the father is to be inserted if his paternity has been proved either by some public document or by his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses; in other cases, the name of the baptized is recorded without any indications of the name of the father or the parents.

- H. Canon 877, paragraph 3: If it is a question of an adopted child, the names of the adopting parents are to be recorded, and also, at least if this is to be done in the civil records of the region, the names of the natural parents, in accord with paragraphs 1 and 2 of same Canon, with due regard for the prescriptions of the Conference of Bishops.

II. Specific Instructions

A. Regarding the Baptismal Register (Canon 877)

1. The following information should be included:
 - a. Complete name of the child
 - b. Place and date of birth
 - c. Date of baptism
 - d. Father's name and mother's maiden name
 - e. Names of sponsors/witnesses
 - f. Name of the priest/deacon

2. If the child was born of a mother who is not married, the following should be noted in the Baptismal Register:
 - a. Complete name of the child
 - b. Place and date of birth
 - c. Date of baptism
 - d. Mother's name
 - e. Names of sponsors/witnesses
 - f. Name of the priest/deacon

3. If the unwed father has proved his paternity, then his name is to be inserted.

4. If a child is baptized **after** an adoption, the Baptismal Register should indicate:
 - a. The Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s);
 - b. The name(s) of the adoptive parent(s);
 - c. The date and place of birth;
 - d. The names of the sponsors selected by the adoptive parent(s);
 - e. The date and place of the baptism;
 - f. The name of the minister performing the baptism;
 - g. The fact of the adoption but not the names of the natural parents.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

5. If a child is baptized **before** an adoption, the Baptismal Register should indicate:
 - a. Child's complete name with his/her biological surname
 - b. Date and place of birth
 - c. Date of baptism
 - d. Biological father's name and mother's maiden name
 - e. Names of sponsors/witnesses
 - f. Name of the priest/deacon

For children baptized before their adoption is finalized, the following notations shall be added to the Baptismal Register, but only after the adoption has been finalized and with due regard for the civil law of the jurisdiction:

- a. Parentheses shall be placed around the names of the natural parents;
- b. The name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added;
- c. The child's former surname shall also be parenthesized and the new surname added;
- d. A notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals shall give only the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

6. If the child is confirmed, married, received Holy Orders or made solemn profession in a religious institute or received a declaration of nullity, this must be noted in the parish Baptismal Register where the child was baptized.

B. Regarding a Person who enters the Catholic Church through a Profession of Faith

1. Regarding a person who has been baptized in another denomination and is entering the Catholic Church through a Profession of Faith, the Baptismal Register of the Parish where the profession of faith was made should indicate:
 - a. Full name of the person
 - b. Place and date of birth
 - c. Date and church of baptism
 - d. Father's name and mother's maiden name
 - e. Sponsors of baptism, if the names are available
 - f. Below the sponsors' names, list the sponsor of the Profession of Faith, the name of the priest/deacon, and the date of Profession of Faith.
2. There should be a signed copy of the Profession of Faith in a separate file in the Parish archives.
3. A notation of Confirmation should be made in the Baptismal and the Confirmation Registers.

4. A notation should be made in the Communion Register regarding the reception of First Eucharist.
5. If it was necessary for the person's marriage to be convalidated, this should be noted in the Marriage Register.

C. Regarding the Confirmation Register (Canon 895)

1. Canon 895 states that the Register for Confirmation should include the following information:
 - a. Names of the confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors.
 - b. The place and date of the conferral of Confirmation are to be noted in the Confirmation Register in the diocesan curia, or, where the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a Register kept in the parish archive.

Note: A Confirmation Register is not kept in the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Yakima.

2. The pastor must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of Confirmation so that the notation is made in that parish's Baptismal Register.

D. Regarding the Marriage Register (Canon 535)

1. In the parish Marriage Register the following information must be included:
 - a. Contracting parties
 - b. Residence
 - c. Place and date of marriage
 - d. Place and date of baptism
 - e. Name(s) of parents
 - f. Name(s) of witness(s)
 - g. Name of the priest/deacon
 - h. Banns, dispensations or declaration(s) of nullity noted in remarks column
2. The pastor must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the celebration of marriage and it is to be noted in the parish Baptismal Register where the person was baptized.

E. Regarding the First Communion Register (Canon 535 paragraph 1)
Practices and tradition form 1917 code and required information in baptismal records.

1. In the parish First Communion Register the following information should be included:
 - a. Baptismal and family name
 - b. Place and date of birth
 - c. Age
 - d. Place and date of baptism
 - e. Residence
 - f. Name(s) of parents
 - g. Remarks

F. Regarding the Death Register (Canon 1182)

1. For the deaths where the funeral is celebrated in the parish or in the parish boundaries, the following information is to be entered into the Death Register:
 - a. Name of deceased
 - b. Residence and age
 - c. Name of person related to the deceased person, i.e. parents, wife or husband
 - d. Date of death
 - e. Sacraments received, i.e. Penance, Anointing of the Sick
 - f. Name of the priest/deacon
 - g. Place and date of burial
 - h. Remarks

After each Register is inspected, the bishop or delegated priest should, below the last entry of the Register, sign his name and indicate the date of his inspection.

APPENDIX

For the Rite of Election, greater clarity is assured if parishes have separate Registers, one for catechumens and another for candidates for full communion in which those individuals sign their names in alphabetical order.

**Diocese of Yakima
Form to be used for the
Inspection of Parish Registers**

To be mailed to the Bishop's office at the completion of the
calendar year and before the end of January of the following year.

I inspected the registers of _____ Parish in the
city of _____.

Comments

Baptismal Register _____

Confirmation Register _____

First Eucharist Register _____

Marriage Register _____

Sick Call Register _____

Death Register _____

.....

Other Comments

Signature of Priest _____

Date _____