



Canon 535

§4 *In each parish there is to be an archive*, in which the parochial books are to be kept, together with Episcopal letters and *other documents which it may be necessary or useful to preserve*. On the occasion of visitation or at some other opportune time, the diocesan Bishop or his delegate is to inspect all of these matters. *The parish priest is to take care that they do not fall into unauthorized hands. (Emphasis added.)*

Best Practices for the use of Parish Archival Records

Parishes have a wealth of fascinating historical documents within their parish archives and are occasionally consulted by a variety of researchers. Each Pastor / Administrator / Parish Director is free to develop their own access policies in regards to their parish archives, but we would suggest the following rules be put into place. These are standard rules used by archives around the world.

The following rules and policies should apply to anyone who does not work for the parish/school. Every researcher should be expected to adhere to the same set of rules regardless of whether they are an amateur researcher, noted author, or university faculty member.

1. Never leave a researcher alone with materials. While we assume the best intentions of everyone it is always possible that someone may inadvertently take something.
2. Materials should never leave the premises. *We know of several instances where people have walked away from the parish with historically valuable materials and have repeatedly refused to return them.*
3. Only certain types of records should be made available to a researcher. This would include such things as newsletters, published directories, photographs, parish histories, etc. Other items should only be opened after a length of time has passed (for example, 50 years), such as committee meeting minutes and financial reports.
4. If asked and if the parish is able, copies may be made of documents as long as the process of copying the document does not hurt the original record. A parish can charge for staff time and paper usage.
5. **Sacramental registers should never be opened to anyone who is not employed by the parish.** Requests for sacramental records for the purposes of family history research (genealogy) can always be made to the Archdiocesan Archive if the parish staff is not able to respond.

OFFICE FOR ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

3501 South Lake Drive | P.O. Box 070912 | Milwaukee, WI 53207

PHONE: (414) 769-3431 | FAX: (414) 769-3408 | EMAIL: archives@archmil.org | www.archmil.org



6. A record should be kept regarding who has had access to what materials. Feel free to utilize the form below.
7. If you have any questions, always contact the Archdiocesan Archives. We are here to help!

Shelly Taylor, Director
taylor@archmil.org
414-769-3407

Amy Nelson, Associate Director
nelson@archmil.org
414-769-3431



**Archdiocese of Milwaukee
Parish Researcher Application**

Name (print): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Institutional affiliation: _____

Purpose of research: Parish history: _____ Family History: _____

Article/Book: _____ Academic paper: _____

Other: _____

Description of topic: _____

I have read the “Rules Governing the Use of the Archives” on the back of this form, and I agree to abide by them. I understand that the right to examine archival records does not constitute a right to publish them. I agree neither to publish, nor to reproduce the records that I have used without explicit permission to do so from the appropriate church official. I understand that if I publish or reproduce archival records, I am responsible for conforming to any and all copyright, right-to-privacy, libel, slander and other applicable statutes. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the parish, its officers, employees and agents from any and all claims resulting from the use of archival records. I understand that failure to comply with these rules may result in the denial of access to archival records.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

If it appears to Archives staff that your research parallels that of another researcher, would you allow Archives staff to give your name, address and research topic to the other researcher? Please initial your response. **Yes:** ____ **No:** ____

Parish staff acknowledgement: _____



Rules governing the use of the parish archival records

1. All researchers must complete the reverse side of this form prior to being given access to any records.
2. Access to records is granted at the discretion of the Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director and in accordance with parish policies; it is a privilege that may be revoked with just cause.
3. Coats, book bags, backpacks, and other personal property not essential to a researcher's work must be left in designated area away from researcher's table.
4. Eating, drinking and smoking are not permitted while consulting records.
5. Only pencils may be used for note taking; no pens, highlighters, or markers. Laptop computers are permitted.
6. All materials must be handled with care.
7. The exact order of material in a file folder must be preserved; if you notice something that is out of order please notify a staff member.
8. Photocopying & Scanning. This will be done at the discretion of the parish staff and only when such duplication does not harm the original record and does not violate copyright restrictions.
9. Permission to Publish: Any materials you wish to use in a publication must be approved by the Parish and a *Permission to Publish Agreement* must be signed.
10. The researcher agrees to donate to the parish one copy of any completed work that was based substantially on records held in the archives.

Materials consulted

Staff use only.

Type of Record	Date of Consultation	Notes

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