



NOTICE

Recording Sacramental Information

Reverend Father,

Among the more solemn responsibilities of pastors is the accurate recording of sacramental information for our people. The Apostolic Nunciature of the United States recently wrote to U.S. Bishops clarifying a few of the basics of sacramental recordkeeping, as well as passing along the new guidance from the Nunciature. Accurate recordkeeping is essential to preserving the rights of the faithful to fully engage in the life of the Church. Please note that the following information is required to be recorded in a **paper copy** of the baptismal register:

- The name of the baptized
- The minister of baptism
- Parents
- Sponsor(s)
- The place and date of birth
- The place and date of baptism

Although the Diocese of Erie is implementing a module in the Ministry Platform software to record the sacraments, this is insufficient on its own. It must be recorded in hard copy as well as in Ministry Platform. The pastor is responsible for ensuring the information is updated **immediately** after the baptism, or at least within a week, of the celebration of the sacrament. He may delegate this responsibility to a trained assistant, although the responsibility for oversight remains with him.

Additionally, the law requires adding the following information to the notations section of the baptismal register:

- Confirmation
- Holy Orders
- Marriage
- Perpetual Profession of Religious Vows
- Dispensation of a Marriage *ratum et non consummatum*
- Enrollment in a Church *sui iuris*
- Adoption
- Declaration of the Nullity of Marriage
- Legitimate Dissolution of Marriage
- Convalidation of Marriage

When a member of the faithful was baptized in another country, pastors sometimes ask the Apostolic Nunciature to pass on updated sacramental information to the parish of baptism. The Nunciature has informed us that they will only transmit the canonically required information as listed above. Optional information (such as the date of first Communion, which is not required to be recorded) will no longer be transmitted by the Nunciature. Pastors would need to communicate optional information by postal or electronic mail.

In no circumstances should a record be created for first reconciliation. This includes any form of certificate given to the child, which gravely jeopardizes the sacramental seal.

Finally, please remember that sacramental registers are strictly and entirely confidential. No one is allowed to see the register aside from the priests or a designated secretary who has been duly informed of its confidential nature. Parishes often receive calls from people engaged in genealogical research requesting to examine parish records. Although a sacramental record may be requested by the person themselves, it is prohibited and contrary to canon law to allow anyone to examine the actual register books.

If there are any questions, please contact the Chancery at 814-824-1130 or chancery@eriercd.org. In the meantime, please be assured of my continued prayers.

By order of the Most Reverend Bishop
January 28, 2026

Joseph A. Petrone, Jr.

The Reverend Joseph A. Petrone, Jr., JCL
Assistant Chancellor