

CHANCERY
ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES/RESEARCH & INFORMATION DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE

1408 CARMEL DRIVE
LAFAYETTE LA 70501
(337) 261-5639 – 261-5667
www.diolaf.org

ARCHIVES GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH POLICY

GENERAL POLICIES:

- Access to records of Baptism shall coincide with access to Federal Census records (current year minus 70 years). Records less than 70 years old are sealed to the public.
- Great care should be taken not to give records indiscriminately to persons who have no legitimate right to them. If the person requesting the record is unable to provide proof of identity at that time or if he or she lives in another city or state, the certificate can be mailed to that person's *parish, where he or she will be asked for proof of identity before receiving a certificate.
- Individuals who have legal access to Baptismal records less than 70 years old include:
 - The person named in the record (if over age 18 or an emancipated minor).
 - A parent or legal guardian of the person named in the record (if the person is under age 18 or incapacitated).
 - Other parties as designated in writing by person named in the record.
 - If person is deceased, their children or heirs may have access to the records after supplying the Archives with documented proof of kinship.
- Other parties as designated or permitted by court order, subpoena, summons, or State or Federal statute.
- In the case of sacramental records that may concern an adoption, the Archives cannot reveal the names of the natural/biological parents. No certificate issued by either the Archives or any individual *parish will contain this information. The Diocese adheres to state guidelines that give priority to the privacy rights of the natural parents.

AUTHORIZED RECIPIENTS OF GENEALOGICAL RECORDS:

- **Currently, the Archives is accepting requests online only.** If you do not have the ability to submit an online request, you may submit one via postal mail. Please note that there may be a delay in processing due to the office being closed. The fee for research must still be received prior to processing any request. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.
- The ordinary request for a sacramental record from church parish to church parish or from a diocesan office (e.g. Tribunal, Chancellor's Office) presents no problem. The record is mailed directly to the church *parish or diocesan office, without requiring a signed release.
- Generally, certificates are issued only for current records and/or legal purposes. The sacramental registers are not open to examination by anyone except authorized church *parish or chancery personnel, as these records may contain confidential information:
- ***Sacramental records are private in that they are created in circumstances presumed to be personal and confidential, and are not available for public viewing. They are public in that, legally, they will stand as valid, authentic evidence when an appropriate civil record does not exist***

- *Parishes may provide certificates for non-sacramental purposes to genealogists/researchers if time permits but may also elect to refer them to the Diocesan Archives. However, this does not mean that church parish Sacramental Registers are available for public viewing.

PROCEDURES TO REQUEST GENEALOGICAL RECORDS:

The Archives Staff *does not research general family lines*. The staff conducts research for a *specific individual's record only* and, when possible, issues documentation of the information listed on an entry for a specific record.

- Each request should contain as much known information as possible; including:
 - Listing the complete name(s) of the person(s) to be researched whenever possible.
 - Designate specific sacramental record(s) to be searched (ex., baptism or marriage).
 - Provide the approximate date(s) for the person(s) to be researched.
 - Provide the name of the town, parish, or region of the diocese where the person(s) resided.
 - Any additional information such as parents' names, birth date of first child, place of residence, the name of the priest officiating at the sacramental ceremony can be very helpful when an exact date or specific Parish church is not known
- **Tips for finding records:**
 - Assuming you are looking for your baptismal certificate, did you ever receive First Communion, Confirmation, or Matrimony in the Catholic Church? Parishes celebrating these other sacraments are required to send that information (a notation only, not the certificate) back to the parish of baptism. Please note that the parish of baptism cannot give you your certificate for First Communion, Confirmation, etc.; it would just have a notation that you received that sacrament (elsewhere).
 - Where were your sisters and brothers baptized? Sometimes siblings were baptized together or at least at the same parish.
 - At what address did you live when you were baptized? We can check and see in what parish that address belongs geographically.
 - Do you know the priest's or deacon's name that baptized you? If so, we can check the clergy records and see where he was stationed at the time.
 - Was it in the city or a rural area?
 - Were you baptized or married on a U.S. military base, either in the U.S. or abroad? If so, your records are probably at the Military Archdiocese:
 - Sacramental Records Department, Archdiocese of the Military Services, U.S.A., P.O Box 4469, Washington, DC 20017-0469
 - Phone: (202) 719-3600 / Fax: (202) 269-9022
 - E-mail: info@milarch.org or website: www.milarch.org
 - Please send a written request to the Military Archdiocese. Forms are available at <http://www.milarch.org/sacramental-records/> It takes two to six weeks to receive the certificate.

FEES:

- The Diocese of Lafayette charges a fee of \$25.00 per individual genealogical record request. This fee covers up to one hour of research per record request. A copy of the digitized record will be provided for each request. Certificates are not issued for genealogical purposes. No request will be accepted without proper payment. Please submit no more than four (4) specific requests.
- Payment for online requests can be completed using our online form (see link below).
- Payment for mail-in requests is accepted by personal check or money order, only, made payable to: **DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE**
- Requests are currently being accepted online at our website.
<https://diolaf.org/genealogical-research>

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- Requests for current sacramental records needed for confirmation, marriage, Social Security, or Medicare purposes are given preferential treatment.
- The Archives *does not* have any records relating to annulments. All records of annulments are held by the Marriage Tribunal. Records of the Marriage Tribunal are not available for genealogical investigation under any circumstances.
- The Archives *does* house the student records for the closed Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese.
- Individuals needing information concerning records from the closed St. Mary's Home (orphanage) may contact our office.
- Each request is answered with documentation in English that includes all pertinent family information, except for information on race and legitimacy.
- We hope the above-listed information assists you in your search. The Diocesan Archivist is always available to answer questions concerning the creation, maintenance, and disposition of sacramental records. If you need further assistance or would like to be directed to your local diocese or archdiocese, please feel free to contact us.
- You may also find a listing of dioceses and archdioceses in the United States at the Web site of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.nccbuscc.org

**Church Parish Policy*

Please note that while it is the policy of our diocese that the actual (physical) sacramental registers (books) of church parishes of the diocese are recorded and kept at the particular church parish wherever the sacramental act takes place; church parishes are separate entities whose policies, procedures, and schedules of fees regarding research may be different from our own.

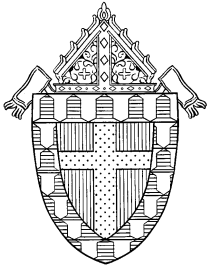
For a complete listing of the church parishes of our diocese, which includes addresses, telephone/fax numbers, and where applicable, websites and/or email addresses, please log onto our website: www.diolaf.org and click on **Parish Listings**

Please submit genealogical requests through our website:

<https://diolaf.org/genealogical-research>

Please forward postal inquiries to:
Archives/Research & Information
Diocese of Lafayette
1408 Carmel Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501

Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing requests.



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- The Diocese of Lafayette charges a fee of \$25.00 for each individual genealogical record request. This fee covers up to one hour of research for each record.
- A copy of the digitized record will be provided for each record request. If the record is not found, we will notify you. The Archives does not issue certificates.
- Exact fees should be made, as the Archives does not provide refunds. Excess fees will be considered a donation. No request will be processed without proper payment.
- Each request should include no more than four (4) specific records.
- Requests and payment are currently being accepted through our website.
- Please contact us if you are unable to submit an online request.

Please submit requests through our website at:

<https://diolaf.org/genealogical-research>

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Cbrunet@diolaf.org / 337-261-5667