



Diocese of Austin

Office of the Bishop

The Catholic Church of Central Texas
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Dear priests, deacons, and parish administrative staff:

Since we are a sacramental church, the keeping of vital sacramental records is an important responsibility entrusted to us and required by canon law. The deans of our diocese, however, are discovering that many parishes are finding it difficult to record information in sacramental books. Some parishes are backlogged for years, and there is a grave concern that some sacramental information has been lost.

In addition, it has been at least 20 years since the diocese undertook a thorough audit of parish sacramental information by copying all records and filing them with the diocesan archives.

The diocesan staff and deans have done considerable research into this matter. Based on their advice and consultation, and to safeguard the sacramental records of our Catholics, I am requiring the following:

As of July 1, 2007, all sacramental information will be entered into ChurchDB, a Web-based database that is already available to parishes for current parish database needs. ChurchDB will become the primary and first place of entry for sacramental information after July 1, 2007, for the Austin Diocese. If parishes wish to maintain a “hard copy” of these records, there will be an option to print pages to be bound. It will no longer be necessary for handwritten entries to be made.

On a regular basis, the diocesan staff will be responsible to format the information in ChurchDB and have it printed and bound into sacramental books.

The procedure to do this is simple. A guide is included with this letter. It is also available online at www.churchdb.com/austin. For any technical questions regarding access to ChurchDB, please contact Teresa Klepac at Austin Computing Solutions at (512) 231-1238, ext. 201, or tklepac@austincomputing.com.

This will allow us to have a permanent, secure and continual source for sacramental information, available via a secured password 24/7. Files are backed up numerous times daily by professionals. Deans and pastors will have easy access to reports in ChurchDB to monitor that the sacramental information is being recorded.

For those who desire more than the online instructions, training will be provided on April 17, 2007 at the distance learning sites (diocesan Pastoral Center, College Station, Temple and Marble Falls). It will also be offered on June 4, 2007, at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center. Please see the attached flyer for more information on the training.

Secondly, the diocese has contracted with an individual to develop a comprehensive archival system for sacramental records prior to July 1, 2007. This individual has been charged with researching the digitization of the sacramental books, presenting a proposal on how to do this as efficiently and economically as possible, and actually copying the sacramental records in all parishes. This project has begun and you will be hearing more information on this in the next few months, and eventually will be scheduling a time for the copying of your sacramental records.

I am hopeful that these two efforts will ensure that our sacramental records are maintained and protected for many future generations. Thank you for your assistance and support of this endeavor.

In gratitude for your ministry to God's people, I am,
Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Aymond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Bishop of Austin

enc.: instructions and training information



Training for ChurchDB

A diocesan-wide database that can handle all your parish's database needs

All sacraments celebrated after July 1, 2007, for parishes in the Austin Diocese are to be recorded in ChurchDB (and no longer in sacramental books).

Please come to one of the trainings below (or check out the online training by clicking on 'churchdb' in the lower left corner at www.austindiocese.org) to learn how to enter sacramental records in ChurchDB.

How can ChurchDB make your job easier?

Find out at one of the trainings listed below. Please register in advance by e-mailing colleen-schiller@austindiocese.org or faxing this form to (512) 476-5341.

April 17, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. OR 2 to 5 p.m. (Session repeated)

Available at the following locations through the diocesan teleconferencing resources:

- St. John Parish, Marble Falls
- St. Luke, Temple, Religious Education Bldg., Room 8
- St. Mary Catholic Center, College Station, Room 203
- Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1625 Rutherford Lane, Austin

June 4, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. OR 2 to 5 p.m. (Session repeated)

Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center, Belton (one site only)

Name _____ Parish/City _____

Please check the training which you will be attending

April 17, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. AT Austin College Station Marble Falls or Temple

April 17, 2 to 5 p.m. AT Austin College Station Marble Falls or Temple

June 4, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center

June 4, 2 to 5 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center

How do you use ChurchDB? What would you like to learn about ChurchDB?



Sacramental Records in ChurchDB

Sacramental records are kept in the Membership Module. Please refer to the Membership Module instructions if you need assistance in entering or updating a membership record.

Entering a Sacramental Record

- Click on Membership
- Enter the full or partial name of the individual that you wish to search for and then click on the Search button
- Click on the link of the appropriate individual
- Click on the Sacraments link located at the top of the screen. This will bring up a table listing all of the members of the family.
- Click on the NO link associated with the sacrament to be entered. Enter all of the information that you have on the sacrament. Fields listed in blue with asterisks are typically required by established guidelines but are not required in ChurchDB in order to save the information. After entering all of the information, click on the Save button. If you wish to print out a certificate, click on the Save & Print button.

Note: In some cases, a YES might already be entered for that sacrament but not all of the information has been entered. Update the information that you have for the sacrament and click on the Save button.

Entering Sacramental Records by Class (Only available to Churches using the Education module)

- Click on Education
- Click on the More link at the top of the screen
- Click on the Assign Sacrament by Class link
- Choose the sacrament to be entered, the term, and a class
- Click on the Show All link at the top of the class list. This will refresh the screen and show all records for this sacrament already entered for any individual.
- All individuals that were registered in the class chosen will be displayed. If all individuals will have the same sacramental information entered, then click on the Select All box. If that is not the case, go through the list of individuals and mark which individuals you are assigning a sacramental record. At the bottom of the screen, choose the church, minister and date and then click on the Assign Sacraments button. The program will assign the sacramental record to the chosen individuals and will then return to the class list.
- Repeat the previous process if you have another group of individuals receiving the sacrament together, such as at a different Mass, etc.
- Click on the Edit link next to any individual to enter (or edit) sacramental information for just that individual. Remember to click on the Save button if information is entered.

Sacramental records are part of the membership module and can be seen by any church with whom the individual is affiliated – not just the church that entered the record.