

FAQ – Registers (parishes)

1.1. Baptism register:

1.1.1. *If the father, mother, godfather or godmother is absent during the baptism, can they come sign the registry later?*

No; the baptism record in the registry must accurately reflect what happened during the ceremony. However, an absent person can be represented at the ceremony by another person who will sign in the register. For the person who represents the godfather, for example, one will write the godfather's name followed by "represented by" and the representative's name. The representative will sign his own name on the godfather's signature line. Under the signature line, the words "representative of the" will be added before the word "godfather."

1.1.2. *If the father's name is unknown at the baptism, what indication do I write for the father?*

The line will be left totally blank, without a line through it. A parent will not be referred to as "undeclared" under any circumstances in the parish registry.

1.1.3. *If a man shows up after the baptism to demand that he be designated as the father of the child, can I add his name to the document?*

If the man brings an official proof of paternity, or if he declares his paternity before the parish priest and two witnesses, the parish can submit a request to the Archdiocese to correct the register. See below for the administrative procedure to correct a register.

1.1.4. *Can someone name two godfathers or two godmothers?*

Godfathers and godmothers are an extension of the family and of the Church, which is beautiful and enriched by the human complementarity between man and woman. Therefore, there cannot be two godfathers or two godmothers. For further information, see the Canonical and Pastoral Guide, 2006 edition, chapter I, section 5.1.

1.1.5. *For whom must the title of "witness" be used?*

This title is reserved to non-Catholic but validly-baptized persons, provided that the other godfather/godmother is a confirmed Catholic person of the other gender.

1.1.6. *If a Catholic person is not confirmed, can I name him/her as a witness?*

No; the title of witness is reserved to non-Catholic but validly-baptized persons and cannot be used in any other circumstances.

1.1.7. *If a Catholic person is not confirmed, can I give that person another title? Person of good conduct, godmother at heart, trustworthy person, committed person, etc.?*

No; the titles of "witness" and "godfather/godmother" are the only authorized titles in acts of baptism, and the applicable rules cannot be circumvented by the use of another title.

1.1.8. If the baptism of a person 14 years of age or older is recorded in the register with the other baptisms, should I strike it from the register and record it as a special act in the white pages?

Despite the mistake, if the act is signed, it must be left as is. However, the baptism will be recorded as a special act in the white pages with, instead of the signatures, a reference to the signed act. Then, in the margin of the signed act, there will be a reference to the special act.

1.1.9. If a person 14 years of age or older is confirmed at the same time as he/she is baptized, must the confirmation be added to the register of confirmations?

Yes. There will then be two entries, one in the register of baptisms (as a special act in the white pages of the registry, with mention of the confirmation) and another in the register of confirmations.

1.2. Confirmations:

1.2.1. Should the confirmation of a person 14 years of age or older be recorded in the white pages?

No; the confirmation should be recorded like the others in the register of confirmations, even if it is performed at the same time as a profession of faith or a baptism.

1.2.2. Can I add the confirmation of a person 14 years of age or older to the other confirmations in the register?

Yes, these confirmations are recorded like the others in the register of confirmations.

1.3. Marriages:

1.3.1. In an act of marriage, how should I indicate if banns were published or not?

In the register, between the (pre)printed words "No opposition was raised against this marriage after . . ." and ". . . publication by posting for twenty days," write the words "the" or "dispensation from," as the case may be.

1.3.2. Should I indicate the dates of publication of the marriage in the act?

It is not indicated in the act, but in Form 6 and on the envelope of the marriage record.

1.3.3. How should I write the act of marriage if there was a civil marriage before (convalidation)?

Strike the words "and according to the provisions of Quebec civil legislation," then write "convalidation" on the permissions and dispensations line.

1.3.4. If it is a "convalidation," should I write the celebrant's "Vital Statistics identification number" anyway?

No, this number is not necessary in case of convalidation, because then the celebrant is not acting as a representative of civil authority.

1.3.5. On the marriage envelope, what is the purpose of the “Delegation” line in the left column?

It is for the name of the member of the clergy who delegated the celebrating minister. This delegation is made by the bishop, vicar general, episcopal vicar, parish priest (leader of the mission) or assistant parish priest (assistant to the leader). In fact, deacons, as well as priests who are not officially appointed as assistant pastors in the parish where the wedding is celebrated (or the assistants in the mission) absolutely must be delegated to receive the consent during the wedding.

1.3.6. If the person declares that he/she has no religion (in the case of disparity of cult), what do I write as religion in the act?

Ideally, you should write “none” or “no religion.”

1.4. Funerals and burials:

1.4.1. If the deceased is divorced or a common-law spouse, what should I write as a title for “husband-wife”?

This space must be left blank.

1.4.2. If the family has not yet decided where the ashes will be placed or buried, what should I write as burial site?

You indicate, “Ashes entrusted to the family.”

1.4.3. If the family tells me that the ashes will be scattered or buried in another country, what burial place should I write?

You must write the exact place; the mere indication of the name of a city or country as a burial place is not adequate, because it lacks precision.

1.4.4. If the family has not decided yet how it will dispose of the body, what should I write in the act?

You will write, “Body entrusted to the family for later burial.”

1.4.5. If the deceased had been residing in a CHSLD for some time, what do I indicate as parish and residence of this person?

One should consider that the person was still a member of the parish where he/she was practising his/her faith before being hospitalized in a CHSLD, and write the name of that parish accordingly. As an alternative, since almost every CHSLD receives the visit of a member of the clergy who administers sacraments there, the name of the parish where this CHSLD is located can be written.

1.4.6. What do I write as parish of residence of the deceased if he/she was no longer practising or if the family does not know in which parish his/her residence was?

You write the parish and municipality corresponding to the last residence of the person, but, in case of doubt, you can write the parish where the person was practising his/her faith.

1.4.7. If the person was deceased and incinerated several years ago, what do I write as the person's parish?

You write the parish and municipality corresponding to his/her last residence. In case of doubt, you can write the parish where the person was practising his/her faith.

1.4.8. If the person was homeless, what do I write as the municipality and parish of residence?

Most homeless people normally spend their days in a relatively limited territory; a member of the clergy takes care of the whole flock living in the territory of his parish or mission; therefore, you should write the name of the parish or mission where the person was living.

1.5. Correction of registers:

1.5.1. What is the procedure to correct an error in the register?

First fill out the form [link to PDF file: registry correction form]. Then, you have to forward to the Chancery, with this form signed by the parish priest or another ordained minister appointed to the parish, a copy of the page to be corrected in the register and, whenever applicable, a copy of the official documents needed as evidence.

1.5.2. A person changes godfather or godmother; should the change also be made in the register?

A person may have changed godfather or godmother, but the entry in the register must reflect the facts at the time of the religious act.

1.5.3. A person wants to change gender in the register; what do I do?

Surgery can change the sexual condition and civil status of a person, but this does not change his/her canonical status (male or female) that was defined at the moment of birth. Therefore, a change cannot be made in the register of baptisms following a surgery or anything else causing a change of gender. However, for information purposes only, a marginal notation must be made in the baptism record.

1.6. Suppliers:

1.6.1. Where can I find a supplier for a new registry?

Please call Reliures Desmarais (Saint-Lazare) at 514-825-7797 or Reliures Diane Malo (Saint-Paul-de-Joliette) at 450-759-5204.

1.6.2. Where can I find the cotton paper needed to produce the summary sheets ("copies of registers")?

Please contact your registry supplier, who will be able to sell you virgin cotton paper to be printed on using the parish software, or preprinted summary sheets to be filled out (for information) by hand. This paper will be legal size (8½ x 14) and will be printed tumble style, which means that you do not turn the pages like a book, but like a calendar.