

**APPRAISING SACRED OBJECTS
OR
DOCUMENTING SACRED PATRIMONY**

Sacred Objects

Canon 1171 --- Sacred objects, which are designated for divine worship by dedication or blessing, are to be treated reverently and are not to be employed for profane or inappropriate use even if they are owned by private persons.

The current liturgical books speak of “dedication” only in reference to places---to churches and altars. “Blessings” are given to all objects which are destined for divine worship; the only exception is the chrism which is consecrated. The liturgical books have blessings for the following objects related to divine worship: a foundation stone of a new church; a chalice and paten; other articles for the liturgical celebration such as the ciborium or pyx, the monstrance, vestments, linens, hymnals, and service books; a baptistery or a new baptismal font; a repository for holy oils; an episcopal or a presidential chair, a lectern, a tabernacle, a confessional; church doors; a cross for public veneration; images for public veneration; bells; an organ; holy water; stations of the cross.

The diocesan bishop has the right of visitation of places where blessed objects are kept, except the houses of pontifical religious institutes and societies of apostolic life. Sacred objects may not be used for secular purposes unless they have lost their blessing. A person who profanes a sacred thing is to be punished by a just penalty. (c. 1376)

Inventory of Goods

Canon 1283 --- Before administrators begin their function:

1° they must take an oath

2° They are to prepare and sign an accurate and clear inventory of immovable property, movable objects, whether precious or of some cultural value, or other goods, with their description and appraisal; any inventory already done is to be reviewed;

3° one copy of this inventory is to be preserved in the archive of the administration and another in the archive of the curia; any change which the patrimony happens to undergo is to be noted in each copy.

Relics

Canon 1190

§1. It is absolutely forbidden to sell sacred relics.

§2. Relics of great significance and other relics honored with great reverence by the people cannot be alienated validly in any manner or transferred permanently without the permission of the Apostolic See.

§3. The prescript of §2 is valid also for images which are honored in some church with great reverence by the people.

Appraisal definition from “Managing Diocesan Archives and Records”

appraisal - The process by which the archivist/records manager determines the value and thus the disposition of records based on their current administrative, legal, and fiscal use; their evidential and informational or research value; their arrangement; and their relationship to other records

Appraisal and Acquisitions

Appraisal is the process by which the archivist/records manager assesses the value of records to determine their disposition. Only a small percentage of records will be appraised as permanent or having enduring value. The most difficult task for the archivist is to appraise records of historical value. Accessioning is the process by which the records once appraised are transferred to the archives from the entity which created them.

In the past, for most dioceses the appraisal of records has been left to the Darwinian concept that whatever survives is important. Older records (generally from the early twentieth century and before) may be valued due to their scarcity. Today the archivist faces the opposite problem due to the use of copiers and high volume printers. The front end management of records (paper and electronic) mitigates against the avalanche of document production.

Official Documents of the Holy See: Letter from the congregation for the Clergy and procedural Guidelines for the Modification of Parishes and the Closure, Relegation and Alienation of Churches (The Jurist 73, 2013, 211-219.)

Prior to alienation, all sacred objects, relics, sacred furnishings, stained-glass windows, bells, confessionals, alters, etc. are to be removed for use in other sacred edifices or to be stored in ecclesiastical custody. Because altars can never be turned over to profane use, if they cannot be removed, they must be destroyed (cf. cann. 1212 and 1238)

Canon 123 (Roman Replies 2006)

In the case where the portion of the Christian Faithful is reallocated among pre-existing or newly created parishes, the corresponding or newly created parishes, the corresponding patrimony and obligations of the closed parishes must follow the Faithful in an equitable and proportionate fashion in accord with the corresponding responsibilities and pastoral duties assumed by the parishes *ad quem*. The wishes of any existing founders and benefactors must be respected, as must any acquired rights as expressed in canon 121 or 122.