

# ACDA NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of the Association of Catholic  
Diocesan Archivists

Volume 29, Issue 3

October 2014

## From the President

By Ann T. Boltin, Diocese of Baton Rouge

A lot has happened since the last newsletter arrived in your inbox. Summer has come and gone and with it we had another successful conference at St. Mary of the Lake. Many thanks to the program committee and the host committee for performing all of the extraordinary work that makes it all run so smoothly. I hope you all had occasion to catch up with one another, get inspired, and return to your own archives reinvigorated and ready to tackle your latest project. I received quite the unexpected promotion while you were all at Mundelein. President-elect Peggy Lavelle made the decision to resign from her position. Peggy did not make her decision lightly and I can assure you that I am up to the task and resolved to move the organization forward.

I am also pleased to announce, due to the hard work of the committee and the generosity of our members, that the Audrey P. Newcomer Continuing Education



Scholarship is now a reality. Enclosed in this newsletter is information on the scholarship, which will be given for the first time ever in February of 2015. This award is for ACDA members only. It grants up to \$1,000 for a practicing

archivist to attend a conference, workshop, institute, or other continuing education activity to enhance their professional training. For those of us who knew Audrey I think this is the perfect way to honor her memory. Her commitment to continuing education was obvious, she strived to learn as much as she could to become a better and more knowledgeable archivist and records manager. She understood the importance of keeping up with current theory and practice and was very active in local, state, and national professional organizations. On a personal note, Audrey was one of the first people that I met while attending Mundelein. She was among a handful of

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## ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC DIOCESAN ARCHIVISTS

### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: ELECTION 2015

In accordance with our by-laws, the nominating committee requests members' nominations for Vice-President/President Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and two Executive Board Members-at-Large for the 2015 election year. Please submit your nomination(s), including the nominee's name and suggested office, to the following nominating committee member by **November 30, 2014**:

Brian P. Fahey  
P.O. Box 818  
Charleston, SC  
bfahey@catholic-doc.org  
843-577-1017

Official position descriptions are available in the Association's by-laws.

**Vice President/President Elect:** Chairs the planning committee and serves on the finance committee for two years 8/2015– 8/2017; automatically succeeds to president 8/2017 at the 2017 annual business meeting. The president is responsible for presiding at the annual meeting; appointing committee chairpersons/members; and, is an ex-officio member of all committees.

**Secretary** (2-year term; 8/2015– 8/2017): Records the minutes of board and general meetings, prepares and responds to general correspondence, provides summary of the minutes in the Association newsletter and updates the Association listing in the Official Catholic Directory of the United States.

**Treasurer** (2-year term; 8/2015– 8/2017): Receives annual dues, maintains the membership list, manages Association funds; maintains Association budget in electronic format and reports semi-annually to the finance committee; submits a proposed annual budget to the finance committee and the president for approval one month prior to the start of the fiscal year; prepares annual budget for the executive board, publishes a year-end financial statement in the next Association newsletter subsequent to the year's end and chairs the finance committee.

**Executive Board Member at Large** (2 positions; 4-year term; 8/2015– 2019 meeting): Four members-at-large represent the membership on the Board. These members should reflect different regions of the US and Canada, as well as diocesan archives of different sizes. Two members-at-large are elected every two years.

**Note:** The exact date of the beginning and ending of office tenure will be determined by the exact date of the annual business meeting held in the year the term of office begins.

## Audrey P. Newcomer Continuing Education Scholarship

The Audrey P. Newcomer Scholarship is a competitive award that honors the memory of Audrey and her passion and enthusiasm for education and knowledge. The scholarship, awarded by The Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists (ACDA), provides up to \$1,000 for a practicing archivist to attend a conference, workshop, institute, or other continuing education activity to enhance their professional training. This award is offered in the years that ACDA does not host its own conference (Odd years only). The awards committee reserves the right to forgo awarding the scholarship if a suitable candidate is not found.

### **Eligibility:**

Applicant must be a member of ACDA in good standing with at least two years of employment in a Catholic diocesan or religious institution. The applicant must have limited institutional funding for continuing education. Candidates who receive this scholarship may not reapply in subsequent years.

### **Obligations:**

The recipient must use the award for the calendar year in which it is awarded, cover any expenses incurred beyond the amount of the award, and return any unexpended funds to ACDA. The recipient must also write an article for the ACDA newsletter about their training experience and how the funding was used.

### **Application:**

Applications will not be considered unless all of the following elements are included:

- A cover sheet including your name, title, institution, mailing address, phone number, and email address.
- Current resume or curriculum vitae.
- Letter(s) of reference, one of which must come from your current employer.
- A personal letter which describes:
  - Your educational background, including information on previous professional education opportunities.
  - A description of your current job requirements, length of employment, and title.
  - Information about the educational program you would like to attend and the dollar amount of assistance required.
  - Why you require outside funding.

### **Deadline to apply:**

Applications must be postmarked/submitted by **January 31, 2015** and sent to:

Brian P. Fahey  
Audrey P. Newcomer Scholarship Committee  
114 Broad Street, Carriage House  
P.O. Box 818  
Charleston, SC 29402

or

[bfahey@catholic-doc.org](mailto:bfahey@catholic-doc.org)

## Catholic Archives of Texas Meeting

By **Marian J. Barber, PhD**, Catholic Archives of Texas

At the suggestion of Lisa May, ACDA member and director of Archives and Records for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, the Catholic Archives of Texas (CAT) organized a meeting of the diocesan archivists of Texas on September 22, 2014, in Austin in conjunction with the General Assembly of the Texas Catholic Conference. May noted that the archivists previously gathered on a regular basis, but in recent years the meetings had been discontinued.



Carmen Cortes-Harms and Janet Fontenette of the Diocese of Austin and Joyce Higgins of the Diocese of Dallas share a lighter moment at the meeting of Texas diocesan archivists.

The September gathering was somewhat of a reunion: several of those in attendance had met during the summer at the ACDA biennial conference at Mundelein. In attendance besides May were Brian Bodiford of the Diocese of San Angelo, Joyce Higgins of the Diocese of Dallas, Dr. Patricia Roeser of the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Romeo Rodriguez of the Diocese of Laredo, Fr. Hank Lanik of the Diocese of Tyler, Carmen Cortes-Harms and Janet Fontenette of the Diocese of Austin, and Eric Hartmann and Dr. Marian J. Barber of the CAT. Rodriguez and Lanik are the chancellors of their respective dioceses and oversee their archives as part of their broader duties. Bro. Ed Loch, SM, of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, who was part of the group at Mundelein, helped plan the meeting but was not able to attend.

Bro. Richard Daly, CSC, of St. Edward's University, who oversaw the CAT during his long tenure as director of the Texas Catholic Conference, was a special guest. He gave the group a quick history of the CAT and its relationship to the diocesan archives. An outgrowth of efforts to combat Ku Klux Klan anti-Catholicism in the 1920s, the CAT augments the work of the fifteen dioceses of Texas, collecting records and artifacts that help document the Catholic experience in the state.

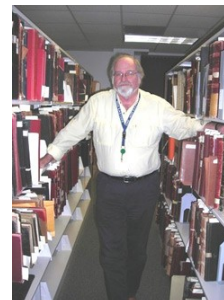
The archivists and chancellors discussed challenges facing diocesan archives today, particularly those staffed by "Lone Arrangers." Roeser reported on her frustrating experience in digitizing the sacramental records of the parishes in her diocese, including a high-priced contractor that sent staff who were not familiar with the hardware and software they were to use. Higgins said that she and Diocese of Dallas Archivist/Historian Steve Landregan are gearing up for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the diocese. Landregan is preparing a series of e-books highlighting the holdings of their archives and museum. They will be available via the diocesan website, <https://www.cathdal.org/archives>.

After a tour of the CAT facilities, the group began planning for their next meeting, to be held in Corpus Christi on Friday, March 6, 2015, in conjunction with the annual conference of the Texas State Historical Association and the annual meeting of the Texas Catholic Historical Society. They agreed to

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## News from ACDA Members!

- Robert Johnson-Lally will be retiring as Archivist of the Archdiocese of Boston effective December 31, 2014, after more than 20 years in that position.



## Catholic Archives of Texas Meeting

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increase outreach to the archivists of the dioceses that were not represented at the fall meeting and to the chancellors of the dioceses that do not have individuals designated as archivists. They also agreed to invite archivists of

the state's Catholic institutions, such as hospitals, schools, seminaries, colleges, and universities as well as the religious orders serving the state and the parishes that have their own archives. They also agreed that the CAT staff would create and manage an

electronic mailing list for the group to facilitate interaction and planning. To join the list or learn more about the spring meeting, please contact Barber at [marian@txcatholic.org](mailto:marian@txcatholic.org).

## From the President

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women whom I looked to as a mentor in the sometimes complicated world of diocesan archives. She was quick to return a phone call or email and always made time to talk to me even if it meant being late for dinner. I am proud of ACDA for recognizing such a great lady, former president,

and archivist with this scholarship and I look forward to it being awarded for many years to come.

I encourage all of you who would like to enhance your professional knowledge to apply for this award. One of the biggest complaints I hear is lack of funding at dioceses for continuing education.

This generous award could cover the cost of registration, hotel, and travel for many educational offerings. If you have any questions about your eligibility or the application process, feel free to contact any of the committee members: myself, Brian Fahey, and Lee Leumas.

## **Managing the Records of Clerics**

By John J. Treanor, Archdiocese of Chicago

Diocesan Cleric's files should be managed within the overall framework of managing all diocesan records. A sound records management program, established in a diocesan policy, managed by a trained professional Archivist/Records Manager is the only recipe for success.

The management of Clergy records has changed dramatically in the last fifteen years. The proliferation of printers, copy machines, faxes, and the constant change of Diocesan personnel and position responsibility, has made the management of paper files a serious challenge. The duplication of records, absence of clear record-keeping policies, and the introduction of lay personnel in diocesan administration has created a different set of dynamics. Paper files kept in various offices create silos of information that have, at times, prevented the Bishop and his designates from accessing the complete record of a cleric when making ministerial decisions. However, none of these challenges have had as great an impact as the ubiquitousness of technology. Computer files with unstructured data living in multiple locations has made the management of electronic records, relating to Clergy records, a problem so large that it caused most dioceses to ignore the problem or attempt Band-Aid solutions. Diocesan e-mail forwarded to personal computers, tablets, and cell phones outside the management of the diocese is the norm rather than the exception. Records, formerly on paper that were either filed or destroyed, now exist on computer hard drives, shared folders, memory sticks, old CDs, personal computers, back-up tapes, or many of the aforementioned locations at one time. These unstructured electronic records present access restriction problems and potential e-discovery nightmares; not to mention a serious impediment to a new Bishop and his designates when making sound ministerial decisions.

### **Clergy Record Keeping Principles**

No one can argue against the statement that the greatest impact on the Roman Catholic Church in America during the last two decades has been the sexual misconduct scandal. The reasons why it happened and who is to blame will be analyzed and discussed by scholars and people in the pew for years to come. Of all the varying points of view as to the cause of the misconduct scandal, at the heart of the scandal were records; both records that did exist and did not exist. As someone at the center of this sad state of affairs, I can say without equivocation that good record-keeping produces accountability and transparency. It also provides a better opportunity for decision makers to make the right decisions.

The proper management of clergy records should be governed by three principles:

1. The Bishop, his designates and their successors can make sound ministerial decisions based on accurate and complete records.
2. A priest has the right to expect that his privacy will be protected and access to his records restricted to only those designated by the Bishop
3. The records honestly document all decisions and actions made during a priest's formation and ministry

When a Diocese or Archdiocese asks, "what records should we keep in a cleric's file?", the answer can be determined by whether or not "the record" documents decisions and actions during his formation and clerical ministry. These records should be managed throughout their life cycle; from the point of creation throughout their active phase into their historical phase or final disposition.

### **Records that Document the Formation Phase of a Cleric's Life**

The formation phase of a cleric begins with discernment. Whether this is handled by a Vocation Office or a Diaconate Office, it usually results in an application by a candidate, an evaluative process, and a decision on the candidate's fitness to enter into a formal Formation program (e.g. Minor Seminary, College Seminary, or Major Seminary). The fact that someone applies, goes through the discernment period and a decision is made by a Diocesan official should be documented. If the candidate is recommended for continued formation, the documents should become part of his formation file. If the candidate is rejected for continued formation, documents should be maintained for a reasonable period in case those decisions need to be reviewed (he might try to reapply at a later date or he may reapply at another formation program and you may be asked to share your decision to reject the candidate.) A reasonable time to maintain the record of rejected candidates is 20 years.

The Formal Formation phase for Clerics includes an education component and well as a spiritual and psychological/emotional maturity component. The education component can be in the form of a general academic education (i.e. math, English, language, history, etc.) at the high school (increasingly rare) and the college level; as well as a clerical specific education (homiletics, pastoral counseling, liturgical rubrics, canon law). The record of the education components are objective grades that measure competency. The records created in the spiritual and psychological/emotional maturity formation component are of a different nature. Records that document the spiritual and psychological/emotional maturity formation phase of a Cleric's training are usually created in the form of a report or written evaluation. They are often subjective and opaquely written. Clerical candidates are evaluated many times during formation. They can be evaluated at the end of each phase, each program, and annually. They can be evaluated formally (with evaluation forms) or informally during formation team meetings. All formation evaluations should be maintained for the life of the cleric. The only exception to keeping evaluative records is when evaluations are done in the "Internal Form," between a clerical candidate and his spiritual advisor. In this case a record is not kept. I strongly suggest that Formation Reports be designed with more objective criteria and clearly rated response; e.g. Did the candidate show evidence of Spiritual Growth? A) His spiritual growth was exceptional? B) His spiritual growth was on target for his stage or formation. C) He needs to work closer with his spiritual advisor and show improvement in the next phase of his formation. D) His lack of spiritual growth should make him reconsider his vocation.

What follows are possible record classifications for Formation. A similar structure can be used for Deacons. The traditional seminarian file is divided into sub-classifications for ease of handling and searching for records. In an analog (eye readable/paper) filing system, keeping file folders for each sub-classification can be a cumbersome. However, in a digital filing system it greatly enhances filing and access.

### **Records that Document the Formation Phase of a Cleric's Life**

#### *Seminarian Files: Application Documentation*

Application records of students preparing for ordination to the priesthood. May include completed application forms, personal statements, writing samples, letters of recommendation, transcripts of previous schools, etc.

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## Managing the Records of Clerics

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### *Seminarian Files: Certificates of Ordination*

Certification records of students preparing for ordination to the priesthood. Types of documents may include requests for certification to the ministries of acolyte and reader and order of the diaconate and priesthood. May also contain Professions of Faith and Notifications of Orders.

### *Seminarian Files: Correspondence*

Correspondence records of students preparing for the priesthood. Types of documents may include letters, e-mails, faxes, or memos to/from and/or regarding the seminarian.

### *Seminarian Files: Formation Reports*

Records that document a seminarian's formation progress toward the priesthood. Types of documents may include reports from advisors, instructors, and field experience supervisors.

### *Seminarian Files: Medical Reports*

Medical records of students preparing for ordination to the priesthood. May include medical examination reports and immunization reports. Medical billing records should not be kept in this file.

### *Seminarian Files: Psychological Reports*

Psychological records of students preparing for ordination to the priesthood. Types of documents may include reports of psychiatric professionals regarding an in-person evaluation or summary reports of psychological tests administered to a seminarian.

### *Seminarian Files: Transcripts*

Grade summaries of academic achievement that document the seminarian's progress toward completion of graduation requirements.

### *Issues with Formation Records*

Some formation directors and seminary rectors have argued that once they determine a clerical candidate is worthy for ordination his files should be destroyed; the candidate is a "tabula rasa" by virtue of his ordination. This notion is argued by persons who do not want to be held accountable for their decisions. It is therefore ill advised. If the recent misconduct scandals that have plagued the church taught us anything, the formation records should be available to the Bishop and his designates throughout the ministerial life of a Cleric. An additional review of the formation files of some of those accused of misconduct would surely have prevented additional incidents. In addition, these formation files are invaluable if the cleric is reduced to the lay state. The process of laicization requires a review of the formation files to help determine if something in his formation would indicate cause for laicization.



### **Records that Document the Ministry Phase of a Cleric's Life**

Once a man is ordained a cleric he begins a life of ministry to the church. The details of that ministry must be documented. Records of his assignments, ongoing ministerial training, and evaluations of his performance should be maintained. This should include any third party psychiatric or medical evaluations requested by the Bishop or his designates to determine a Cleric's fitness for ministry as well as subsequent ongoing treatment reports for substance abuse or other medical issues. These reports are only protected by doctor/patient confidentiality privileges if they reside with the medical professional or institution that authored the report. Here are common classifications of records found in clergy files. Not every diocese will have each classification.

#### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Appointment Documentation*

A document, either in the form of a letter or decree from the bishop to a priest, which documents an appointment to a particular parish or other position in the Archdiocese. It may also be in the form of change of address notice.

#### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Reports*

Includes any and all reports about a priest, (e.g. psychiatric reports, medical reports, performance evaluations, financial reports, etc.). Psychiatric/Medical reports should be given a Medical Records or HIPPA caveat to restrict access to that portion of the file.

#### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Correspondence*

May include various forms of official correspondence (e.g. letters, memos, faxes, emails, etc.) either to/from or about a cleric; which document his ministry or his career as a priest. (It should not contain appointment documentation, greeting cards, casual notes, etc.)

#### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Petition for Laicization*

Found in personnel files of laicized Clerics and in some inactive Clerics. Includes a cover sheet or cover letter and may contain supporting documentation.

#### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Rescript*

Found in the personnel files of laicized Clerics. This is a Latin document that changes a priest's status back to the lay state and removes his obligations of ordination, including the promise to remain celibate. These documents were originally from the Sacra Congregatio Pro Doctrina Fidei (Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) but are now issued by the Congregatio De Cultu Divino Et Disciplina Sacramentorum (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments).

#### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Formation Documents*

May contain various documents regarding a priest's journey toward ordination (e.g. seminary grade reports, cards listing dates of orders and ordination). This sub-classification is common in Dioceses without their own seminary if they do not demand a full copy of the cleric's seminary file.

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## Managing the Records of Clerics

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### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Signed Oaths & Agreements*

Documents in a Cleric's file by which he acknowledges the policies of the Diocese and the expectations of its Clerics. May contain promises, professions of faith, codes of conduct, oaths against modernism, etc.

### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Sabbatical Documents*

Documents the request of or decisions for a Cleric taking Sabbatical. May include sabbatical evaluation form, etc.

### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Wills*

Originals or copies of a will, its amendments, codicils, etc., of a Cleric.

### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Priest Power of Attorney & Funerary Arrangements*

Instructions from a priest regarding details of his own funeral (e.g. liturgy, celebrants, burial instructions, etc.)

### *Personnel Records – Diocesan Clerics Files: Vitae Cards*

An electronically-generated report that details the assignments, extraordinary appointments, ordination date, birth date, and other vitae information of a diocesan cleric. This report should include a photograph

## **Electronic Records**

There is only one way to manage Clergy records now and in the future. We must manage all records relating to the formation and ministry of clerics in electronic form at the point of creation and throughout their life-cycle. This requires a conversion of analog (paper or microfilm) records to electronic records (I suggest searchable standard format PDF/A) and the utilization of an EDRMS (Electronic Document and Records Management Systems) tool that is structured as above to capture future records as they are created. This type of electronic record-keeping tool can create a single store for records, grant or restrict access as necessary, provide audit trails of actions on records, prevent the duplication of records in stores and place retention requirement on records. These tools can manage all your electronic records if you have the will. In any case, the management of Clergy Records must include e-mail management as email has replaced letters and memos. These EDRMS tools can accomplish the management of email as well.

*John J. Treanor is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists, a certified Archivist and a certified Records Manager who has worked in Diocesan Archives for over 30 years. He has consulted for over 26 Roman Catholic Diocese on Archives and Records Management practices as well as three Religious Orders of Men. He is the co-author of Managing Diocesan Archives & Records: A guide for Bishops, Chancellors, and Archivists.*

*These observations and suggestions reflect my own views and should not be construed as the views of any diocese or religious order I have worked in or engaged as a consultant.*

## ACDA Members at the Biennial Mundelein Conference!



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