



The Chancery

Diocese of Erie

429 East Grandview Boulevard
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Priests and Deacons
FROM: Rev. Msgr. Lawrence E. Brandt, Chancellor
RE: Regulations regarding Adoption and Baptismal Registers/Certificates
DATE: December 15, 2000

On November 18, 1998, the Latin Rite *de iure* members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved complementary legislation for canon 877.3 of the Code of Canon Law for the Latin Rite dioceses of the United States.

The action was granted *recognitio* by the Congregation for Bishops in accord with article 82 of the Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus and issued by Decree of the Congregation for Bishops signed by His Excellency Most Reverend Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect, and His Excellency Most Reverend Franciscus Monterisi, Secretary, and dated September 30, 2000.

"The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the prescriptions of canon 877.3, hereby decrees that:

- (I) **For children baptized after their adoption is finalized**, the following information shall be entered in the register:
- a) the Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s);
 - b) the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s);
 - c) the date and place of birth;
 - d) the names of the sponsors selected by the adoptive parent(s);
 - e) the place and date of the baptism;
 - f) the name of the minister performing the baptism; and
 - g) the fact of adoption but not the names of the natural parents.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

- (II) **For children baptized before their adoption is finalized**, the following notations shall be added to the baptismal register, but only after the adoption has been finalized and with due regard for the civil law of the jurisdiction:
- a) parentheses shall be placed around the names of the natural parents;
 - b) the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added;
 - c) the child's former surname shall also be parenthesized and the new surname added; and
 - d) a notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals shall give only the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

For future ease in reference, and to afford what may often be the only possibility of reference after

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the adoption has been finalized, a baptismal entry for the adopted child can be made in the baptismal register of the adoptive parents' parish, citing the date and location of the original baptismal record, and listing only the name of the adoptive parents, and the date and place of birth.

Parish personnel having access to parish registers have an obligation not to disclose to any person any information which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted."

As President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, I hereby decree that the effective date of this decree for all the Latin Rite dioceses in the United States will be December 1, 2000.

Given at the offices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, on October 20, 2000.

Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza
Bishop of Galveston-Houston
President, NCCB

Reverend Monsignor Dennis M. Schnurr
General Secretary