

Conducting Research Using Roman Catholic Church Records

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Sacramental Records:

- Baptism
 - May be the earliest record noting the birth of your ancestor
 - Recorded name and date of baptism, date of birth, parents' names (sometimes maiden name noted for mother), names of sponsors/godparents and priest
 - Additional notes may be captured next to baptism such as marriage information
- Reconciliation/Penance
 - Received before First Holy Communion
 - A list of children may be noted (may be included in communion records)
- Eucharist/First Holy Communion
 - Received about 7 or 8 years of age
 - Date and name were captured
- Confirmation
 - Received between 12 and 16 years old
 - Date and name captured and possibly a sponsor
- Matrimony
 - Includes names of couple being married, names of witnesses and signature of priest
 - Traditionally took place in bride's parish
- Extreme Unction/Last Rites
 - Include date of visit, name, whether last rites received or not, location of visit or home address
 - Date of death and cause may be noted
- Holy Orders/Ordinations
 - Priests' records will be located in archdiocese where ordained or where he served
 - For specific orders of priests and nuns, records will be kept in provincial or national houses of the order

Non-Sacramental Records:

- Cemetery/Burial Records
 - Parish church
 - Diocese may centralize records

- Vestry Minutes
 - Recorded the church's business regarding staff, repairs to the church, issues within the congregation, etc.
- Diocesan Newspapers
 - Includes obituaries, marriage banns, and local events for parishes
- Schools
 - Elementary and high schools, universities, colleges, and seminaries
- Catholic Societies and Fraternal Organizations
 - Ex. Knights of Columbus
- Catholic Charitable Organizations
 - Orphanages, homes for unwed mothers, immigrant services

Publications

Daly, Marie. *Genealogist's Handbook for Irish Research*. (Boston, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2016)

Dolan, Jay P. *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865*. (South Bend, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 1992)

Humling, Virginia. *U.S. Catholic Sources: A Diocesan Research Guide*. (Salt Lake City, Ancestry, 1995)

Mitchell, Brian. *Guide to Irish Parish Registers*. (Baltimore, MD, Genealogical Publishing Company, 1988)

O'Toole, James M. "Catholic Church Records: A Genealogical and Historical Resource." *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 132 (1978).

Websites

Catholic Parish Registers at the National Library of Ireland, <https://registers.nli.ie/>

FamilySearch, www.familysearch.org

Irish Genealogy, www.irishgenealogy.ie

New England Catholic Records, <https://catholicrecords.americanancestors.org/>

RootsIreland, www.rootsireland.ie