

## Annual Report of the Archivist and Registrar - 2020

I usually begin my Convention report with a reminder of the extent of the Archives of the Diocese of Missouri... the document and photograph collections, our library of more than 2,000 volumes, the official records of the Standing Committee, Parochial Trust Fund and the Corporation of the Diocese of Missouri, Diocesan Council, diocesan journals, diocesan newspapers, information about our bishops, our churches, our clergy, our properties and financial history.

But this year has been a year like no other, and archivists around the world are struggling to keep up with preserving the vast amounts of information produced by governments, organizations, institutions and so many other groups during this 2020 COVID pandemic. Your diocesan archivist is no different. Almost no information remains from 1918 and the Spanish flu epidemic to tell us about life in the Diocese that fall and winter and I don't want that to happen again. I am gathering and saving all the digital material, weekly iSeek communications, social media posts and other local documentation so it will be available for diocesan archivists and historians in 20 or 50 or 100 years.

My usual work in the archives of sorting and filing and organizing is on hold for now. Instead I've taken this opportunity for work I can do from home. One project has been to create a database of all official acts logged into the Register of Official Acts. This large register contains the official record of all the clergy who have ever been canonically resident in the diocese dating back to 1840, their ordinations, canonical transfers both in and out of the Diocese and clergy deaths. So far, this database includes entries for more than 1,100 clergy. The register also includes the names and consecration dates of all bishops consecrated in the Diocese of Missouri. My hope is that this will become a resource for staff and for successor archivists.

Something else that was possible this year is the digitization of all of our bishops' portraits. Bishop Tuttle's portrait had been digitized several years ago. This will allow far greater use of these priceless images.

This pandemic year seems to have increased the interest, or perhaps just provided the time for many to work on tracing family history. Even with the increasing number of online genealogy resources available, we have received more than the usual number of requests for birth, marriage and burial records. I know church offices receive similar requests. If I can help with any of your requests, please let me know.

While no congregation is beginning an archives project this year, I do encourage every parish and mission to create a congregational COVID archives. There may be no Sunday bulletins or program or event flyers, there are digital group communications with parishioners to be saved, like newsletters and social media posts and maybe even pertinent community information. And remember that part of my job is to provide archives assistance for congregations. If I can answer questions about what or how to save your congregation's story of 2020, please let me know.

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