

The Catholic Archives Society

Important Note

The Collections Policy below is what is used by Westminster Diocesan Archives in 2010. Westminster Diocesan Archives have generously allowed it to be placed on the Catholic Archives Society website for use by diocesan archivists and others.

Anyone using it should be aware that it is what is currently in use in Westminster and so is subject to change. This and other forms and policies on the website reflect the situation in 2010.

Westminster Diocesan Archives (Archives of the Archbishops' of Westminster) Collecting Policy

Collections Policy

Westminster Diocesan Archives collects primary source material in all formats which significantly adds to or complements existing collections, or which falls within its collecting criteria, defined as follows:

1. Papers, both personal and official, of the Archbishops of Westminster and their office (e.g. Office for Public Affairs, Diocesan Communications), including pre-1850 bodies.
2. Papers of the Archbishops of Westminster post retirement.
3. Papers, both personal and official, of the Auxiliary Bishops of Westminster.
4. The Chancery of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster.
5. Central Services (otherwise known as the Diocesan Curia) of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster.
6. Diocesan Publications, including booklets and pamphlets, past and present.
7. The administrative departments of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, as defined by the Westminster Diocesan Yearbook and/or website, and/or the Diocesan Archives classification scheme.
8. Consultative Bodies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, as defined by the Westminster Diocesan Yearbook and/or website.
9. Papers detailing the Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, past and present.
10. Papers of the Diocesan Pastoral Care Centres of All Saints and St. Joseph's.
11. The Metropolitan Tribunal of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster.

12. Records of the parishes of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, as outlined in the Diocesan Guidelines for Parish Records Retention.
13. Records produced by the Westminster Diocesan Education Service.
14. Papers of significant historical value produced by the chaplaincies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster.
15. Papers regarding the development of the Diocesan Archives.

In addition to the above, Westminster Diocesan Archives will consider the acquisition of both Diocesan and National Catholic Societies that can demonstrate a strong association with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster in its administrative sense.

The parameters of the Collection Policy (as approved by the Archbishops' Council of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster) remain wide and, to some extent, flexible. The prime criterion by which papers will be accepted remains that of *importance*. This will be judged by the Archivist, in consultation, if necessary, with academic experts in the relevant fields and the Archives Advisory Council.

Further Information

1: Westminster Diocesan Archives needs a Collections Policy:

- to facilitate the creation of a core of related collections
- to help ensure consistency in its dealings with potential donors and depositors
- to ensure that the Archives does not collect material that might be better deposited with another repository
- to help with grant applications, where such a collection policy is routinely required

2: The Collections Policy is deliberately wide and flexible in order to allow the Archives the freedom to assess the importance of each unique collection, but the standards are high and the following could be taken as guidelines:

- to qualify, individuals must have played a major role in national government or national/international events. A powerful case would need to be made for someone without a proven role in high level advocacy of Catholic causes.
- to qualify, clergy must have had a lasting influence beyond parish life.
- to qualify, it is not enough for Catholic societies to simply be operating within the geographical area of the Diocese. A strong link with the administration of the Diocese must be demonstrated.

3: Westminster Diocesan Archives will seek to work within the wider national archival framework to ensure that collections are housed in the most appropriate repository. This may mean steering potential donors/ depositors towards other repositories that already house similar material.

4: Westminster Diocesan Archives must assess each collection/deposit on the merit of its content. The Archives does not routinely seek to acquire personal financial and property records, works of art, library stock, newspapers, artefacts, and photocopies and surrogates of material held elsewhere, whatever the status of the individual or institution generating such material. Where resources permit, the Archives will seek to liaise with potential depositors and to advise on what should/should not be permanently preserved.

5: Westminster Diocesan Archives reserves the right to apply similar criteria to the collections it already holds, but recognises that any de-accessioning must be handled sensitively, and that the donors or their heirs must be informed and offered back unwanted material whenever they can be traced. De-accessioned material should be returned, offered to another repository or destroyed, and not sold (without the express permission of the owner and due regard to the ethical considerations).

6: Westminster Diocesan Archives seeks to acquire material as gift. A permanent loan may be considered, but the Archives will not take material on a temporary basis unless there is an exceptional reason for doing so (such as a short-term commercial arrangement).

7: Except in exceptional circumstances, Westminster Diocesan Archives will not seek and does not have the financial resources to purchase collections, although it may encourage trusts and individuals to purchase material on the understanding that the material is then presented to the Archives as a gift.

8: Donors and depositors are encouraged to consider giving the Diocese such personal copyrights and intellectual property rights as they may own in the papers, and encourages them to consider supporting the long-term future of the collection. The Westminster Diocesan Archives would welcome, when a gift of archives has been accepted, any financial contribution which might help defray the costs of the cataloguing, storage or preservation of the material presented.

9: This policy and any related guidelines will be reviewed annually by the Archivist and the Archives Advisory Council.