



# ARCHDIOCESE of HARTFORD

## Office of the Archdiocesan Archives

### GUIDE TO HANDLING ARCHIVAL RECORDS/ MATERIALS

#### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Please adhere to any and all instructions of the AOH Archivist and/or authorized AOH Archives staff and handle all items with care.
- Tampering with, altering, and /or mishandling of archival items in any way is prohibited.
- Writing on or otherwise making notations/ marks on archival items is prohibited.
- DO NOT photograph, film, digitize, scan, photocopy, trace, record, or otherwise attempt to copy, duplicate, or reproduce any archival items without the permission of the AOH Archivist; such actions may permanently damage archival items and may violate copyright laws.
- DO NOT lend or share archival items with others without permission of the AOH Archivist; such actions may cause loss, damage, misfiling, or breach of confidentiality.
- Always store and secure archival items safely and properly, as instructed by the AOH Archivist, when not in use or when finished working with archival items.
- Always transport/ carry archival items as instructed by the AOH Archivist.

#### PRESERVATION PROTOCOLS

- Always wear a mask when working with archival items; a laboratory apron is also advisable, and cotton or nitrile gloves may be required for use with certain archival items; please follow the PPE protocols as imparted by the AOH Archivist.

- Please avoid coughing and/or sneezing over archival items and avoid handling archival items when sick/ill.
- All archival items are to be handled with clean and dry hands.
  - Only clean hands with soap and water and dry thoroughly; DO NOT handle archival items with wet hands.
- DO NOT use hand sanitizers, wipes, lotions, etc., when working with archival items.
- Only use soap and water to clean work surface intended for use with archival items; DO NOT use chemical or bleach cleaners, sprays, wipes, disinfectants, etc.; contact with such chemicals will permanently damage and/or destroy archival items.
- Ensure surfaces are fully dry before placing archival items on them; contact with wet surfaces is harmful to archival items.

### **ENGAGING WITH ARCHIVAL ITEMS**

- Always place archival items on a flat, clean, dry, and stable/ steady table or surface.
- Whenever possible, lay archival items flat; DO NOT lean on or press down on archival items with hands or other means, especially the spines of books.
- DO NOT bend, fold, roll, or disassemble archival items.
- Whenever possible, handle archival items by holding edges or corners.
- DO NOT hold archival items in the air for better viewing; please use a magnifying glass and/or an approved object cradle as designated by the AOH Archivist.
- DO NOT place or set archival items on the floor.
- DO NOT put anything on top of archival items or on workspaces where archival items are in use.
- Only access one box, folder, volume, object, etc., at a time; when finished, properly replace item before proceeding to the next item.
- The exact order of items within a box and/or folder are to be maintained; DO NOT re-arrange or shuffle papers and/or contents around.

- If you believe you have found a discrepancy in the ordering of papers or box contents, DO NOT remove the item(s) or attempt to correct the ordering and/or placement of contents – please notify the AOH Archivist who will determine the best course of action.

### STANDARD PRACTICES

- Only use pencil when working with archival items; NO pens, markers, etc.
- Keep food, drink, gum, etc., away from archival items.
- Do not smoke/ vape around archival items.
- Keep archival items out of direct sunlight and minimize exposure to indoor lighting.
- Keep archival items free from vents; drafts; windows; heaters; A/C; fans; leaks; overhead pipes; water; smoke; sprinklers; chemicals; vapors/fumes; glue/adhesives; paints; animals; dirt/debris; nests/infestations; loose/faulty wiring and outlets; wet and damp area; hot and/or humid areas; sharp items; shredders; and other potentially dangerous and/or hazardous situations.
- DO NOT attempt to remove stains, smudges, dirt, spills, or other markings on archival items; please contact AOH Archivist for assistance.
- DO NOT attempt to repair ripped, torn, broken, loose, or otherwise damaged archival items; please contact AOH Archivist for assistance.
- Please inform the AOH Archivist if you discover damaged/ broken (or accidentally damage/ break) archival items.
- Please inform the AOH Archivist if you discover mold, mildew, allergens, insects, debris, yellowing/fading, fragile, etc., while using archival items.

### NOTICE

- Failure to comply with any and/or all of the AOH Archives rules may result in immediate dismissal from the AOH Archives; restriction on further access and use of the AOH Archives and its records/materials; and/or appropriate legal action.