

## Library of Birmingham Archives & Collections

### Source list for records relating to ROMAN CATHOLICS

#### Early Records

Other than church records, most early records relating to Roman Catholics will be found in the relevant county record office.

- 1559 Act of Uniformity made non-attendance at services of the Church of England ('recusancy') an offence, punishable by a fine of one shilling for each absence, which was collected by the churchwardens and used for poor relief.
- 1581 Recusancy fine increased to £20 per month for absenteeism; 100 marks plus one year's imprisonment for attending a Catholic Mass; 200 marks plus one year's imprisonment for celebrating Mass.
- 1584 Receiving the ministrations of Catholic priests became high treason.
- 1714 Non-payment of fines became punishable by seizure of all moveable goods and two thirds of one's lands.
- 1754 Oath of Allegiance required by all persons over 18, renouncing the Catholic Church and papists compelled to register the value of their lands with the Clerk of the Peace.
- 1778 Hardwicke's Marriage Act makes marriage legal only in Church of England churches.
- 1791 The repeal of the penal laws against Catholics, allowing them to take and Oath of Allegiance and attend law courts.
- 1829 The Catholic Relief Act enabled Catholic worship at registered churches under registered priests.
- 1837 The Emancipation Act enabled Catholics to vote, sit in Parliament and hold property unconditionally.
- 1908 Marriage in catholic churches made legal. Some older registers were deposited at the Public Record Office. *Convalidation* (a marriage service conducted in the Catholic Church at some point after the civil marriage) made the marriage valid in the eyes of the Catholic Church. If the non-Catholic party was not prepared to go through a Catholic ceremony, a legal fiction called *sanatio in radice* validated the marriage. However, as Britain was considered a Catholic Mission and was not subject to Canon Law, there

was some doubt as to whether *Convalidation* and *sanatio in radice* were necessary.

- 1908 An edict makes *Convalidation* and *sanatio in radice* necessary.
- 1917 Decrees of the Council of Trent make *Convalidation* or *sanatio in radice* formally necessary for the marriage to be considered valid in the eyes of the church.

## Records held in the Archives

- 384850 [ZZ 33]** Rentals, charter, etc. regarding estates of dissolved religious houses in Staffordshire c. 1550 - 1596
- 354851 [IIR 42]** List of popish recusants in Staffordshire 1678-1679  
Churchwardens' accounts etc. for the ancient parishes

## Church Records

The records of Catholic churches are held at the Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives, Cathedral House, St. Chad's Queensway, Birmingham B4 6EU. Before 1791, few Catholic Church registers were kept, though some do begin from 1778 with the repeal of the penal laws. However, as marriage in a Catholic Church was not made legal until 1837, marriages before this date had to take place in an Anglican Church. Records of the Anglican diocese are held in Birmingham City Archives.

Roman Catholic Churches in Birmingham established before 1901:

- 1786 St. Peter, Broad Street
- 1808 St. Chad, Queensway
- 1840 St. Francis, Handsworth
- 1846 St. Thomas and St. Edmund, Erdington
- 1846 St Michael, Moor Street
- 1849 St. Anne, Alcester Street
- 1851 The Immaculate Conception, Edgbaston
- 1858 St. Catherine of Sienna, Bristol Street

1867	St. Joseph, Nechells
1870	St. Mary, Harborne
1876	St. Patrick, Dudley Road
1883	St. Vincent de Paul, Ashted and Vauxhall
1889	St. Edward, Selly Park
1896	St. Dunstan, Kings Heath
1897	Sacred Heart and St. Margaret Mary, Aston
1901	Holy Family, Small Heath

---

### **The following copy registers are held in the library**

#### **Archives:**

578341 [ZZ 75A] Photocopy register of marriages at Brailes Chapel 1786 – 1912

#### **Local History:**

662625	Microfilm registers of St. Chad's Cathedral	1807 – 1854
LF 90.02	Crisp, Frederick Arthur, <i>Catholic Registers of the City of Worcester</i> [1685 – 1837]	
B929.3094245	Kinsella, W, <i>Roman Catholic Registers</i> [of Shrewsbury, Newport, Acton Burnell, Plowden, Mawley Chapel]	
B929.3094246	Staffordshire Parish Registers Society, <i>Vol. 65, [Registers of] Chillington, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Cresswell</i>	
B929.3094248	<i>Warwickshire Parish Registers, Vol. 2 – 3: The Franciscan Register of St. Peter's, Birmingham</i>	

#### **Social Sciences:**

B282.42	Printed publications of the Catholic Record Society, which include transcripts of parish registers
---------	--

---

## School Records

With a couple of exceptions, catholic school records are held at the Diocesan Schools Commission, Coleshill (tel. 01675 430230). Some closed schools' records are also at the Closed Schools Office, Saltley School, Belchers Lane, Birmingham B9 5RX.

<b>S 145</b>	The Oratory Roman Catholic School	1882 – 1927
<b>S 174</b>	St. Vincent Roman Catholic School	1884 – 1967

## Children's Home Records

The Catholic Church ran its own network of children's homes, which were quite separate to those run by the city council. Birmingham City Archives holds no catholic children's home records. Enquiries should be directed directly to the children's home concerned, or to Father Hudson's Homes.

## Other Records in the Archives

**MS 1565** Autobiography of Dr. William B Ullathorne, Roman Catholic priest, mid 19<sup>th</sup> century

John Hardman & Co. (stained glass manufacturers and ecclesiastical metal workers)

## See Also

- Civil War source list
- Irish in Birmingham source list