

**CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL ARCHIVE OF THE  
POOR SERVANTS OF THE MOTHER OF GOD**

RULES FOR RESEARCHERS

**Archives are by their nature a valuable and often unique resource, and need to be used in a careful and responsible manner. It is therefore necessary that clearly defined procedures be observed on being given access to archives and related library materials. These rules are framed in such a manner as to give access to researchers on as favourable terms as are possible, within the limits imposed by the resources and priorities of the service as a whole.\***

1. Access to the archives by persons who are not members of the community is by appointment only, with the permission of the Generalate, and at the discretion of the archivist. Researchers will need to apply in writing to the archivist in order to obtain access to the archives, giving details of their research topic, and will generally require a reference or recommendation from an academic supervisor or other responsible person. The archives will generally be open three days a week during normal office hours but this cannot be guaranteed, and researchers will need to make specific arrangements with the archivist. Disabled access to the archives can be facilitated, but those with particular requirements in this regard are requested to discuss their needs with the archivist when making an appointment.
2. Those given access will be required to record their name and address legibly in the visitors' book on each visit, and some proof of identity may be required. Signing the visitors' book will constitute an agreement to abide by the current set of 'Rules for Researchers' approved by the Generalate.
3. Where possible, lists and other finding aids relating to archival documents will be provided. It may, however, be necessary to refuse access to internal catalogues where they include confidential or restricted data. The archivist will always attempt as far as possible to locate material relating to a researcher's enquiry, but reserves the right to deny access to uncatalogued material if deemed necessary on preservation or security grounds.
4. Orders of documents will generally need to be made in advance, and order forms will need to be signed by the researcher before any document or book can be issued.
5. Researchers will generally be required to work in the archivist's office under the supervision of a member of the archival staff, but this rule may be relaxed at the discretion of the archivist for less valuable non-archival items. Documents and books may not be removed from the room or area in which they are made available for consultation, and should be immediately surrendered to a member of staff when the researcher has finished using them. The number of items issued at any one time is at the discretion of the archivist.
6. Researchers are not permitted to take their coats and bags to their study place.
7. Lead pencils only may be used for note-taking. Those wishing to use tape-recorders, lap-top computers or typewriters should inform the archivist of their request when making an appointment.
8. Researchers are responsible for any archives or library items issued to them, which should be handled with the utmost care, and any newly perceived damage or defect should be reported to a member of archival staff immediately. Documents should be maintained in the order in which they have been issued, and should not be marked, creased or otherwise altered in any way. Those using volumes and/or large or unwieldy documents should use the book rests and weights provided. The archivist reserves the right to deny access to any book or document which they adjudge is in such a fragile condition that it would be damaged by further use. If directed by the

archivist, documents should be protected by a sheet of transparent polyester while being consulted. Tracing of documents is only allowed with the express permission of the archivist, and the relevant document should be protected by a polyester sheet at all times.

9. Researchers may not eat, drink or smoke while consulting documents or library material, and all mobile phones should be switched off.

10. On completion of each session in the archives, researchers may be required to make available their research notes for a brief security check.

11. No documents created less than 30 years ago will generally be available for public access. Records of a confidential nature, particularly those relating to individuals, will usually be closed for a period of not less than 100 years, and the specific permission of the Generalate will be required before access to such material can be given. The provisions of the Data Protection Acts will always be observed where applicable.

12. Photocopies of documents and library material may only be provided where, in the opinion of the archivist, no damage will be caused to the original source material by the process. Photocopying will be carried out by archive staff only, and a contribution towards the cost of providing this service may be requested. Photographs of items may be taken by researchers, with the permission of the archivist, except where any copyright issue is outstanding. The details of a photographer, suitable for carrying out such work to a professional standard, can be provided on request. Researchers should note that the onus for satisfying the requirements of the Copyright Acts rests with them, and that they will be required to sign a form guaranteeing that any image or reproduction is for their own personal use only.

13. Any researcher wishing to publish extracts or images from the archives must seek permission prior to publication from the Generalate, and will be required to sign a form delimiting their use of such material. A reproduction fee may be levied in these circumstances. Any person publishing any reference to or extract from the archives will be required to include in the work a standard form of acknowledgement to the Generalate.

14. A researcher or external user may not without prior permission communicate to a third party any record or manuscript, or any finding aid<sup>1</sup>, transcript, calendar or other original work produced by the congregation to which they are given access by the archives service, or any part of the foregoing; nor may they have any part of the foregoing stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, typographic, reprographic, electronic or otherwise.

15. Refusal to abide by any of the above rules may result in the immediate and permanent exclusion of the researcher from the archives.

*\* It should be noted that the archives are in their entirety the private property of the Congregation of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, and that no rights of access or use can be presumed by any potential external user. However, the archives service aims, as far as is possible, at all times to follow professional standards of practice in service provision where they are applicable, as reflected in the codes of conduct issued by bodies such as the Catholic Archives Society, the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Public Record Office<sup>2</sup> and the Society of Archivists. Users of the archives will be invited formally to offer comments on the quality of service offered following the completion of their research. Any further comments on the service should be referred to the Generalate of the Congregation at: Maryfield Convent, Mount Angelus Road, Roehampton, London, SW15 4JA.*

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in the Historical Manuscripts Commission Standard for Record Repositories, 2001 edn, p.2

<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the Standard for Access to Archives (vers. 6, 2000) issued by the Public Services Quality Group, sponsored by the Public Record Office