

The Catholic Church Needs Your CPR-number

As we in the Catholic Church move from a hand-written card membership register to an electronic membership register, we need your help in a variety of ways.

First, in the old system, we are missing the date of birth of many members, and of many more, we are missing their CPR-numbers.

Secondly, people move. We Catholics are obviously no better than anyone else, when it comes to notifying everyone about a change of address, and especially our parish church. Frequently a letter or a church bulletin is returned to sender with "address unknown." 4,500 Catholics have become lost in this way. Now we are making good progress in finding these lost or unknown addresses with the help of "address laundering", that is, we get assistance from both Post DK and the CPR-department under the ministry of Welfare. The latter has a program, which they make available to organizations, companies and others like ourselves in the Catholic Church.

Third, "address laundering" does not solve all the problems, as it can only be used when we are aware that someone is lost due to an incorrect address. What happens with those who move without notifying their parish of an address change or with those who do not receive Katolsk Orientering (KO)? KO only sends out one copy per household. If you or your young Catholic moves and obtains a new but unknown address, you will not be offered KO. Actually you and all our young Catholics, when they reach 18 years of age, should be offered KO. This we cannot do if your CPR-number and new address are not in your parish register.

Therefore, we in the Catholic Church in Denmark are not only in the process of finding our young Catholics new addresses, but we are also interested in a general clean-up of our register. Our aim is to have everyone's CPR-number entered into the parish and diocesan registers. The CPR-number not only gives one's date of birth but also it makes it faster and cheaper to find out if the 16 year old still lives at home or now has his/her own residence. Actually according to our present parish register there are quite a few of our youth still living at home while others, in fact, have moved a long time ago but are still listed at the old home address. It is important, therefore, that not only the parent's CPR-number be correct, but that each of your children and young ones are correctly registered as well.

The CPR-number ensures, as well, that there are no double entries in our registers, that is, when someone in connection with a move is registered in the new parish without being deleted from the former parish register.

Fourth, in addition to the above we are also leading up to a new plan for the Catholic Church tax (kirkeskat) like the basic church tax system which the Danish Lutheran Church (Folkekirken) has.

This requires also your CPR-number. It has been suggested that we copy Sweden's system where everyone is notified in advance about the new plan and told of the possibility of entering into a special agreement, where they can pay their church tax but now in another way. Everything in this connection must be in perfect order with respect to all rules of data protection before the plan can be put into effect.

These are the reasons that we now call upon you for your help. We are asking everyone to assist us in this clean-up of our membership register. You can do this by submitting your CPR-number to your Pastor or to your parish office. You can also assist us by bringing this matter to the attention of other Catholics, who may not read this. This ensures that no one is missing in our parish and diocesan registers. As a practical example, you can ask in your parish, if your children, who no longer live at home, are still registered under their old home address; if this is so, the new address should be given. In addition, you can make sure that the CPR-numbers for your small children and teenagers under 18 years of age, (and older children), but still living at home are entered into the parish register.

The fact is, that if you are lost to the Church, the risk is overwhelming that the Church is also lost to you – and it is also lost to our children. The membership register has not only an administrative purpose, but it is, first and foremost, to serve the larger Catholic community as well.

Information to Catholics on the Catholic Church's Membership Register in Denmark.

The Catholic Church in Denmark has an electronic central register (CR) over all Catholic members with information pertaining to their name, address, date of birth, and possible CPR- number.

This information is for use by the local pastor in his pastoral work, for sending information forward and the distribution of Katolsk Orientering, for keeping addresses up to date, for the payment of church tax, for church statistics, osv.

In addition, the central register has a church membership department which replaces the hand-written church books, which books are found in every parish. The electronic church membership register contains all information with regard to baptism, confirmation, 1st communion, reception into full membership in the church, marriage, death, and other church ceremonies. In addition, it is possible to register, which special ministries of service which a member has.

Another special department in the central register includes all information on the member's Church tax commitments and tax-free gifts. This information is very confidential, and is available only to entrusted persons responsible for finances.

The Church is obligated to notify SKAT concerning all monies given, unless the person notifies in writing within the given calendar year not to give this information to SKAT.

The information contained in the Church's central register on its members is only for use by the parish priest for pastoral work and by the Bishop's Office as an organ for the Diocese. The Pastor of a parish and those entrusted to work with him have access to this information about his parish members, but the pastor does not have access to information with regard to a member's church tax or any church gifts.

The diocesan central register is kept up to date primarily by the parish pastor and his secretary; thus there is an electronic membership register in the parish. The Bishop's Office through the person responsible for parish registrations now registers all the information, which is sent to the Office, and oversees this registration in its entirety. It is also the Bishop's Office through the Vicar General which gives access to the use of this register. Access to the register is given to a determined person (this is primarily the pastor alone), and it may not be given further to another. The Vicar General is the responsible person for the membership register with regard to the authorities.

The above mentioned parties are bound by confidentiality with regard to any and all information contained in the membership register in accordance with the laws on data and confidential information.

From your pastor you have the possibility to know what information, which the membership register has with regard to you . If the information given with regard to you is not correct, this will be corrected after the Bishop's Office has been given this information.

Given in Copenhagen, 19 May 2008

Lars Messerschmidt

Vicar General & responsible person for the Catholic Church's Membership Registry