

The New Jersey Adoption law has changed

Beginning January 1, 2017, adoptees and certain relatives will be able to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate without a court order.

The birth certificate will include the names of the birth parents who placed children for adoption, even though for 40 years both the State and the Church promised anonymity to the birth parents at the time of the adoption.

The Catholic Church always has supported reunions between adoptees and birth parents if such reunions were by mutual consent. For this reason, Catholic Charities agencies continue to assist both birth parents and adoptees seeking reunions. The Catholic Church also supports adoptees having full access to their birth parents medical, cultural, and social history information.

Can birth parents in New Jersey protect their privacy and indicate whether or not they want contact with the adoptee?

Yes, the New Jersey Department of Health now offers two forms – a *Redaction Request Form* and a *Contact Preference Form* – that allow birth parents of adult adoptees an opportunity to protect their privacy.

How can birth parents protect their privacy?

Birth parents who finalized an adoption before August 1, 2015 can file a request with the State of New Jersey indicating that they want the State Registrar to keep their Personal Identifying Information off documents provided to anyone. To do this, birth parents **MUST** complete and submit a *Redaction Request Form* **no later than December 31, 2016.**

Can a birth parent request no contact with an adoptee?

Birth parents have three options related to contact with an adoptee. By completing and submitting a *Contact Preference Form*, birth parents can indicate they want no contact with the adoptee; or they can indicate that they agree to have a third party arrange contact with the adoptee; or they can indicate that they are willing to have direct contact with the adoptee. Submitting a *Contact Preference Form* is essential.

Adoptees who want to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate can submit a request. The New Jersey Department of Health will begin releasing birth records after January 1, 2017.

For more information regarding the changes to New Jersey's Adoption Law visit the New Jersey Catholic Conference website: www.njcatholic.org/adoptions.