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Mary, Undoer of Knots: Unraveling Best Practices for Unwanted Donations and Deaccessioned Collection Items in a Catholic Library

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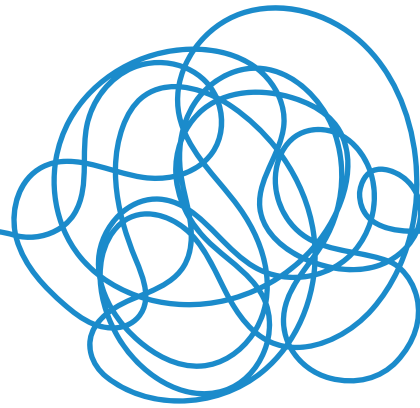
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Mary,

Undoer of Knots



Unraveling Best Practices for Unwanted Donations and Deaccessioned Collection Items in a Catholic Library

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INTRODUCTION 🧶 When humorist Tommy Tighe tweeted that he is “so Catholic I bury old parish bulletins instead of throwing them out whenever I clean out the van, just in case,”¹ many on #CatholicTwitter felt a twinge of recognition. In addition to the human tendency to accumulate material things, there is also legitimate concern in a Catholic context about discarding materials associated with the practice of faith. The parish bulletin is an extreme example; we can safely relegate that to the recycle bin once we have read about the ladies’ breakfast and the Christmas wreath fundraiser. In the routine practice of the faith, sacramentals such as palms from Palm Sunday and broken rosaries are examples of materials that ought to be appropriately destroyed or repurposed.

The Catholic Church provides specific canon law and commentary about the treatment of “sacred objects,” as well as historical directives for how to dispose of altar vessels and other liturgical objects. But there are also materials of popular devotion that raise questions; we simply cannot know how every item has been used by its previous owners. The sacred nature of some objects is not determined exclusively by what they are but also by how they have been used. The 1964 *Collectio rituum* literally contains a “blessing of anything” or “blessing for all things” at the end of its section of blessings of objects for ordinary use, meaning that just about anything in a Catholic library collection may have been blessed.² In Catholic cultural heritage institutions, we need to take into account library best practice and standards for deaccessioning, weeding, discarding—

even, rarely, destroying—Catholic objects. At the same time, we need the freedom to make responsible decisions about what does not belong in our collections.

Deaccessioning, or weeding, is the formal process of permanently removing objects from a collection. The term deaccessioning is frequently used for museum and archival collections, whereas weeding can be viewed as the synonymous function in a circulating library setting. The Society of American Archivists defines deaccessioning as “the process by which an archives, museum, or library permanently removes accessioned materials from its holdings.”³ This definition implies that for an item to be deaccessioned, it must have first been accessioned, or physically and legally transferred to a particular repository.⁴ This also means that an accessioned item is logged so that the institution has a record of it belonging in the collection. We are choosing to use the term deaccessioning for the sake of consistency, but recognize that some of the materials we refer to (specifically, unwanted donations) may not have been accessioned in the first place.

There are several options for the future of an item that is deaccessioned. The ideal, and often first solution sought is to transfer it to a different institution such as a library, school, parish community, or church where it will be used. Rarely is disposal in the trash can or a recycle bin necessary if no one has a use for a particular item. Some religious materials must be destroyed in specific ways and those standards come from the Church instead of from cultural heritage best-practice documents.

As library and archives professionals, our primary responsibility is to acquire, describe, preserve, and provide access to materials that belong in our collections, ideally in accordance with a formal collection development policy. The focus of this article is materials that are not in scope, including both materials that have been added to the collection in the past and materials that arrive via unexpected donation. In the Marian Library, we are the fortunate recipients of frequent donations, many of which are accessioned to fill gaps in collection coverage. When appropriate, we document these donations with a deed of gift or other internal records regarding gifts-in-kind. However, we occasionally receive unsolicited donations that duplicate current holdings; some of these arrive anonymously or with very little contextual information. In some cases, unwanted donations are returned to the original donor, but this is not always possible, especially in cases where the donation may have arrived decades ago with minimal documentation. In addition, as we assess legacy collections, it is apparent that some items have been added to the collections that do not fit the parameters of the Marian Library's collection development policy.⁵ (Not coincidentally, a former librarian referred to the Marian Library as "Our Lady's Attic.") Reappraising and deaccessioning are critical parts of collection management as routine procedure.

The Marian Library supports scholarship on the Blessed Virgin Mary and documents diverse expressions of popular devotion to Mary. The Marian Library is part of the University Libraries at the University of Dayton, a Catholic and Marianist institution, and we work closely with our colleagues in Roesch Library (the main circulating collection), the US Catholic Special Collection, the University Archives and Special Collections, and the International Marian Research Institute. The Marian Library collections include books and periodicals, archival collections, statues, artwork, and other realia and artifacts such as rosaries, scapulars, and medals. In this article, we will address the practices we have used for deaccessioning different types of materials, with discussion of the processes for materials that may qualify as a "sacred object" according to Canon Law. We will also discuss the dilemma of "gray area" materials, such as holy cards. We discuss some efforts we make to find homes for materials that do not belong in our collections, both items that have been deaccessioned and donations that do not fit in the collection. We do not have all of the answers, but we hope some of our workflows and thought processes will be helpful for our colleagues at other institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW  The relevant canon laws and commentary are reproduced below in full.

Can. 1171

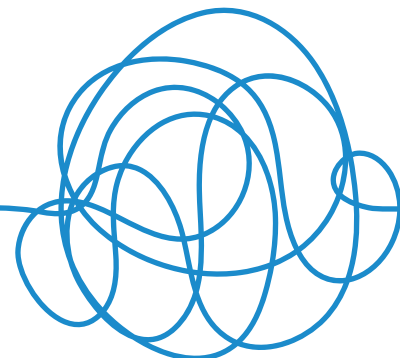
Sacred objects, set aside for divine worship by dedication or blessing, are to be treated with reverence. They are not to be made over to secular or inappropriate use, even though they may belong to private persons.

Sacred things are defined as those which have been blessed, consecrated, or dedicated for divine worship. The object or place should not be so dedicated if it appears that profane use cannot be avoided. Those who have in their possession sacramentals or other sacred objects are obliged to treat them with care. When sacramentals can no longer be used, they are usually destroyed, e.g., pouring of holy water into a *sacrarium*, the burning of holy oils. The law provides that anyone who profanes a sacred object is to receive a just penalty (c. 1376).

Can. 1376

A person who profanes a sacred object, moveable or immovable, is to be punished with a just penalty.

A concern for reverence of sacred objects accounts for this provision that should be read in conjunction with canon 1171. Sacred things are those destined for divine worship through their dedication or consecration, be they immovable, e.g., church, or movable, e.g., chalice. The seriousness of the "just penalty" obviously corresponds to the seriousness of the offense, i.e., putting such objects to profane or common use contrary to their cultic orientation.⁶



Although the canon law text is quite straightforward about the treatment of sacred objects, it is not always abundantly clear whether an object is sacred or not. The 1964 *Collectio rituum* includes numerous blessings for priests to bestow on sacramentals, places, animals, and items for everyday use (including blessings for seismographs and “tools for scaling mountains.”) Given the numerous items that are blessed in the normal course of Catholic life, it must be acknowledged that not every blessed item is always disposed of according to the official guidelines. A scroll through eBay will confirm this observation; sadly, even reliquaries can often be found for sale online. The desire to find good homes for religious items is undoubtedly one reason why the Marian Library—like many other religious collections—receives so many donations.

In *Question Time: 150 Questions and Answers on the Catholic Faith*, Fr. John Flader distinguishes between two types of blessings, that which “dedicates an object to a religious purpose” and the type of blessing that invokes God to assist or protect, as in the blessing of a building, a meal, or a person. The second type of blessing does not make an object sacred. However, the first type of blessing can be applied to a wide array of objects, including “holy oils, holy water, Rosaries, statues, sacred images, holy cards, crucifixes, palms on Palm Sunday, ashes on Ash Wednesday, etc. Once these objects have been blessed, they are considered in some way to be dedicated to the service of God and should be treated with reverence.” When it comes time to dispose of them, if they cannot be repaired, they should be burned or buried.⁷ Many of these items find their way into cultural heritage collections.

Today, some Catholic dioceses provide specific guidelines to assist parishioners with respectful burning and/or burial, and other options for “respectful disposal” to avoid dishonoring sacramentals and other items that have been blessed.⁸ There are numerous Q & A-type Catholic websites engaging with this issue, indicating the level of respect many people feel about the candles, pictures, medals, and holy cards that tend to accumulate in Catholic households, and conversely the anxiety they feel about disposing of them appropriately.⁹ Popular Catholic literature includes suggestions about the burning of sacramentals in a bonfire on the Eve of the Feast of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (June 23), burning and burying the ashes of combustible sacramentals, melting down and repurposing metal liturgical objects, and the breaking/burial of worn-out statuary.¹⁰

While not all items in a Catholic cultural heritage collection are liturgical in origin, the instructions for treatment of liturgical objects may inform treatment of sacred objects, blessed artifacts, and the “gray area” materials that fill Catholic collections. In the late nineteenth century, the Sacred Congregation for the

Rites (now the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship) provided specific guidelines for disposal of items such as vestments, holy water, rosaries, and statues when they are no longer suitable for use.¹¹ Early editions of the *Sacristan's Manual* (both the 1874 and 1907 editions) do not include instructions on the removal or disposal from a church of objects such as books or statues, but do address the disposal of liturgical materials such as holy water (to be poured in the *piscina*, or *sacrarium*, the sink in the church's sanctuary that drains directly into the ground instead of into the regular sewer system), burning old fabric used during baptisms, and — significantly — the automatic deconsecration of broken chalice or paten and the need for reconsecration after repair. Extrapolating from this instruction, we can understand that, as is often the case in Catholicism, intent truly matters. If a liturgical object is broken accidentally, that does not constitute desecration; in fact, the inadvertent damage of a sacred vessel leads to automatic deconsecration. Perhaps this can give us hope that our best intentions truly do matter when it comes to the care of Catholic materials in our custody.

The *Sacristy Manual* from 1993, a modern update of the *Sacristan's Manual*, includes further instruction on liturgical items no longer in general use. Burning is one option, followed by pouring the ashes in the *sacrarium*. Burial is the other option. Burning and burial are both presented as respectful means of disposal that prevent sacred objects from being put to frivolous or scandalous use. Ironically, this manual also suggests that discarded liturgical objects may be welcomed by archives or museums.¹²

There is an abundance of literature and resources available for libraries, archives, and museums on applicable laws and best practices for deaccessioning; however, none of these sources address the unique challenges of dealing with Catholic collections, including items that may be sacred. The Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association provides several resources for library weeding on its blog.¹³ Along with tools for developing weeding criteria and creating a collection development plan, it also highlights news stories of “weeding gone wrong,” where routine collection management was perceived poorly by the public. Although librarians and archivists understand the importance of continual assessment of our collections, many of our users have a fierce loyalty to these items and so we must be mindful of how patrons will perceive our actions. Burning deaccessioned collection items is certainly not standard operating procedure for cultural heritage institutions. On the other hand, we can easily imagine a patron becoming upset at seeing a donated Missal, for example, in a trash can. But destruction and disposal are the options that remain to us if we cannot find a new home for unwanted objects. As with

so many situations in our profession, communication and trust with our community is essential. The Society of American Archivists' *Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning* acknowledges that guidelines cannot cover all scenarios and states that, "archivists should rely on their best professional judgement when dealing with specific circumstances that are not covered by these guidelines."¹⁴


In *Things Great and Small*, published by the American Association of Museums (AAM), deaccessioning is considered for the following purposes: improving the collection by focusing on objects better suited to the mission, returning an object to its rightful owner (as in the case of Native American cultural property or Nazi-looted objects), and removing an object that has been found to be a forgery. Codes of ethics published by AAM and the International Council on Museums stress that once an item has been accessioned into a museum collection any decision about deaccessioning must be made with careful consideration and documentation, including the preparation of a communications plan.¹⁵ Destruction of art objects after the point of deaccessioning can be a particularly difficult subject, but if they cannot be sold or transferred to another collection, it is recommended that any destruction "be witnessed by an impartial observer" to ensure there are no questions in the future.¹⁶

Catholicism is far from the only religious tradition that has protocols for the appropriate disposal of religious objects. In Islam, there are standard practices for the respectful disposal of worn copies of the Qur'an. Burial, shredding, and respectful burning are all mentioned in a 2012 blog post from Cornell University, which also acknowledges the concern about unintentionally desecrating sacred texts.¹⁷

In Judaism, a close analogy to the Catholic burial of religious objects is the *genizah*, a word meaning "reserved" or "hidden" in Hebrew, which refers to the practice of setting aside space in a synagogue or cemetery to store religious objects that are no longer in use. These items can include religious texts, prayer shawls, and other ritual objects. These items are stored to be buried every few years.¹⁸ A famous example of this long tradition is the Cairo Genizah; this collection of documents has yielded valuable insight into a medieval Jewish community following its rediscovery in the late 1800s.¹⁹ Today, many Jewish cemeteries welcome donations for their *genizahs*. In our age of information overload, unfortunately many *genizahs* are at capacity.²⁰ In conversation with Melanie Meyers of the Center for Jewish History (CJH), we learned that CJH attempts to donate unwanted donations with the name of God written in them; such objects cannot be thrown away, so whenever possible a school or a synagogue is identified to accept materials that do not fit the scope of that collection.²¹

Catholicism is, of course, part of the long heritage of Christianity. Some early Christian texts—including Gnostic and noncanonical texts such as the Nag Hammadi codices—may have been buried in imitation of Jewish practices.²² An example of improper disposal of religious texts are the Oxyrhynchus papyri, which are a tremendous resource for the history of early Christianity, but survived only because the Christian residents of Oxyrhynchus did not follow appropriate protocols for disposal, and in fact relegated numerous manuscripts to a communal trash heap.²³ Valuable as this choice was for the historical record, let us not emulate this practice in our libraries when we can avoid it!

In the sections that follow we will outline several broad categories of collection materials and how we have (or have not) handled deaccessioning of unwanted donations in the Marian Library.

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS  Dealing with books and periodicals is perhaps the most straightforward deaccessioning process in Catholic collections. Of all the materials in our collections, these items are least likely to be sacred objects according to the Church. In the exceptional cases of holy books that have been used for worship, best practice would be to locate an appropriate repository; failing that, burning or burial are the standard for respectful destruction.

The majority of books and periodicals in our collections are not truly sacred objects, despite the sentimentality we may attach to them. The Marian Library is the collection of record on the Virgin Mary. The collection includes complementary materials on general theology, history, and topics such as the history of art. Deaccessioning is rare, but has happened with out-of-scope periodicals, duplicate materials, and non-theological books that were part of legacy donations. In 2014, our colleagues presented at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) conference on the value of a collection development policy for identifying materials, such as photocopies and Internet printouts, for removal from the collection.²⁴

In the Marian Library, we believe it to be a worthwhile investment of time to identify other libraries with collection gaps that might be appropriate repositories for deaccessioned materials, such as incomplete periodical runs or specific collecting priorities. In some cases, it has made sense to transfer to the circulating collection of Roesch Library or to the US Catholic Special Collection. The University Libraries, of which the Marian Library is a part, has a relationship with the used book retailer Better World Books, though our deaccessioned collection materials are often not in its scope. We have also occasionally worked with an antiquarian bookseller who has identified good homes for books and periodicals that do not belong in the Marian Library.




Free rack outside the Marian Library's reception area, where deaccessioned items such as postcards, holy cards, or sometimes rosaries are available for visiting patrons to take home.

A deaccessioned book that is within the Marian Library's collecting scope, but is in poor condition. Tag in the book reads, "Marian but moldy."



There are many factors that the Marian Library considers when choosing whether or not to accession a donation of books, and that includes the condition of the material and whether we have adequate resources to properly conserve it if necessary.²⁵ For example, there are several similarly titled "Life of the Virgin Mary" books published in nearly identical editions by multiple publishers from the 1850s through the 1880s. The Marian Library holds enough copies of these books and no longer accepts more. When another copy arrived in a recent donation, we tried to identify a good home by contacting other libraries. When that failed, we contacted the donor, who did not want it back, so it was discarded.

PAPER EPHEMERA  Paper ephemera can be one of the most complex areas for deaccessioning. In the Marian Library we have identified several different item types within our archives that were most likely *not* blessed or used in prayer, such as Christmas cards, calendars, photographs, scrapbooks, pamphlets, postcards, stamps, and newspaper clippings. This still leaves a large quantity of other paper material within the Marian Library's collection where the history of use cannot be ascertained.

Holy cards, and the various subsets such as baptism, ordination, and funeral cards, are a conundrum. In addition to several discrete holy card collections

donated by individuals, there is also a general Marian Library holy card collection with approximately ten thousand cards.²⁶ This collection was built over time through donations and cards brought back from the travels of Marianists who operated the library. We accept donations of holy cards that fill in gaps in the collection, such as holy cards from parts of the world not well represented currently. We do not have infinite storage capacity, even for small items, but more importantly we do not have infinite personnel to arrange and describe these materials. Although it is common archival practice to avoid describing collections at the item level, a more detailed categorization of the holy cards is necessary, given that researcher requests are most often for specific images.²⁷ Describing the holy cards more thoroughly also allows the archivist to determine if an image already exists in the collection and can expedite appraisal of new donations.

In 2018 we posed the question of deaccessioning paper ephemera, and specifically holy cards, to the Archivists of Religious Collections (ARCS) listserv, "a network of professional archivists who work for national, international, and local Church organizations, religious societies and orders, and theological schools."²⁸ One archivist responded that she had served with two different orders of Catholic sisters and they always operated under the assumption that holy cards are not blessed unless indicated otherwise. Another archivist

stated, "I don't take the chance of something being blessed or not, if I am not sure I err on the side of it being blessed."²⁹ These two approaches illustrate our dilemma and motivation for this article.


Holy cards arrive at the Marian Library on a weekly basis from donors both well known and anonymous. It is likely that at least some of the Marian Library's holy cards have been blessed, in particular those that may have been distributed in the context of a Catholic Mass. For cards that are not accessioned at the time of donation and cannot be returned to the donor, our typical approach is to attempt to find them a new home. One professor who frequently uses the Marian Library is an active member of the Legion of Mary. She assists with redistributing these holy cards through her work with the Legion of Mary and also occasionally brings us new donations. We also leave holy cards on a "free" rack in the library. The Marian Library hosts multiple exhibits each year that bring in visitors who are eager to take a souvenir home and give it a new life. We assume the best of our visitors, so although there is a possibility that an item will be used for a profane purpose, we view that risk as minimal. Once the card has a new owner, we cannot predict the future of that item; however, we have suspicions that some of the same cards given away by the Marian Library are then later donated back by our very well-intentioned and devoted patrons.

Some of the other paper material not added to our collection is much less likely to be blessed, but we still seek ways to respectfully repurpose as a means of discarding. The Marian Library collects a representative sample of depictions of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Christmas cards and also receives calendars via donation. Calendars and Christmas cards illustrate popular devotion to Mary in contemporary culture, but are not intended to be an exhaustive resource and therefore we find ourselves overrun with these materials. Local parishes and schools have asked for donations to use for children's crafts. This use is genuinely heartwarming, knowing that the materials get a second life as gifts for the homebound and senior citizens.

This visually rich material can also find a home on a wall in an office or department on campus. The Marian Library has a lending program for the art collection that is an opportunity for the collection to be seen and enjoyed by others.³⁰ Certain images, particularly those from calendars or magazines, are not suitable for accessioning into the archives or the art collection, but with the addition of a frame can be given to colleagues elsewhere on campus who are looking for religious images to display.

The Marian Library's postcard collection, numbering more than 41,000 postcards, was recently reprocessed to remove duplicates and items outside of scope.³¹ In October 2019, to highlight both American Archives

Month and the 150th anniversary of the postcard, a colleague created a pop-up exhibit that encouraged visitors to take a postcard and write home to family.³² More than three hundred postcards were distributed to University of Dayton students, employees, and visitors, and we hope this may prompt curiosity about the rest of the collection.

STATUES, SACRED ART, AND ARTIFACTS  The statues in the Marian Library depict different devotions and varied cultural representations of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is clear that all statues and related sacred art must be treated with care. Catholic convention is that discarded statuary ought to be burned or buried, or a combination where the statue is first burned and then the ashes buried. However, neither method is within a standard deaccessioning procedure for most libraries and museums. When the same question asked on the ARCS listserv was asked of the Catholic Library Association's Academic listserv, one respondent mentioned partnering with Campus Ministry. They stated that their Campus Ministry "has a back-to-school bonfire...and will dispose of a broken Crucifix, a torn amice, some extraneous purple stoles for hearing confessions and miscellaneous cinctures left behind by long-dead priests."³³ This partnership is especially beneficial in the context of a bonfire, as community members might not react well to an official library or archive bonfire. We have also been told of religious orders burying such materials with deceased members of the order.

The Marian Library art collection has not been deaccessioned in a significant way to date, but that is partly due to the complicated logistics of undertaking such an endeavor. There are items in the collection that simply do not belong, and one impetus for writing this article was to explore the different ways that material could be respectfully and feasibly removed from this area of the collection. In addition to material that unnecessarily duplicates other items in the collection, we have statues and other artifacts in the Marian Library art collection that are not Marian, are in terrible condition, and were accepted with a charitable motivation to preserve Catholic cultural heritage when they were removed from area churches. Many library professionals, including the present authors, are inclined to a sentimental attachment to artifacts. Additionally, the items outside our Marian scope may still include representations of saints, or even of Christ, which means that decisions to remove them are emotionally and administratively complex. These are not decisions we take lightly. In the coming years, our colleague in the newly-created position of Librarian for Visual Resources plans to undertake a systematic assessment of the art collection, which will likely result in some deaccessioning.

Right: Pop-up exhibit in the lobby of Roesch Library where students and visitors were encouraged to take discarded (duplicate) postcards from the Marian Library during American Archives Month, October 2019. Below: Close-up of duplicate postcards given away to visitors.




Rosaries and scapulars are just some of the many artifacts that illustrate how Catholics practice their

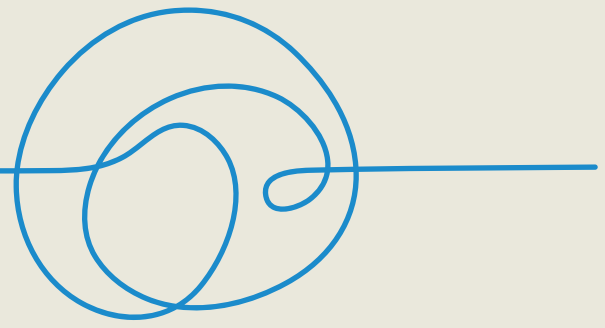
religion. For the most part, they are all sacramentals that should be treated respectfully and reverentially. In some cases, such as with scapulars, the Marian Library strives to have a representative sample of each type. Rosaries tend to have more unique variations, such as a rosary made of cowrie shells that was created by a soldier in Guadalcanal during World War II.³⁴ Therefore, we tend to acquire more rosaries, and are less likely to deaccession them. Some of the rosaries within the Marian Library collection are in fact third-class relics, or an object that is touched to a first- or second-class relic. We are very grateful to our predecessors for documenting these materials' associations with particular saints as otherwise their status would not always be apparent.³⁵

On the rare occasion that we have removed rosaries from the collection, we have shared some of them, along with the holy cards, at the “free” rack. Others have been shared with Campus Ministry, since there is a demand for rosaries among today’s Catholic undergraduates. Several area parishes also accept donations of rosaries, while rosary clubs will even accept broken ones for repair and repurpose. Libraries and museums could also utilize the processes available for closed or merged churches. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia, for example, collects sacred objects from closed parishes and provides them for sale to appropriate venues.³⁶ A similar service is available through church-inventory.com, which facilitates the “respectful disposition of sacred and religious goods.”³⁷

Although a large-scale assessment for deaccessioning has not yet been undertaken for the Marian Library’s collection of statues, artwork, and artifacts, we have periodically accessioned portions of a donation and directed the other portions to entities such as the University of Dayton’s Lalanne master’s program for Catholic school teachers. These instructors, many of them new to the field, often welcome donated specimens of religious art for their classrooms. If reappraisal leads us to believe that an item needs to be deaccessioned from the collection, our first step will be to try to identify an appropriate repository, whether elsewhere on campus, another institution, or an area church or school.

CONCLUSION  Deaccessioning in Catholic collections should—as in all libraries, archives, and museums—be informed by a detailed and institution-specific collection development and management policy. Such a policy improves internal decision-making processes and facilitates communication with external stakeholders, including donors. Once an item is deaccessioned, it is wonderful to find a new owner or an appropriate repository if possible. In recent years, the Marian Library has formalized procedures for gifts-in-kind across all areas of the collections. This means deeds of gift in the case of larger donations, acknowledgement letters, and information sharing with the University of Dayton’s advancement department. We have recently posted the Marian Library’s collection development policy on our website and have added specific instructions for potential donors. We believe this transparency will mitigate the longstanding practice of anonymous donations with little provenance information.

In this article, we have provided a literature review with a focus on information from Catholic sources about the treatment of sacred objects, as well as



A nativity in the Marian Library's art collection that utilizes palms from Palm Sunday in the setting constructed by Marian Library volunteers, illustrating a "repurpose mindset."

suggestions provided to lay people for the treatment of sacred objects in their care. The nature of a Catholic library, archive, or museum means that such a collection will likely contain a mix of materials. In many cases, as in the case of a parish bulletin or a sacramental such as a palm from Palm Sunday, the appropriate handling is self-evident. Often, however, we must rely on our best professional judgment and trust in our good intentions. We have tried to address the variety of items in the Marian Library collections in hopes that our attempts at best practice will be useful to colleagues in other institutions, both Catholic libraries and other repositories that include Catholic materials. We hope that this article has helped elucidate what discarding means for different types of material. In some cases, the trash can or recycle bin is sufficient. But, as caretakers of Catholic materials, it is important to understand that some items — even those that do not belong in the collection — require more respectful, even reverential, destruction. ■

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NOTES

1 Tommy Tighe, Twitter post, August 6, 2019, 4:21 p.m., <http://twitter.com/theghissilent>.

2 Catholic Church, *Collectio rituum: pro dioecibus Civitatum Foederatarum Americae Septentrionalis* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1964), 461. Fewer blessings are included in books of rites published after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, though the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a *Book of Blessings* in 1989. This book includes blessings for sacred images, rosaries, scapulars, religious articles such as crucifixes, Advent wreaths, nativity sets, and even Christmas trees. Catholic Church, *Book of Blessings: Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United*

States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1989).

3 "Deaccessioning," Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology, Society of American Archivists, accessed January 31, 2020, <https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/d/deaccessioning>.

4 "Accession," Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology, Society of American Archivists, accessed January 31, 2020, <https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/accession>.

5 "Marian Library Collection Development and Management Policy," Marian Library, University of Dayton, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://udayton.edu/marianlibrary/about-us/policies-procedures/collection-development-and-management-policy.php>. The Marian Library plans to update and revise this policy in the near future to better align with current practices and with the budget impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

6 James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, Donald E. Heintschel, eds., *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

7 John Flader, *Question Time: 150 Questions and Answers on the Catholic Faith* (Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Publishers, 2010).

8 "Disposal of Religious Items," Diocese of Superior, Wisconsin, accessed January 7, 2020, <https://catholicdos.org/disposal-of-religious-items>.

9 Fr. William Saunders, "Disposal of religious items," *Arlington Catholic Herald*, May 21, 2014, accessed January 7, 2020, https://www.catholicherald.com/faith/disposal_of_religious_items/.

10 Margaret Rose Realy, *A Catholic Gardener's Spiritual Almanac: Cultivating Your Faith Throughout the Year* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2015), Appendix B.

11 Catholic Church, *Decreta authentica Congregationis Sacrorum Rituum* (Typographia Polyglotta, 1898-1927). These decretals are available in Latin via the *Internet Archive* by searching "Congregatio Sacrorum Rituum" as creator. Searching for terms such as calix (chalice), statua, candela, vestitu, and rosarium will lead to the relevant passages. These nineteenth-century publications specifically address liturgical objects. (<https://archive.org/search.php?query=create%3ACatholic+Church+Congregatio+Sacrorum+Rituum>)

12 G. Thomas Ryan, *The Sacristy Manual*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011), 68.

13 "The Library is a Growing Organism: Resources for Weeding Collections," *Intellectual Freedom Blog*, The Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association, <https://www.oif.ala.org/oif/?p=16681>.

Deaccessioning in Catholic collections should—as in all libraries, archives, and museums—be informed by a detailed and institution-specific collection development and management policy. Such a policy improves internal decision-making processes and facilitates communication with external stakeholders, including donors.

- 14 “Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning,” Society of American Archivists, accessed December 10, 2019, https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/GuidelinesForReappraisalDeaccessioning_2017.pdf.
- 15 John E. Simmons, *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2006), 63-64.
- 16 Simmons, *Things Great and Small*, 70.
- 17 Ali Houissa, “Disposing of Copies of the Koran,” *Cornell University Middle East & Islamic Studies Collection Blog*, February 24, 2012, <https://blogs.cornell.edu/mideastlibrarian/2012/02/24>.
- 18 “Ask the Expert: Burying the Genizah,” My Jewish Learning, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ask-the-expert-burying-the-genizah/>; and Solomon Schechter and Elkan N. Adler, “Genizah (lit. “hiding” or “hiding-place”):” In *Jewish Encyclopedia*, accessed February 20, 2020, <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6582-genizah>.
- 19 Stefan C. Reif, “The Cairo Genizah: A Medieval Mediterranean Deposit and a Modern Cambridge Archive,” *Libraries & Culture* 37, no. 2 (2002): 123-31, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25548988>.
- 20 “We are sorry to inform the community that until further notice we cannot accept any materials that should be buried in the Genizah. We are working hard to create a new Genizah in Simi Valley as quickly as possible. Once this is completed we will begin accepting *Shemmot* again,” from “Genizah and Book Burials,” accessed January 7, 2020, <https://mountsinaiparks.org/resources/genizah/>.
- 21 Melanie Meyers, phone conversation with Sarah Burke Cahalan, September 25, 2019.
- 22 Colin H. Roberts, *Buried Books in Antiquity: Habent Sua Fata Libelli* (London: Library Association, 1963).
- 23 AnneMarie Luijendijk, “Sacred Scriptures as Trash: Biblical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 64, no. 3 (2010): 217-54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20789015>.
- 24 Colleen Hoelscher and Jillian Ewalt, “Separating the Wheat from the Chaff: Intensive Deselection to Enable Preservation and Access,” (paper presented at IFLA, Columbus, Ohio, 2016), <http://library.ifla.org/1568/>.
- 25 “Donations of Books and Media,” Marian Library, University of Dayton, <https://udayton.edu/marianlibrary/about-us/give.php>.
- 26 Marian Library holy card collection, Marian Library, University of Dayton, <https://archivescatalog.udayton.edu/repositories/2/resources/92>; Auguste Martin collection, Marian Library, University of Dayton, <https://archivescatalog.udayton.edu/repositories/2/resources/89> and Christine Mathieu holy card collection, Marian Library, University of Dayton, <https://archivescatalog.udayton.edu/repositories/2/resources/75>. The Auguste Martin and Christine Mathieu collections are provenance-based.
- 27 For example, researchers frequently request a holy card with an image of a specific Marian title, such as “Our Lady of All Nations,” or from a particular country or region.
- 28 “About ARCS,” Society of American Archivists, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/archivists-of-religious-collections-section/about-arcs>.
- 29 E-mail messages to ARCS listserv, August 6, 2018, and August 7, 2018.
- 30 “The Art of Sharing,” Marian Library, University of Dayton, accessed December 16, 2019, <https://udayton.edu/marianlibrary/art-exhibits/art-loan-program.php>.
- 31 Marian Postcard Collection, Marian Library, University of Dayton, <https://archivescatalog.udayton.edu/repositories/2/resources/67>.
- 32 Melanie Zebrowski, “‘The Original Instagram’: Happy Anniversary to the Postcard,” Marian Library blog, University of Dayton, October 2, 2019, <https://udayton.edu/blogs/imri/2019-10-02-the-original-instagram.php>.
- 33 E-mail message to Catholic Library Association Academic listserv, August 16, 2018.
- 34 Brother Andrew Kosmowski, S.M., “Guadalcanal Rosary,” Marian Library blog, University of Dayton, August 31, 2018, <https://udayton.edu/blogs/imri/2018-08-31-guadalcanal-rosary.php>.
- 35 The Marian Library does care for a small selection of first- and second-class relics, as well; they are all in our collecting scope so proper deaccessioning of those items has never arisen. If we were to receive a relic that was not appropriate to the collection we would consult first with Campus Ministry and our archdiocese in an effort to find an appropriate home. We have seen from experience that relics in the UD Libraries are used for prayer sessions and class visits, so we would likely have a generous view of what we retain, even if the individual relic is not associated with the Virgin Mary or a saint with a particular Marian devotion.
- 36 “The Ecclesiastical Exchange,” Archdiocese of Philadelphia, <http://archphila.org/archdiocesan-offices/the-ecclesiastical-exchange/>.
- 37 “Church-Inventory,” <http://www.church-inventory.com>.