

## **Mass Stipend Guidelines to Our Parishioners**

From the very beginnings of the Church, it was customary for the faithful to donate the bread and wine to be used in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. In time, offerings of money were substituted for the actual bread and wine. Money given in excess of what was necessary for the procuring of the bread and wine was used to assist the poor and, eventually, to support the clergy. Thus, it became customary for the priest to accept from the faithful a donation (formerly called a “stipend”) in return for remembering a specific intention in the celebration of a Mass. Through this voluntary offering, the donor seeks spiritual benefits that God may bestow upon the persons or concerns that are specially held in prayer at the Mass. What is more, the ***Code of Canon Law (canon 946)*** notes that the donor himself benefits: “Christ’s faithful who make an offering so that Mass can be celebrated for their intention contribute to the good of the Church, and by that offering they share in the Church’s concern for the support of its ministers and its activities.”

According to the **Council of Trent (1545-1563)**, the Mass “is quite properly offered according to apostolic tradition not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions and other needs of the faithful who are living, but also for those who have died in Christ but are not yet fully purified” (Session XXII, Chapter 2). The deep faith and ardent charity of the parishioners of Parish of the Precious Blood manifests itself in the numerous Mass offerings you donate to the parish, especially for your beloved deceased. The abundance of requests in certain communities creates something of a problem insofar as your requests for Mass intentions far exceed the number of Masses offered in some communities. In order to encourage the orderly execution of this pious practice in our Parish, we have established guidelines that are in support of the Canon Law and Diocesan guidelines.

1. Universal Church discipline as contained in the ***Code of Canon Law (canons 945-958) of the 1983 Code of Canon Law*** strictly regulates the offerings made for the celebration of Mass.
2. As your Pastor, I am “obliged to apply a Mass for the people (*pro populo*) entrusted to (me) on each Sunday and holy day of obligation” (***Code of Canon Law, 534***). Take consolation in the fact that every weekend and holy day of obligation a Mass is offered for all of you who are members of Parish of the Precious Blood.
3. The amount of the Mass offering, is specified by the Diocese of Portland Remuneration of Priests, as ten dollars (\$10.00). These monies are deposited in a separate account of our parish called the Mass Stipend Account.
4. All monies received on the occasion of All Souls Day for the celebration of Masses are to be applied at a rate of \$10.00 per Mass allowed for the celebrant.
5. The precept of **Canon 948** is to be maintained always: “Separate masses are to be applied for the intentions for which an individual offering has been made and accepted.”

In accord with decree of the **Congregation for the Clergy of 1991** a priest cannot gather together several different intentions for which an individual offering has been made and satisfy them with a single Mass.

6. Offerings for Masses that cannot be celebrated at Parish of the Precious Blood within one year must be forwarded to the Missions Office of our Diocese. Thus, priests in the missions who lack Mass offerings (see ***Code of Canon Law 953, 956***) will offer these Masses.

7. A priest can place restrictions on how many intentions he is willing to take from a particular individual, or exclude intentions of questionable piety. Within Parish of the Precious Blood we have set a limit of 5 intentions to be accepted and scheduled at any one time. (example: If a parishioner comes in with a request of 10 intentions, we can accept all 10, but only 5 will be scheduled within the parish when openings are available and the other 5 will be sent to retired priest or the Missions to be said.)

8. The parish has also limited the amount of intentions that can be said for one person within the parish. To insure consistent and fair opportunity for all wanting an intention said for a loved one, it has been decided that no one individual will have more than 10 intentions on the books with in the parish over the period of a year. Intentions will still be taken for an individual but they will be sent out to the Diocese to be offered in locations where they can be said.

9. Every effort will be made to have the Masses said within the community of request, but if requests exceed the amount of Mass celebrations for that location then the intention will be scheduled within the Parish at a site with an open Mass. This is very important to ensure we meet the one year period requirement.

10. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 Parish of the Precious Blood will now only maintain one Book for Mass Intentions as a Parish rather than one book for each church we service.

11. To request a Mass Intention you can still contact your local church representatives as has been done in the past or call the Parish office in Caribou.

12. As a Parish we will make every effort to accommodate a Mass within 30 days of the passing and the first anniversary of a deceased member. All other Mass intentions are on a first come, first served basis.

13. No intention is allowed to be scheduled further out than 364 days from the date of request.

14. If for any uncontrollable circumstance, such as a funeral, a Mass cancellation occurs the intention for that mass will be reschedule on the next available opening.

When a priest accepts a Mass stipend, he sets up a contract with that person to pray for their intention at a specific Mass. The priest contracts to pray for that intention specifically, but that does not nor can it preclude him from also praying for other intentions as well.

All participants, including the priest, and all celebrants, may, and hopefully will, not only pray for their own intentions at Mass, but also for the intentions of all present, as well as for the needs of our world, Church, and local community. Each of the Eucharistic prayers have within them prayer for many intentions....the Prayer of the Faithful does likewise. Therefore, the Mass is never offered for a single intention.