

## **POLICY 3.5.2      Mass Stipends**

There is a long history in the Catholic Church of Mass stipends. These are donations made by the Catholic faithful to the priest for the celebration of Mass. Usually, the person making such a donation also asks the priest to pray for their intention during that Mass – this may be for the spiritual benefit of a deceased friend or relative, for the intention of the donor or of another worthy intention. The specifics of the intention need not even be known to the priest, but we trust that God knows of the donor's intention. In every way, we are to discourage any semblance of simony, or the idea that one can “buy a Mass”. The Mass stipend is simply a donation made to the priest in consideration of his ministry. Because there is a service directly applied to the donation, a charitable donation receipt for income tax purposes cannot be given.

The Code of Canon Law (Canons 945-958) has established some ground rules for Mass intentions, so that there be no abuse of this practice. In short, what is stipulated is that:

- The practice of accepting Mass stipends is safeguarded in Church practice. The stipend is for the free use of the priest only after that Mass has been celebrated. It cannot be used prior to satisfying the intention by saying the Mass.
- If a priest presides at a second Mass on the same day, the amount of the second stipend shall not be kept by the priest (see below). This does not apply to Christmas Day.
- If a priest concelebrates at a second Mass on the same day, he cannot accept a second stipend at all.
- The bishop is to establish the usual amount of the Mass stipend in his diocese. As already laid down in Policy 3.5.1, this is \$10. However, no intention is to be refused, even if the donation is smaller than the prescribed amount.
- A priest is not to retain stipends that he cannot satisfy within twelve months. Those that he cannot satisfy are to be sent to other priests, or to the chancery office for redistribution.
- Pastors are to celebrate one *pro populo* Mass (without a stipend) for the needs of his people each Sunday, even if he is in charge of several parish communities. This should be the principal Mass of the day. To be clear, no stipend is to be accepted for a *pro populo* Mass that is celebrated by the pastor or the bishop. However, if the Sunday Mass is celebrated by a priest who is not the pastor, it need not be considered a *pro populo* Mass, and a stipend may be accepted.
- Reliable records are to be kept of Mass stipends received, satisfied, and transferred elsewhere.

Further to this, the following also apply in this archdiocese:

- When a priest accepts a second stipend for the day, having binated or trinated, the priest cannot retain the second or third stipend for himself, but he is free either to give it to his parish or send it to the Chancery office.
- The manner of announcing the intention for the Mass is left to the priest in consultation with the Parish Council. There is no obligation to verbally announce the intention at the Mass; the priest may choose to

- (1) announce it at the Mass, either at the beginning of the Mass, or within the Prayers of the Faithful [but never in the Memento for the Dead in the Eucharistic Prayers], or
- (2) announce it in the parish bulletin, or
- (3) list it in the church narthex or foyer.

With this in mind, the priests of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan are encouraged in the practice of the faithful offering Mass stipends. If this is not the practice in a priest's parish or missions, he is invited to do a suitable teaching on the matter.

Occasionally, the Archdiocese receives stipends from Catholic institutions, organizations and groups across Canada, for Masses to be celebrated by priests here. The practice of the Archdiocese is to pass along the stipends, and their accompanying Mass intentions, to priests in our missions. Priests are required to report on the satisfied stipends. No additional stipends can be forwarded until the pending ones have been satisfied.

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