

## **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 as specified in our Update to Mass Intentions Policy dated March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

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, an 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.

**Updated Mass Intention Policy - Parish of the Precious Blood**  
**March 1, 2017**

The practice of requesting a Mass to be offered for loved ones, living or deceased, is a beautiful and meaningful part of our Catholic tradition. In our Catholic Parish, there are many requests for scheduling such Mass intentions. It is important to remember that **these Masses are prayers for the living and deceased** we wish to remember.

It is necessary at this time to amend our Mass intentions policy in order to accommodate the numerous Mass requests in a reasonable manner. As of **March 1, 2017, we have on the books 503 Mass intentions**, of which 204 were received in February alone. According to the *Code of Canon Law (Canon 953)* we must offer Mass for the scheduled intention **within one year's time**. If we keep all these intentions to be said at our 10 worship sites, we would be unable to accept new intentions for several months.

In discussion with Fr. Labrie, we are implementing the following:

- ➔ We are limiting the number of **intentions from any one person to 5 intentions for the calendar year**. Additional Mass intentions may be submitted BUT these would more than likely need to be sent elsewhere.
- ➔ We can schedule a **maximum of 10 Masses per year for any one intention** and as availability allows (**locations may vary**). 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. Keep in mind that some of our 10 worship sites offer only one weekly Mass; **it may be necessary to have Mass intentions celebrated at another worship site**.
- ➔ Masses **may only be scheduled 6 months in advance** from date of request. **Exception** to this: We will accept a Mass intention a year in advance for the 1st anniversary (only) of a death of a loved one.
- ➔ Due to varying location/times of Masses for Easter and Christmas, specific requests cannot be accepted.
- ➔ Specific days, dates and/or location cannot be guaranteed.
- ➔ Requests will be honored on a **first-come, first-serve** basis in the order in which the request is received at the Parish Office.
- ➔ Intentions will not be recorded until payment is received.
- ➔ NOTE: The Mass stipend offered does not belong to the Parish. It goes directly to the priest that is saying the Mass offering the intention.
- ➔ One Mass every Sunday by the pastor must be scheduled for the intentions of our parishioners known as "*Pro Populo*" (**For the People**) as required by Canon Law and diocesan statute.

Therefore, to ensure the current requests are fulfilled, we will be sending some to diocesan retired priests, other parishes that need intentions and/or to the missions (Propagation of the Faith).