

## **POLICY 3.5.2      Mass Stipends**

### **SUMMARY**

1. The offering of Mass stipends by the Christian faithful has a long history in the Church and is encouraged in the Archdiocese.
2. The *Code of Canon Law* regulates how priests are to handle Mass stipends and this policy outlines the specific requirements for priests in the Archdiocese for a) the stipend amount, b) Sunday Mass celebrations, c) announcing Mass intentions, d) satisfying and reporting stipends from various sources, and e) stipends that cannot be honoured within one year.
3. Although exceptional celebrations of Sunday Mass are permitted, the financial offering at that Mass belongs to the parish.

### **FORMS**

N/A

### **RELATED POLICIES**

Policy 3.5.1 Parish Responsibilities for Collecting and Paying Fees for Pastoral Services  
 Policy 3.5.5 Reporting of Stipends by Diocesan Priests

A Mass stipend is a financial offering made by a member of the Christian faithful to a priest for a particular intention to be applied to a Mass he will celebrate. The acceptance of Mass stipends by priests is regulated by the *Code of Canon Law* (canons 945-958). This policy strictly adheres to the canons and is addressed to priests and parish administrators, to assist them in complying with Church law.

#### **1. The canons and diocesan norms on Mass stipends**

##### **a. Stipend amount**

The bishops of the ecclesiastical province are 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.

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.

The Mass stipend is 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.

##### **b. One Mass a day**

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.

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. This does not apply to Christmas Day.

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.

If a priest concelebrates at a second Mass on the same day, he cannot accept a second stipend at all.

#### **c. Mass intentions**

The manner of announcing the intention for the Mass is left to the priest in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council. There is no obligation to verbally announce the intention at the Mass; the priest may choose to:

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

#### **d. Sources of Mass stipends**

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.

#### **e. Stipends that cannot be honoured**

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.

Reliable records are to be kept of Mass stipends received, satisfied, and transferred elsewhere.

## **2. "Payment" for Sunday Mass celebrations**

Priests are not to accept additional remuneration for the celebration of Mass. For example, on occasion a parish priest may be invited to celebrate a Sunday Mass with parishioners at a location away from the parish church, such as a summer vacation site. Any financial offering/collection taken up at that celebration rightly belongs to the parish itself. The priest may not accept that collection for his personal use. The priest may accept reimbursement, from the group that invited him, for his personal expenses to travel to the site for the Mass celebration.

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