

## MASS STIPENDS – SOME PRACTICAL DIRECTION

The following observations are not intended to be a full explanation or commentary on the Church's teaching and law in regard to Mass stipends, but rather intended to provide some practical direction about the matter.

1. The custom of making an offering for the celebration of a Mass is a longstanding one in the Church and is sanctioned by Church law. It is not permitted, therefore, for a parish priest to decide that no Mass stipends will ever be accepted in the parish for which he is responsible.
2. The intentions of the donor must always be respected. Thus, if a priest accepts one or more stipends with the understanding that the Masses will be offered in the parish church, the priest is not free to send them elsewhere without the consent of the donor.
3. Separate Masses are to be offered for each stipend that is given for a single Mass. It is not permitted to group separate stipends together and offer a single Mass for many intentions.
4. It is permissible for the faithful to contribute to collective Mass intentions (e.g. "Purgatorian Masses") provided it is clear to them that their individual offerings will be used in this way. However, the place and time of the offering of these Masses must be made public and they are not to be offered more than twice a week in any given church.
5. No priest or parish may retain more Mass stipends than can be satisfied within one year. **Surplus stipends are to be sent to the Chancery or the Mission Office for distribution to other priests in the Archdiocese or in the missions.**
6. While a priest may offer more than one stipend Mass on a given day, the second stipend (**bination stipend**) is to be sent to the Chancery with the notation that the obligation has already been fulfilled. These funds are dispersed to Mount St. Mary's Seminary and to general Archdiocesan operations.
7. The Priest Personnel policies of the Archdiocese provide that priests may waive stipends owed them personally in favor of a specified regular monthly payment. However, the policies and Code of Canon Law, (canons 276.2.2 and 904) also call for regular, even daily celebration of the Eucharist by priests.
8. Pastors of parishes (and diocesan bishops) are required to offer Mass for their people on Sundays and other specified feast days. If a priest is pastor of more than one parish, one Mass per Sunday or feast day satisfies this obligation. However, on these days, the pastor may not receive a stipend for another Mass. If stipend Masses are scheduled, the stipend is to be sent to the Chancery in accord with number 6 above.

9. The Mass offering for all Masses in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is \$5.00. No more than that may be requested for a Mass offering, though more may be accepted if it is freely offered. Less may be accepted and no reasonable request for Masses shall be refused.

10. These items are matters of justice and are therefore to be interpreted strictly. Any abuses or mismanagement of the Mass stipends require restitution.

11. Since the Code of Canon Law (canon 958.2) calls for the bishop to inspect the Mass stipend books of his parishes, the Mass stipend books should be presented for his inspection with the sacramental records when the Archbishop or his representative comes for Confirmation, parish visits, etc.