

POLICY N° 26 (Revised January 1, 2013)

OFFERINGS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASSES

1. Introduction

The tradition of giving offerings to have Masses celebrated for specific intentions is a laudable one and should be maintained as much as possible.

It is true that whenever the Eucharist is celebrated, the needs and intentions of the entire human family, both living and dead are included. Nevertheless, as Catholics, we believe that there is inestimable value in “having a Mass celebrated” for a particular intention. Those for whom the Mass is thus offered benefit in a special way from the grace of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Christ’s faithful who make an offering so that a Mass can be celebrated for their intention, contribute to the good of the Church, especially the support of the sacred ministers and the fulfillment of the Church’s apostolic activity (*CIC*, can. 946). Addressing the question of Mass offerings, Pope Paul VI stated: “There has been a strong tradition in the Church that the faithful, led on by a religious and ecclesial awareness, should conjoin a kind of sacrifice of themselves, as it were, with the Eucharistic sacrifice in order that they might more actively participate in it. In this way, they, on their part, provide for the needs of the Church, and especially for the support of her ministers...” (Paul VI, *motu proprio, Firma in traditione*, June 13, 1974, in *AAS*, 66 (1974), pp. 308-311).

Church teaching and Canon Law (*CIC*, canons 945-958) provide important guidelines on how to preserve the dignity and appreciation of this practice.

A priest may accept a Mass offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention. Even if no offering has been received, a priest should celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially the needy (*CIC*, can. 945).

When a priest accepts a Mass offering, no matter how small, he is bound in justice to fulfill the obligation according to the norms of the Church and the intentions of the one making the offering.

Priests must not prevent the poor from being able to have intentions applied to a Mass due to their inability to make the suggested offering.

When accepting Mass offerings, all priests must be zealous in avoiding any semblance of trafficking or profiting from the offerings of the faithful. The celebration of Mass is never

to become or even appear to become a means of monetary profit for the priest or parish (*CIC*, can. 947).

2. Policy

Effective January 1, 2013, the schedule of offering for Masses in parishes in the Archdiocese of Ottawa is as follows:

- A. **Register:** A special book or register is to be kept in which is indicated the number of Masses to be celebrated, the intention, the offering given, and their celebration (*CIC*, can. 958). This register is subject to review by the Archbishop or regional vicar at the times of parish visitation.
- B. **Separate Account:** The offerings for Masses to be celebrated are to be kept in a distinct account and are not to be commingled with parish funds. The records of the account are to be accurately kept, so that it is clear, at any moment, what obligations for the celebration of the Masses remain.
- C. **Announced Mass Offering:** The offering for an announced (communal) Mass is \$15.00. The \$15.00 suggested offering in its entirety is retained by the celebrant. A priest may not ask for an offering larger than the specified amount, but may accept a voluntary offering in any amount, as long as it is clear that the donor is requesting only one Mass. The parish shall retain any amount over the \$15.00 retained by the priest for an announced Mass. Even if the offering is less than the norm, a single Mass is to be offered for the specific intention (*CIC*, can. 948).
- D. **Unannounced Mass Offering:** The offering for an unannounced (without community participation) Mass is \$10.00, and the offering is retained by the celebrant.
- E. **Bination:** When a priest celebrates more than one Mass on the same day, he may apply an intention for each Mass celebrated, but he may retain only one offering for himself, except for Christmas Day when the priest is permitted to retain the offering for each Mass (up to three Masses). The other Mass offerings (for binated or trinated Masses) are to be divided equally between the parish and the Diocesan Compensation Fund.
- F. **Concelebration:** In the case of concelebration, a priest may accept an offering (\$10.00-unannounced) if that is the only Mass a priest celebrates that day. A priest who celebrates or concelebrates a second Mass on the same day may not take an offering for it, and the norms for bination apply (*CIC*, can. 951).
- G. **Multiple Intentions:** Ordinarily, it is strictly forbidden to collect offerings for more than one particular intention and offer one Mass collectively for the sake of those intentions. This is particularly true when the faithful are not aware that their specific

intention will be joined to others in the same Mass. However, “in cases in which the people making the offering have been previously explicitly informed and have freely consented to combining the offerings in a single offering, their intentions can be satisfied with a single Mass celebrated according to a “collective” intention. In this case, it is necessary that the place and time for the celebration of this Mass, which is not to be more than twice a week, be made public” (Decree *Mos iugiter “On Collective Mass Intentions”* of the Congregation of the Clergy, February 22, 1991, arts 1-2).

The only two Masses per week with a “collective” intention may be scheduled on any day, including on Sunday, at the discretion of the pastor. Any number of intentions, within reason, may be included in each of these two Masses with a “collective” intention. Moreover, they must be from different donors, and for different intentions.

For such “collective” intention Masses, the priest may accept only the offering equivalent to a single Mass intention (\$15.00). The remainder of the offerings is to be divided equally between the parish and the Diocesan Administration Fund.

- H. **Missa pro populo:** Every pastor (and administrator) is obligated to offer one Mass for the people, or *missa pro populo*, every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation (Christmas and Mary, Mother of God – January 1). A pastor who is legitimately prevented from this celebration is to have another priest apply it on these days or he is to apply it himself on other days (*CIC*, can. 534). If a pastor has care of more than one parish, he may offer the Mass for the people once for all those given to his care. No other intention may be joined to this Mass. Nor may a stipend be accepted on the occasion of the celebration of a Mass *pro populo*. If, however, the pastor celebrates a second Mass on that day, he may accept the offering for that Mass.
- I. **Funerals:** Where the custom currently exists for a collection to be taken up at a funeral, half of the proceeds shall be applied towards Mass intentions for the deceased (\$15.00/Mass), and the other half shall be kept by the parish for its needs. It is recommended over time that the practice of taking up such collections cease. Where the practice does not exist, it is not to be introduced.
- J. **Wills:** In the case of a sum of money left in a will for Masses to be celebrated without any indication of the number of Masses, the norms indicated in *CIC*, can. 950 shall apply, namely, the number is to be computed on the basis of the offering established in the Archdiocese (currently \$15 for an announced Mass or \$10 for an unannounced Mass). If the number of Masses is indicated and the donation accepted, then that number of Masses must be celebrated. Before accepting an amount of money greater than the equivalent of thirty (30) Masses, the Chancellor is to be consulted.

- K. **Scheduling of Masses and Surplus Offerings:** Masses to be applied for specific intentions should not be scheduled more than one year in advance. Moreover, *CIC*, can. 953 prohibits any priests, parishes and institutions from accepting more offerings for Masses to be applied than can be satisfied within a year. Surplus Mass offerings and intentions should be forwarded to the Chancery office for distribution to retired priests and priests in other parts of the world.
- L. **Sample Forms:** Surplus offerings directed to the Diocesan Compensation or Administration Funds shall be forwarded every three months to the accounting office using the sample forms provided.
- M. **Intention of Donors:** In case of doubt as to the intention of the donors, the Vicar General is to be consulted.
- N. **Visiting Priests:** Visiting priests shall receive the stipulated stipends for Mass assistance on weekdays and Sundays, which includes the Mass offering.
- O. **Weddings and Funerals:** Please consult the existing diocesan policy for offerings to be given on the occasion of weddings and funerals.

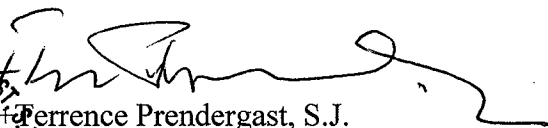

3. Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy must be requested from the Archbishop of Ottawa or his delegate, providing they do not contravene the universal law of the Church.

4. Effective date

The previous policy is abrogated, as well as the first revision of March 12, 2012. This revised policy is effective as of January 1st, 2013.

Given this twentieth day of November, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twelve, at the Metropolitan Curia of the Archdiocese of Ottawa.


 TERRENCE PRENDERGAST
 ARCHBISHOP OF OTTAWA
 + Terrence Prendergast, S.J.
 Archbishop of Ottawa

 Fr. Christian Riesbeck, CC. E.V.
 Chancellor