

NORMS REGARDING MASS STIPENDS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

The venerable practice of the faithful making an offering to the priest for the intention of the Sacrifice of the Mass is guided by ecclesiastical law. It is opportune, therefore, to reiterate the universal norms found in the *Code of Canon Law*, Book IV, Title III, *The Most Holy Eucharist*, Chapter III, *Offerings Given at the Celebration of Mass*. This reiteration underscores the following further application of these norms in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

In accord with the approved usage of the Church, it is lawful for any priest who celebrates or concelebrates Mass to receive an offering to apply the Mass according to a definite intention (canon 945,1).

Separate Masses are to be applied for intentions for which an individual offering, even if small, has been made and accepted (canon 948).

Accordingly, a priest accepts one stipend for one definite intention for one Mass. The content of this definite intention may be stipulated for one person, multiple persons and/or include multiple prayer requests. It is unlawful for a priest to accept multiple stipends for multiple definite intentions for one Mass.

The priest celebrant or concelebrant, acting in the person of Christ the Priest, brings the intentions of Christ himself for the whole Church to the celebration of every Mass. While it is commendable for the priest to remember various intentions, these cannot be considered part of the stipended definite intention of the Mass and always remain separate and distinct.

In accord with my duty as Archbishop to safeguard the practice and discipline of the Church with regard to one stipend for one definite intention for one Mass, the use of the Collective Mass Intention, as described in the decree of the Congregation for the Clergy, February 22, 1991, is not to be applied in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

A priest who celebrates Mass more than once on the same day may apply the individual Mass for the intention for which the offering is made, but with the law that, except on Christmas, he may retain the offering for only one Mass, giving the other offerings to purposes prescribed by the ordinary, except for some recompense by reason of an extreme title. A priest who concelebrates a second Mass on the same day may not take an offering for it under any title. (canon 951, 1 and 2).

Accordingly, a priest who on the same day celebrates an additional stipended Mass for a definite intention must submit the additional offerings to the

Propagation of the Faith for the missions or Saint Charles Seminary for the formation of future priests.

At this time, I wish to confirm that one stipend for one definite intention for one Mass is to remain the practice in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Cardinal Justin Rigali
Archbishop of Philadelphia
May 21, 2010