

மதுரை உயர்மறைமாவட்டம்



அருட்பணியாளர் பெயர் :

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THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MADURAI

NORMS REGARDING MASS STIPENDS

Introduction

From the very beginnings of the Church, it has been customary for the faithful to donate bread and wine to be used in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and to offer other gifts to sustain clergy and feed the needy. In course of time, offering of money was 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 support the clergy. Thus, it became a custom for the priests 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 a spiritual benefits that God may bestow upon the persons or concerns that are specially held in prayer at the Mass. The venerable practice of the faithful making an offering to the priest for a specific intention at the Holy 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, (CC 945-958) under "Offerings Given at the Celebration of Mass".

Canon 946 notes, "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). Following this, we also have the tradition of Gregorian masses which are a continuous series of thirty masses for the repose of the soul of the dead. The reiteration underscores the following for further application of these norms in the Archdiocese of Madurai.

Due to the demand for such intentions and remembrances in the Archdiocese of Madurai, the following regulations will be applied with an immediate effect.

1. As per the Archdiocesan policy, an offering of Rs.100/- (For high Masses it may go upto Rs. 125/-) is requested for each mass intention. Can 942\$2 earnestly recommends priest to celebrate Mass for the intentions of Christ's faithful especially of those in need, even if they are unable to give an offering.
2. As a rule, there will be only one intention per Mass. Even many intentions are read in a mass, separate Masses should be applied for each intention for which is accepted (Cf. Can. 948). In accordance with the Decree *Mos Iugiter* issued by the Congregation for the Clergy (22 November 1999), a single mass for multiple intentions can be offered but not more than twice each week. In this case, the faithful must voluntarily agree to have their intentions combined in a single celebration and they are to be informed of the date and time of the celebration. The celebrant can retain for himself only the offering for one intention. The rest of the amount must be forwarded to the Archdiocesan Procurator.
3. A Priest is entitled to offer Mass for anyone living or dead (Can. 901). It is an obligation for the Priest to celebrate and apply mass for the intention of those who made an offering, even if the offering received has been lost for no fault of him (Can. 949).
4. Any offering accepted for an intention must be applied within a year, and the time count begins from the day and time of the reception of an offering (Can. 955\$2). No Priest may accept more offerings for Masses to be celebrated by himself than he can discharge within a year (Can. 953).
5. Those parishes that receive more requests of intentions than that can be celebrated in their territory within a year are to transfer those excess intentions to the diocese (for the procurator's office).
6. Parish Priests are not encouraged to transfer the excess Mass intentions to the priests of their own choices. All the excess Mass Intentions should be transferred to the diocese, so that the priests in the institutions and in remote or mission parishes might be supported.
7. There should be one Mass diary in every parish (including all the substations) and the number of Masses accepted, celebrated and transferred to are to be properly recorded (Cf. Can. 955\$ 3,4).

8. When a priest celebrates a number of Masses on the same day, may apply each Mass for the intention for which an offering, was made. But, he may retain for himself the offering of one Mass only. The others are to be transmitted to the Archdiocesan seminarians' Fund. (Generally, for the priests in parishes, *bination* on week days and *trination* on Sundays and feast days are allowed). Only on Christmas day, a priest can take an offering for each Mass he celebrates.
 9. On Sundays and Holy days of obligation, all the parish priests are obliged to celebrate one Mass for the Parishioners and benefactors of the Parish (*Misso Pro Populo*) for which no offering should be obtained. He may obtain an offering for the second Mass he celebrates.
 10. When there is no offering of intention, the Priest can offer one Mass per day for the intentions of the procurator and receive the offerings from him.
 11. Every month all Priests (Incardinated / working in the diocese) are to offer one Mass for the intention of the sick and elderl clergy and that offering is to be added to the '*Opus Securitatis*' Fund.
 12. When a brother Priest expires, every Priest (Incardinated / working in the diocese) is to offer three Masses for the repose of the soul of the deceased priest.
 13. The GIRM, Added to the Can. 902, states that con-celebration appropriately expresses the unity of the priesthood, of the sacrifice, and also of the whole People of God. When a Mass is concelebrated, each priest offers the sacrifice of the Eucharist and each priest is able to have his own intention. Hence, a priest who concelebrates a Mass may also receive an offering for an intention; but, if he concelebrates on the same day a second Mass, he may not under any title accept an offering for that Mass (Can. 951\$2).
 14. There should be no trafficking or trading of Masses and even the semblance is to be entirely excluded from the Mass offering (Can. 947).
 15. Each and every priest has to submit the personal mass diary to the Archbishop on the occasion of the annual retreat for the necessary scrutiny (Canon 958 \$2).
 16. Any alteration or change in this regard is subject to and limited only to the Archbishop.
- ❖ Kindly send the duly filled Mass slip to the Procurator's office on or before 3rd of every month so that it could be easy to transact Mass stipend on 5th of the same month.

Conclusion

When those people who have made the offering for mass are present for the celebration of the Eucharist, their intentions are brought before God. Each celebration of the Eucharist is for all those present and for the particular intentions and needs of all the Church. A Mass is never celebrated only for a particular intentions, but a particular intention can be remembered during the celebration of any Mass. Thus, the Church continues the tradition of Mass offerings.

When a priest accepts a Mass stipend, he sets up a contract with those persons 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 praying for other intentions as well.

All participants, including the priest, and 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.

***"Celebrate the Holy Mass as if it is
Your First Mass,
Your Last Mass, and
Your Only Mass."***

+ *Antony Pappusamy*

Date :

Seal :

Archbishop of Madurai
Most Rev. Dr. **ANTONY PAPPUSAMY**