

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Mass Stipends and Offerings Policy

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Mass Intentions and Offerings

Offering a Mass for a specific intention requested by the faithful has been a long and venerable tradition in the Church. The faithful request that a Mass be offered for a person who is living or deceased, for a special occasion like a wedding anniversary or for a special intention. They frequently give an offering to the priest to apply that intention to the Mass.

It is important to properly understand the Church's discipline concerning the intention for which a Mass is offered and the monetary offering received by the priest from the faithful. The Mass, and indeed all sacraments, do not cost money. The impression of charging for a Mass or trafficking in multiple Masses is an abuse which must be scrupulously avoided.

Masses With Single Intentions and Offerings

A priest may accept an intention for a Mass and a freewill offering given by the person requesting that intention. In the Diocese of Dallas, the usual offering is \$5.00. If a person is indigent and unable to afford the normal offering, the intention should not be refused.

A second intention and offering may be accepted and celebrated by the priest for another Mass that same day, but the second offering may not be retained by the priest. The second offering should be given to charity or some other pious work.

At the celebrations of Christmas Masses, the priest may retain the offering for each Mass he says up to three Masses.

Masses With Multiple Intentions and Offerings

Sometimes, several intentions with an offering for each intention may be scheduled and celebrated at a single Mass on the same day.

This is permitted under the following conditions:

1. The priest may retain only one of the offerings and give the rest to charity or some other pious work.
2. All of those requesting an intention must be informed and agree to several intentions at that particular Mass.
3. The date and time of the Mass must be known by each donor.
4. A Mass with several intentions may occur no more than twice in one week.

Recording, Fulfilling or Transferring Mass Intentions

Church law specifies that intentions that have been received must be satisfied within one year of the date received.

If an intention received cannot be satisfied within that time, it must be sent to a priest, of proven integrity, who can say the Mass for that intention (e.g., to retired priests, religious houses or the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for distribution to missionary Dioceses).

Every intention and offering received and accepted for celebration by a priest or in a parish must be recorded in the parish Mass record with the date received, the offering given and the date it was satisfied.

A record must also be kept of the intentions transferred including the amount of the offering and the date of transfer. Care must be taken to record the acceptance of the obligation by an outside priest or religious house.

Once a year, the Dean of each Deanery is to inspect the books to verify that Masses are properly recorded. He is then to inform the Vicar General in a written letter that the parishes in his Deanery are current in their records of Masses.

Novena Masses

In the Diocese of Dallas, it has been common practice to celebrate Masses, usually a Novena of Masses, for Mother's Day, Father's Day, and All Souls' Day with multiple intentions and free will offerings given by the faithful.

On these occasions, the faithful must know that their offerings and the names submitted for Mother's Day, Father's Day and All Souls' Day will be remembered together as the intention of the Novena Masses.

They must also know the dates, usually in the bulletin, when these Masses will be celebrated.

The offerings received on these occasions should be divided among the priests serving in that parish.