



**DECREE**

Having heard the Presbyteral Council, on 25 May 2001, having carefully considered the matter, and mindful that the bishops of the Province of Ohio have unanimously decided on 12 March 1984 with respect to the decree mentioned in Canon 952, that each diocesan bishop in the province shall determine the fee for Mass stipends in that diocese, I hereby establish the following:

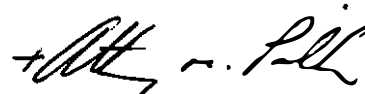
1. Except when the contrary is obvious, nothing in this decree shall be construed as derogating from the provisions of the Code of Canon Law, canons 943-958, or the decree of the Congregation for the Clergy on "Collective Mass Intentions" of 2 February 1991 (see Origins, Vol. 20, No. 43, 4 April 1991). This present decree in no way constitutes an exhaustive treatment of the discipline of Mass intentions and offerings. Rather, reference should be made to the above-named sources for guidance on any matters not fully explained in this decree.
2. The normal offering for any announced or unannounced Mass in the Diocese of Cleveland shall be \$10. An announced Mass is one that is arranged for a definite day and hour and is announced according to the parish custom. Unannounced Masses are all others, including intentions for concelebrated Masses.
3. No one may request more than \$10 for a Mass stipend. If more is offered spontaneously or voluntarily, it may be accepted, provided it is clear that the donor is requesting only one Mass.
4. Masses already promised based on the former \$5 stipend shall be honored. Henceforth, when a contribution is received for an indefinite number of Masses, the number to be offered is calculated on the basis of the \$10 stipend established in No. 2 above.
5. Individual priests retain the right to renounce the acceptance of Mass stipends but still have the obligation to offer Mass for the specified intention. It is not permitted, however, for a parish, a pastor, or the clergy assigned to a parish to entirely abolish the practice of receiving offerings and of offering Masses for specified intentions in any given parish.
6. It is always permissible to accept a lesser stipend for the offering of Mass, but this in no way diminishes the obligation in justice to offer a separate Mass for the specified intention once any stipend, even if small (or waived entirely) has been accepted. (See also the October 1987 policy re: Mass intentions sent to the missions).

7. Individual priests may not retain more Mass obligations than they can discharge in a year. Parishes and institutions that receive Mass offerings to be offered in that church or institution may not retain more than can be discharged in two years.
8. Excess Mass stipends should be forwarded to the Diocesan Mission Office for distribution to local and missionary priests in need of them. Masses with conditions that cannot be fulfilled by other priests (such as described in No. 12) cannot be transferred unless the donor personally withdraws the condition.
9. Bination and trination stipends are to be forwarded to the Chancery or Finance Office for distribution to the seminary fund, in accordance with the diocesan custom.
10. Each priest or each parish (whichever is applicable) must maintain scrupulously accurate records of Mass intentions received, the date received, the amount of the stipend, and the date the Mass intention was discharged (or some equally unmistakable method of cancellation). The parish Mass intention books are subject to the normal episcopal inspection at times of parish visitation.
11. Large bequests for numerous Masses create an unreasonable burden and ought to be discouraged or even refused if the priest or parish cannot discharge them in a timely way (i.e., in accordance with the rule of No. 7).
12. The conditions stated by the donor when the Mass offering is accepted (e.g., that it be said in a particular church) must be honored; if the condition cannot be accepted, the offering should be refused.
13. Founded Masses (i.e., an endowment to which is attached the obligation to celebrate Mass for a given intention at specified intervals for up to 50 years) are not permitted to be established without the express written permission of the Ordinary.
14. If a parish or institution receives Mass intentions and distributes the stipends to priests, the funds for unsatisfied obligations must be kept in a separate fund or account until distributed. If interest accrues on these deposits, it is considered normal parish revenue. No additional Mass obligations are incurred other than those originally requested by the donor. The interest should be transferred on a regular basis to the general fund of the parish or institution, and not allowed to accumulate in the stipend account.
15. The Pro-Populo Mass must be offered by the bishop and pastors as specified in Canons 388 and 534 respectively. These Masses must be offered gratis and it is not permitted to superimpose another intention to be offered by the same celebrant at the same Mass. If another priest is requested to offer the Pro-Populo Mass by either the bishop or the pastor, the bishop or pastor shall tender the current stipend of \$10 to the priest offering the Mass, unless the latter voluntarily waives it.

16. So-called "Collective Mass Intentions" as described (in the document mentioned in No. 1) can only be accepted under the following conditions:
- the several donors must consent to the combination of intentions beforehand;
  - the Mass and its celebration must be made public;
  - the celebrant is entitled to only the standard \$10 stipend and all in excess is to be sent to the Chancery or Finance Office the same as for bination/trination stipends;
  - this privilege may not be used more than twice a week in any given place of worship.

Note: It is not permitted to combine Mass intentions that have already been received and accepted with the understanding that a separate Mass would be offered, or to ask donors to consent to the subsequent combination of these separate intentions with other separate intentions.

This decree is effective 1 September 2001. Given at the Chancery Office 1 June 2001 anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

  
Bishop of Cleveland

  
Chancellor