

**Memorandum**

October 7, 2004

**To:** The Priests of the Diocese of Beaumont  
**Re:** Canon Law Regarding Mass Intentions and Stipends  
**From:** Michael A. Jamail, Vicar General

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A reminder of canonical and local regulations regarding the acceptance and fulfillment of stipends given by the faithful for Mass intentions follows.\*

Enclosed for your review are the pages which give instructions on Mass Offerings. Please note in particular the section on Collective Mass Intentions (VI, C.), and the section on Record and Supervision (VI, E, 3) which requires the Episcopal Vicars annually to inspect the Mass offering books, which would normally be done when the vicar is inspecting and signing the Sacramental Registers.

Bishop Curtis J. Guillory provides the following instruction:

*A practice seems to have developed in some parishes that for All Souls Day parishioners are encouraged to write down the names of deceased loved ones and with a donation, place the envelope in the collection. The All Souls Days Masses are celebrated for all the named persons and the priests distribute the entire collected amount among themselves. This practice is scandalous and violates the law of the Church regarding Mass stipends. In 1992 the Congregation for the clergy issued a directive on "Collective Mass Intentions." In this document it is stated that the Church allows on rare occasions the combining of Mass intentions as long as the faithful are explicitly informed that the Mass intentions will be combined. In these cases, however, the priest may only take the dollar amount equal to one stipend (\$5.00 in the dioceses of Texas). The rest of the stipend offering is to be forwarded to other priests to fulfill the Mass intentions or to the chancery for forwarding to missionary priests.*

You are encouraged to provide a copy of this memo and its enclosure to your parish secretary / bookkeepers so that she/he is aware of these regulations.

Should you have any questions regarding Mass intentions, please call Sister Esther Dunegan, Chancellor, or myself. If you have questions about the financial recording keeping and disbursement of the Mass stipends, please contact Rusty Chimeno, C.F.O., for accounting procedures.

Thank you.

\* A priest fulfilling the *pro populo* obligation can keep the stipend for a second mass he may offer that same day.

**-end-**