

## Mass intentions policy for Saint Mark parish

At each Mass we pray for the Church universally and locally, for the living and the dead. On Sundays and holy days of obligation, at least one Mass is offered by every pastor for the people of his parish.<sup>1</sup> The offering of a Mass for a requested intention is a centuries-old tradition of the Church, dating back to the first centuries of Her history - especially in prayers offered for the deceased.

At the same time, the Church carefully regulates Mass stipends to ensure that “any appearance of trafficking or trading is to be excluded entirely from the offering for Masses”.<sup>2</sup> As such, there are careful limits placed on stipends and Mass intentions, both by canon law and the particular law of the Archdiocese of Seattle.<sup>3</sup>

It is edifying that many of the faithful at Saint Mark parish seek to have Masses offered, usually for the benefit of their beloved dead. In light of the consistent interest in making Mass intentions widely available and aware of the limited availability of Masses (in general, a priest may only celebrate no more than two Masses a day and three Masses on Sundays)<sup>4</sup>, this policy has been formed to assist in guaranteeing that a wide number of parishioners can have an opportunity to request Mass intentions through the year.

**Please note:** The guiding principles for this policy are fairness and justice, with the goal of making the rich tradition of offering Masses for specific intentions available to as many as possible.

Though discernment has gone into the formation of these policies, not every circumstance can be anticipated. This document may be edited as need arises or circumstances dictate.

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<sup>1</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, 534

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 947

<sup>3</sup> See *Code of Canon Law*, 945 and *Many Gifts, One Spirit*, ‘Priestly Ministry’, PM 48

<sup>4</sup> See *Code of Canon Law*, 905 and *Many Gifts, One Spirit*, ‘Priestly Ministry’, Appendix A, Section I

The following are the policies for Mass intentions at Saint Mark parish:

### **Stipends**

- The amount for stipends for Masses are set by the ordinary (the bishop or archbishop). In the Archdiocese of Seattle, no amount has been set. While donations are encouraged as a sacrificial offering and in support of the ministry of the parish (a common offering is between \$5-\$10) **there is no minimum stipend**. Any donation is welcome and will be gratefully received.

### **Requesting Mass intentions**

- Mass intentions must be personally made to the parish office.
  - This may be done by phone or in person – **requests may not be made electronically or through a proxy**
  - Mass intentions must be for one of the following:
    - a specific person (living or deceased)
    - a specific couple/group of people
    - a general intention that applies to people living or deceased.
  - For purposes of privacy, Mass intentions will only name the person, couple, group, or general intention.
- Mass intentions may only be requested within the current quarter/3-month period. Intentions for the upcoming 3-month period may be requested the month before that period begins:
  - January-March – **opens in December**
  - April-June – **opens in March**
  - July-September – **opens in June**
  - October-December – **opens in September**

### **Days and dates for Mass intentions**

- Mass intention dates will be assigned by the parish office
  - Dates are usually assigned at the time a request is made and are shared immediately (or as soon as possible) with the person making the request

- If a specific date or days of the week is desired, it must be submitted for approval at least a month before the desired date **AND** be approved by the pastor or a staff member
  - Requests for specific dates or days of the week are limited to a maximum of four times in a calendar year
  - These requests may include dates outside of the 3-month period (ie, an anniversary of death, wedding, or other special date or day)
- If a Mass intention is moved, reasonable effort will be made to notify the person who made the request

### **Considerations to assist in fairness and Mass availability**

- A maximum of 10 Mass intentions per household may be requested in a 3-month period
  - Requests made for specific dates/days (**limit 4 annually**) count as part of the 10 intentions made within the 3-month period even if the dates requested are outside of the 3-month period
- Major feasts and memorials (excluding solemnities and holy days of obligation) may be requested once every three years
- Sundays, Holy Days of obligation, and their vigils are reserved to the pastor for offering Masses *pro populo* (for the people of the parish) and intentions of his choosing.

### **Special notes**

- Unless explicitly requested otherwise, Mass intentions will be published in the parish calendar (online and in the bulletin)
- Mass intention cards are available upon request for you to send, artfully crafted & designed to share the Mass intention & date assigned (**if interested, please ask the parish office for details**)