

Canon 952 §1 MASS OFFERINGS

The provincial council or the provincial Bishops' meeting is to determine by decree, for the whole of the province, what offering is to be made for the celebration and application of Mass. Nonetheless, it is permitted to accept, for the application of a Mass, an offering voluntarily made, which is greater, or even less, than that which has been determined.

The Bishops of the Province of New Zealand approved the following policy on 30 October 2020 regarding offerings for the celebration of Mass:

Policy on Offerings for the Celebration of Mass

Term Definition

Mass offering: a gift freely given by the faithful to a priest on the occasion of the celebration of Mass for a specific intention.

Intent of the Directive

To make certain that the intentions of the faithful are duly respected when offerings are made for the celebration of Masses.

To avoid any semblance of trafficking or trading in the distribution of Mass offerings (see canon 945, §1).

Policy

Parish priests and parish administrators are reminded that they are obliged to offer one Mass for the people of the parish(es) on Sundays and the Feast of the Assumption.

Priests are reminded when a bequest is made to the parish priest or the diocesan bishop the bequest belongs to the juridic person and not to the parish priest or the diocesan bishop personally (canon 1267).

Priests are encouraged to offer Masses whenever someone asks for a Mass to be celebrated even if they do not give a stipend.

Priests are forbidden to accept pious foundations or trusts for Masses or anything else without the written permission of the diocesan bishop.

1. Any priest who celebrates or concelebrates a Mass may accept an offering to offer the Mass for a specific intention.



2. If a Mass intention is accepted by a priest, the number of Masses agreed must be celebrated.
3. The offering for legacy Masses will be ten dollars for the first twenty Masses and thereafter twenty-five dollars for each Mass.
4. The entire offering for binated and trinated Masses, except for those celebrated on Christmas day, is to be forwarded to Holy Cross Seminary.
5. When a bequest for over \$500 is made for Masses to be celebrated, the bequest is to be referred to the diocesan bishop to oversee the distribution of the offerings and the celebration of the Masses according to canons 1301-1310.
6. Priests must not accept Mass offerings for more than one year in advance. Any surplus Mass offerings must be referred to the diocesan bishop to distribute.
7. One only Mass intention is to be accepted for each Mass.

This policy to take effect on 29 November 2020.

COMMENTARY

In New Zealand the bishops of the Province, which technically make this decree, are in fact the same bishops who make up the Conference of Bishops.

The practice of asking for a Mass offering goes back to the second century. It's an ancient and beautiful Church tradition where Christians seek a Mass to be offered for their loved ones, living and deceased, for some special intention, or in thanksgiving for graces received. In making a Mass offering St John Paul II reminds us that "The Church believes that she will be heard, for she prays in union with Christ her Head and Spouse, who takes up this plea of His Bride and joins it to His own redemptive sacrifice."

The Church does not charge for sacraments or for Mass offerings but throughout the ages people have often wanted to make a koha in the spirit of giving. In the spirit of Jesus' self-offering, and in the spirit of the faith, hope and love that impelled the Mass offering, priests should be diligent in their honouring the commitment to offer the Mass and in recognising the koha as a gift for furthering the coming of the Kingdom.