



THE ARCHANGEL

St Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No.69

January 2024

Suppléance (Substitution)

First of all, many thanks for all the wonderful gifts that we received this Christmas. In return, please be assured of our prayers for all the attendees and families of the parish.

God has been very good to us this past year. Our new church is the crowning gift of His grace and Providence. Let us not disappoint Him by using it sparingly. On the contrary, we should take every opportunity to assist at Holy Mass and Benediction often in thanksgiving for His care and also in recognition of the responsibilities that He now puts before us.

Local access to a new church and a locally resident priestly community are incredible graces granted to a chosen few. Such graces come, however, with a spiritual price tag. God looks to those He blesses for help in His great work of redemption. The nature of the Mystical Body means that the fervour of a small number of souls can contribute to the health of the whole.

We are aware of just how sick Christ's Mystical Body is at the present time. God looks to us, therefore, to help heal His wounds and He has given us the means of doing so. How many Catholics today are able to assist at Holy Mass daily? Few, so we must go in their place.

A saintly Trappist monk, Father Jérôme (+1984) wrote the following lines. They describe the duty of the blessed regarding those who are not so fortunate.

« On the way to heaven, we travel in God's train, lest we miss our destination. There are a handful of carriages for God's friends and a long line of coaches for everyone else. Travel in a coach is free of charge but places in a carriage are ticketed and the tickets are expensive. But the most interesting part is this: God's friends have to pay ten and twenty times over for their seats! During the journey, the Master passes by asking them to pay again and again. They eventually understand that they are being made to pay not just for themselves but for all the other passengers

travelling free of charge in the long line of free coaches behind. And when they are called on for the twentieth time to pay up, then complain to our Lord, but not too much, because they know that this won't be the last time. That's what our mission of substitution demands. »

For Fr Jérôme, God's friendship is both a blessing and a burden. It is an invitation to share in our Lord's redemptive mission. He paid the price of our sins and now we must pay the price of the sins of our brethren.

Whenever we assist at Holy Mass we do just that. We share in the burden of sin and we join our Lord in offering ourselves in sacrifice for the redemption of many.

May God grant us all an increase in faith, virtue and devotion during this New Year 2024.

Fr John Brucciani, Prior

REMINDER

Every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, mass is celebrated "pro populo" - for the spiritual and temporal needs of the faithful for whom the priory has pastoral care.

Every First Thursday, Holy Mass is offered for the Companions of St Michael.

Every First Friday, Holy Mass is offered for benefactors of Operation Philomena.

Once a month, Holy Mass is celebrated in each priory for the repose of the souls of deceased members of the Society and benefactors.

The Companions of St Michael are those who have donated £10K+ to the Church Building Fund. To become a Companion of St Michael, contact the prior.

Benefactors of Operation Philomena are those who donate via monthly standing order to St Michael's School. See envelopes in church vestibule.

THE WORKINGS OF THE CATHOLIC PARISH

Several people have requested information about how Catholic parishes function, notably regarding mass stipends, stole fees, honoraria and other expenses that are incurred when receiving a sacrament.

The Catholic parish is structured and regulated by Canon Law. It offers a standardised way for members to fulfil the obligation to support the church and its clergy. This obligation makes up one of the five precepts of the Church and is equal in gravity to the obligation of attending mass on Sundays and Holy Days.

Here follows a breakdown of the various ways Catholic faithful are expected by Canon Law to support the Church.

Mass Stipends

Mass stipends are monetary offerings made to the priest personally when he is asked to celebrate a mass for a particular intention.

When a priest accepts a mass request + stipend, he takes on the obligation, under pain of mortal sin, to celebrate the mass within a year of its reception.

While a priest may legitimately celebrate more than one Mass per day when the law or the local ordinary allows it and have a separate intention for each Mass, he may only accept one offering or stipend each day (except on Christmas). Offerings for a second or third mass must be passed on to the priory of residence.

Sometimes, the donor asks for a mass to be celebrated on a certain day. Since priests can be sometimes « blind-sided » by urgent intentions (funerals, dying persons), they may or may not be able to celebrate a previously planned intention on the day proposed. In such cases, they will celebrate the mass as soon as he can after the original date.

Priests use their mass stipends to help pay for personal expenses such as clothing, travel, books, charitable donations and optional items needed for carrying out their apostolic mission (computer, travel mass kit, etc.).

The justification for Mass stipends lies in the axiom of St. Paul: “Those who minister at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings” (1 Corinthians 9:13). Thus, in the Old Testament, the Levites would accept a share in the sacrificial offerings made to God (usually a cut of meat from the animal offered in sacrifice).

The District Superior sets the mass stipend amount. Note that priests are few and intentions are many. It can sometimes take months for a mass intention to be celebrated.

Mass intentions may not be combined. A priest would commit a mortal sin if he were to combine several mass intentions into one mass celebration.

Gregorian Mass Stipends

Gregorian Masses are a set of thirty Masses celebrated on thirty consecutive days for a deceased soul. Gregorian Masses cannot be offered for living individuals. They are of incalculable value in relieving a soul from the pains of Purgatory. The priest must celebrate all thirty masses in succession. If a day is missed, he must begin the Gregorian again from the start.

Stole Fees

Stole fees are monetary offerings made to the parish (not the priest) on the occasion of the celebration of a sacrament or sacred rite, such as a baptism, wedding, funeral, sick call or house blessing.

The standard or suggested offerings for sacraments and sacramentals are set by the diocese or ecclesiastical ordinary (For SSPX = District Superior). Stole Fees are paid to the parish or priory of residence to help fund a priest's maintenance (board, lodging, medical expenses, etc.) and parish expenses (mortgage, utilities, repairs, embellishments, etc.)

When an individual voluntarily offers more than the established offering, the priest must judge whether the donor intends to give the amount beyond the suggested offering to the priest himself, or to the parish. In doubt, canon law requires donations given to the priest to be passed on to the parish itself.

NB: stole fees are waived at the discretion of the priest in cases of hardship.

Honoraria

An honorarium is similar to a stole fee. It is a monetary offering made to the parish for notary services related to a sacrament or sacred function, such as course of instruction in preparation for reception into the church, or for marriage or for issuing copies of sacramental certificates.

It is useful to know that, in addition to giving the sacraments, priests must also keep the sacramental

registers. This entails establishing or tracking down paperwork, drawing up requests for records, sending notifications to places all over the world so that every Catholic's baptismal register is kept up to date in regards to sacraments received (confirmation, matrimony, Holy Orders).

For example, for a couple to be married, the priest must first obtain a baptismal extract from each party's place of baptism. This will indicate if they have been married before and if they have received the sacrament of confirmation (necessary for marriage). The couple must then receive mandatory instruction and fill in paperwork that establishes in writing their good faith, willingness to marry and their understanding of what marriage entails. Once married, the priest must then notify their places of baptism so that the marriage can be notified in each party's baptismal record for future reference.

Similarly, when a person is confirmed or receives Holy Orders, their baptismal record must be updated, for future reference.

The honoraria may be compared to the fees paid to a solicitor for establishing the legality of a transaction.

NB: honoraria are waived at the discretion of the priest in cases of hardship.

Church Building Rental

When planning a wedding or a funeral, it is customary to set aside funds for the use of the church venue. The church rental fee is paid to the parish or priory and serves to pay for building maintenance and utilities.

In some city parishes, rental fees used to vary according to the solemnity of ceremony desired. One could « rent » extra decorations and even sacred ministers for the greater embellishment of the ceremonies.

Choir Rental

Parishes often host a parish choir made up of volunteers who wish to contribute to the beauty of the Divine Liturgy. Because of the hours of work involved in practising and performing, wealthy parishes pay choristers for their time. This is not the case with poorer parishes such as ours.

However, outside of the normal round of choral duties (Sunday masses and other liturgical celebrations such as the Holy Triduum), it is customary to remunerate choir members for their services, for example, at weddings and funerals. The remuneration should include the hours spent not only in per-

forming on the day but also the time needed for practising and rehearsing.

The choir rental fee is paid to the Parish Choirmaster who then divides it up the choir members selected for the occasion.

Note that if a choir other than the parish choir sings at a ceremony, the visiting choir does not have access to the choir loft unless the choirmaster or church organist is present.

Organist

In addition to the choir, the organist should also be remunerated for his participation in extraordinary functions such as weddings and funerals. It should be noted that due to the intricacy and delicacy of the instrument (it takes hours to tune and balance the sounds), only the church organist has access to the organ. As with any other expensive equipment, no one may have access to the instrument without prior permission.

Altar Servers

Similarly, it is customary to remunerate altar servers for attendance at weddings and funerals. Remuneration is paid directly to the altar servers and is at the discretion of the giver.

Parish Hall Rental

The school refectory is available for use during school holidays, usually following a baptism or wedding. Rental may include the use of crockery, fridge and kettle.

Sunday Collections

Sunday collections are the modern form of the spontaneous offering ancient Christians used to make at the offertory during Holy Mass. In former times, the faithful would bring food and goods to offer at Holy Mass as a way of joining in the Holy Sacrifice and to support the clergy who prayed for them through the chanting of the Divine Office and the celebration of the Holy Mysteries. Today the former offertory procession is now replaced by the Sunday collection. Contributing to Sunday collections is the most common way of fulfilling the precept of the Church mentioned earlier in this article.

The proceeds of the Sunday collection go to the parish or priory and serve to pay the general expenses of both parish and priory (utilities, repairs, embellishments, etc.) and priestly maintenance (board, lodging, medical expenses, etc.)

PARISH FEE STRUCTURE

MASS STIPENDS

Payment to the priest-celebrant. Please note in writing the intention.

SINGLE MASS: £14

NOVENA OF MASSES: £140

GREGORIAN OF MASSES: £600

BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION

STOLE FEE: £50

Payment to « BURGHCLERE PRIORY »
Society of St Pius X
Sort Code: 16-26-18
Account number: 10191331

WEDDINGS

WEDDING MASS STIPEND: £20

Payment to the priest-celebrant

WEDDING HONORARIA: £80

Payment to « BURGHCLERE PRIORY »
Society of St Pius X
Sort Code: 16-26-18
Account number: 10191331

CHURCH RENTAL: £180

Payment to « BURGHCLERE PRIORY »

CHOIR RENTAL FEE : £200

Organise payment with the Choirmaster

ORGANIST FEE : £150

Organise payment with the Choirmaster

PARISH HALL RENTAL

Weddings, Funerals, Baptism
(School Holidays only)

HALL ONLY: £60

HALL AND KITCHEN: £70

HALL, KITCHEN, CROCKERY: £80

Payment to « BURGHCLERE PRIORY »
Society of St Pius X
Sort Code: 16-26-18
Account number: 10191331

FUNERALS

CHURCH RENTAL STIPEND: £180

Payment to « BURGHCLERE PRIORY »
Society of St Pius X
Sort Code: 16-26-18
Account number: 10191331

FUNERAL HONORARIA: £80

Payment to « BURGHCLERE PRIORY »

FUNERAL MASS STIPEND: £20

Payment to the priest-celebrant

OPTIONAL CHOIR RENTAL: £100

Payment to « BURGHCLERE PRIORY » who then passes on to singers.

Note that these funeral expenses are usually included in the fees charged by the funeral company. The undertakers then transact directly with the parish where the funeral takes place.

For more information,

- Email secretary@sanctusmichael.com
- 01635 278137