



DIOCESAN MASS STIPENDS DISTRIBUTION POLICY

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

Background:

The Moderator of the Curia receives Mass stipends for distribution to priests or parishes in the diocese that exhibit a need for this source of income.

Historically, the **Catholic Extension Society** supplied gifts from benefactors for distribution to poor and rural churches in keeping with its mission. In recent years, the number of stipends has greatly diminished. The principle behind this practice was to help the U. S. Church in areas where there was financial need. While the need remains, the ability of Catholic Extension has fallen.

Another regular source of Mass stipends has been **benefactors of St. Labre**. A policy of the organization has been to pray regularly for people who send financial gifts to support the mission of the Indian school. This is a relatively small amount of dollars to be distributed through the office of the Moderator of the Curia.

Finally, the only other significant source of stipends is excess Masses that an **individual parish** may receive. Sometimes a large number of Masses may be included in a will and funded by the estate; in such a case the pastor may ask the diocese to help distribute them. Or, the Moderator of the Curia may ask for Masses from an individual parish that customarily has excess stipends on an on-going basis (Our Lady of Lourdes in Great Falls).

Present Policy:

As times have changed, funding has diminished greatly. Therefore, Mass stipends will be distributed according to this priority:

- ❖ Priests in full retirement or on special assignment who are not attached to any parish on a regular basis.
- ❖ Parishes that are in proven financial stress.

Pastors, parochial vicars and pastoral administrators may request stipends from the Moderator of the Curia, (for themselves or for their parish) but the likelihood that excess stipends would be available is highly unlikely. Pastors, parochial vicars and pastoral administrators have the duty to preach about the value of having Masses offered for the deceased or for people with special needs. Parish leaders need to look for ways to inculcate the spiritual value of this ancient custom in the hearts and minds of their parishioners.

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