



DECREE OF THE METROPOLITAN OF THE PROVINCE OF DUBUQUE IN IOWA

On the offerings for and on the intentions of the Holy Masses

By the Grace of God and the Apostolic See

Archbishop of Dubuque and Metropolitan of the Province of Dubuque in Iowa

Having consulted with and having received the deliberative vote of the Assembly of the Bishops of the Province of Dubuque at a meeting of the Assembly of the Bishops on October 20, 2025, I now decree the following:

“Secundum probatum Ecclesiae morem, sacerdoti cuilibet Missam celebranti aut concelebranti licei stipem oblatam recipere, it iuxta certam intentionem Missam applicet” – “In accord with the approved practice of the Church, any priest celebrating or concelebrating is permitted to receive an offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention” (can. 945 §1 *CIC*).

Indeed, the Church has long held that it is in this way that the faithful are united more intimately to Christ, who offers Himself and, in a certain sense, are inserted even more deeply into communion with Him. Thus, this use is not only approved by the Church, but also is promoted by her.¹

It is because the faithful are aware of this grace that they “wish to unite themselves more closely to the Eucharistic Sacrifice through the offering, adding their own sacrifice and collaborating in the needs of the Church and, in particular, contributing to the maintenance of its sacred ministers.”²

In fact, “from the end of the 10th century, commemorative gifts were offered to request the celebration of Mass for a specific intention From this arose the custom of giving an offering at Mass, a custom that the Church not only approves but also recommends and encourages.”³

Nevertheless, we, the clergy, must keep before our eyes the irrevocable belief and fact that the Eucharist, “although it constitutes the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a generous remedy and nourishment for the weak. These convictions also have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness.”⁴

Additionally, I fully acknowledge that because it has been more than 50 years since the institution of the current offering/stipend for the celebration of Mass for a specific intention for the Province of Dubuque – as well as on the basis of the experience accumulated since then by the Assembly of Bishops of the Province of Dubuque, which includes being responsive to the observations, questions and requests received from members of the clergy, lay faithful and communities of consecrated life – this Assembly, having examined in depth all aspects of

¹ Cf. Pope St. Paul VI, Apostolic Letter in the form of *motu proprio Firma in Traditione*, June 13, 1974, in AASS66 (1974), 308; Congregation for the Clergy, Decree *Mos iugiter obtinuit*, February 22, 1991, in AAS83 (1991), 443.

² Dicastery for the Clergy, Decree, April 13, 2025, n. 3, *Sulla disciplina delle intenzioni delle Sante Messe*.

³ Dicastery for the Clergy, Decree, April 13, 2025, n. 7, *Sulla disciplina delle intenzioni delle Sante Messe*.

⁴ Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 24 November 2013, in AAS 105 (2013), 1039-1040, n. 47.

the question, has reached the conviction that new norms are needed to regulate the matter of the offering/stipend for the celebration of Mass for a specific intention in this Province.

Thus, I now promulgate the following regulations to complement those regulations now in force on the matter as prescribed in the 1983 Code of Canon Law (cf. cann. 945 – 958 *CIC*); the Congregation for the Clergy, Decree, February 22, 1991, *Mos iugiter*; and the Dicastery for the Clergy, Decree, April 13, 2025, *Sulla disciplina delle intenzioni delle Sante Messe*:

Art. 1 §1 Pursuant to canon 952 §1 *CIC*, for the entire Province of Dubuque in Iowa, the offering/stipend to be given for the celebration and application of Mass is set at \$10.00.

§2 The offering/stipend of \$10.00 to be given for the celebration and application of Mass becomes effective January 1, 2026. However, all offerings/stipends already given and accepted for 2026 and beyond at the current designated amount of the Province at \$5.00 are obligated to be fulfilled at that amount (cf. can. 949 *CIC*).

§3 Also pursuant to canon 952 §1 *CIC*, a priest is not permitted to seek a larger sum. Nevertheless, the priest is permitted to accept for the application of a Mass a voluntary offering/stipend, which is larger or smaller than the one defined in Article 1 §1.

§4 Furthermore, when one of the faithful offers a specific sum of money with the intention of at least some of it being given for the celebration and application of Masses but no number is stipulated and it is not possible to obtain a clear indication of the donor's wishes, then it is necessary to celebrate the number of Masses that corresponds to the amount established for the Province; that is, the standard or established offering is the denominator of the amount received (cf. cann. 950 and 952 *CIC*).

§5 Members of all religious institutes in the Province of Dubuque must also observe the offering/stipend proscribed in Article 1 §1 as well as Article 1 §§2-4 (cf. can. 952 §3 *CIC*).

Art. 2 I reiterate and strongly exhort the norm of canon 947 *CIC*: "Any appearance of trafficking or trading is to be excluded entirely from the offering for Masses." Indeed, Mass offerings in the Church receive particular juridical protection, as canon 1383 *CIC* makes it an offence (delict) to profit unlawfully from them, either by trafficking in them or by failing to fulfill the prescriptions of canons 948 and 955 and of the Decrees, *Mos iugiter obtinuit* of the Congregation for the Clergy (February 22, 1991) and *Sulla disciplina delle intenzioni delle Sante Messe* of the Dicastery for the Clergy (April 13, 2025) on so-called "collective" Mass intentions.

Art. 3 Above all, it is necessary to keep in mind the provisions of canon 848 *CIC*, which establishes that the minister, beyond the offerings determined by the competent authority, is not to ask for anything for the administration of the sacraments, always ensuring that the needy are not deprived of the help of the sacraments because of poverty. Furthermore, the strong recommendation of canon 945 § 2 *CIC* should be observed, namely, priests should "celebrate Mass for the intentions of the Christian faithful, especially the needy, even if they have not received an offering."

I encourage my brother bishops in the Province as well as superiors of all religious institutes in the Province of Dubuque to use this opportunity of the promulgation of the change in the offering/stipend for the celebration and application of Mass to review the canons of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the decrees of February 22, 1991, and April 13, 2025, of the now Dicastery for the Clergy on the discipline of the Church regarding the intentions of the Holy Masses.

Dubuque, Iowa

Place



Most Rev. Thomas R. Zinkula, J.D., J.C.L.

Archbishop of Dubuque and

Metropolitan of the Province of Dubuque

November 19, 2025

Date



Janine Marie Idziak, Ph.D.

Chancellor

