

2021 PARISH MASS BOOK

As we prepare to open the 2021 Mass Book, I want to share a few thoughts about the practice of having a Mass said for a deceased or living person. We often refer to this as having a Mass said for someone. Most often we ask that a Mass be said for someone who has died, because they rely on us the living to pray for them. Masses can also be offered in Thanksgiving for something or someone or for a living person as a spiritual gift on their birthday, anniversary, or when they are sick as a few examples. Some of what follows comes from a column written by Fr. William Saunders in the *Arlington Catholic Herald*.

"The tradition of offering Masses for others, particularly the dead, originates in the very early Church. Inscriptions discovered on tombs in Roman catacombs of the second century evidence this practice... St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), in one of his many catechetical discourses, explained how at Mass both the living and dead are remembered, and how the Eucharistic Sacrifice of our Lord is of benefit to sinners, living and dead. St. Ambrose (d. 397) preached, "We have loved them during life; let us not abandon them in death, until we have conducted them by our prayers into the house of the Lord."

Fr. Saunders also quoted St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) when he stated, "Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them." Finally, Pope St. Gregory (d. 604) said, "Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them." Fr. Saunders concluded his reflection with these words: "We find not only the origins of this practice dating to the early Church but we also clearly recognize its importance. When we face the death of someone, even a person who is not Catholic, to have a Mass offered for the repose of [their] soul and to offer our prayers are more beneficial and comforting than any other sympathy card or bouquet of flowers. To have a Mass offered on the occasion of a birthday, anniversary or special need is appropriate, beneficial and appreciated."

When you come and ask for a Mass to be offered you are NOT "buying a Mass" though some refer to it that way. Church law in Canon 946 states: "The Christian faithful who make an offering so that the Mass may be applied for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by their offering take part in the concern of the Church for the support of its ministers and works." The suggested but not obligatory offering for weekday Masses is \$10 and \$15 for Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.



In advance of the opening the 2021 Mass Book, we have given a thorough review of our schedule of Masses throughout for the coming year and there are no significant changes. There will continue to be six (6) scheduled Masses on the weekend with one of them being a 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass at Sacred Heart Church and our usual schedule at St. Paul. That is a 4:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass and Sunday Masses at 7:30, 9:00, and 10:30 a.m. and 12 Noon. The weekday schedule will stay the same as well with Masses at 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. There will be variations to these schedules when religious or secular holidays occur and other special circumstances.

This year we will have a tiered approach to the opening of the Mass Book. We are hopeful that this plan will accommodate special anniversary dates and give as many parishioners as possible the opportunity to have Masses reserved for their loved ones. The dates for this three tiered approach and an explanation of each tier follows:

Tier A - Tuesday, September 15th to Friday, October 2nd for significant wedding anniversaries and 1st anniversary of death;

Tier B - Wednesday, October 14th to Monday, November 30th for all other intentions, but limited to three (3) for any one person deceased or living by any one donor

Tier C - Tuesday, December 1st for all intentions with no restrictions

Tier A of the 2021 Mass Book will open on Tuesday, September 15th and run until Friday, October 2nd for the following wedding and death anniversary requests ONLY:

1. For those who are celebrating their 25th, 40th, 50th, 55th, 60th, etc. wedding anniversary in 2021. These couples may reserve one Mass on a day of their choosing (does not have to be the actual anniversary date).
2. One Mass intention on the occasion of the 1st anniversary of death of a loved one. The date of the Mass does not have to be the actual death anniversary.

To schedule one of these anniversary Masses call or stop in the Parish Center by October 2nd. No other Mass intentions will be taken until Tier B opens on October 14th. Parish Office #860-828-0331. Open Monday-Friday 8am-4pm.

Tier B - Due to the large number of Mass intention requests, and so that as many parishioners as possible can have a reasonable opportunity to arrange to have a Mass said for their loved ones, parishioners will be limited to three (3) reserved dates per living or deceased person. These reserved dates may be three (3) weekday Masses or two (2) weekday and one (1) weekend Mass. Only one Mass per family is allowed on a weekend date. This restriction will be in place until December 1st. This will allow everyone seven (7) weeks to arrange the Masses that they want for next year.

Tier C will begin on December 1st when these restrictions will be lifted. Your understanding and cooperation is most appreciated as we try this approach to accommodate as many Mass requests as possible.

Sacred Heart Mass Intentions - As you know during this time of COVID, the Sunday Mass at Sacred Heart has been suspended until the obligation to attend is reinstated. While I certainly pray that 2021 will bring us back to normal, I cannot guarantee it. **With that in mind, we will accept Mass intentions for the 9:30 Mass at Sacred Heart with the provision that if no Mass is being celebrated at Sacred Heart the intention will be transferred to a Sunday Mass on the same weekend at St. Paul.** We are able to do that easily because each weekend the intention for one the Masses has to be "For the People of the Parish." While that intention must be offered it can be celebrated on another day by one of the priests. Refunds will not be given for any intention once it has been recorded.

Multiple Intentions at the same Mass - Canon Law (Canon 948) requires that only one intention is allowed per Mass. The donor is free to include as many names as they desire, but it is one intention for those being remembered. However, in 1991 Pope John Paul II in a decree issued by the Congregation for the Clergy allowed for a "collective" intention no more than twice a week. Here at St. Paul's the Tuesday 7:00 a.m. Mass and the Thursday 5:00 p.m. Mass are set aside as days for these "collective" intentions when up to five (5) intentions will be accepted for the one single Mass. You as the donor must ascent to this arrangement when scheduling a Mass on those days at those times.



"Do this in remembrance of me."

1 Corinthians 11:24