



St. Patrick Catholic Church
St. Michael Mission
Higgins Hill • P.O. Box 164
Bisbee, Arizona 85603

Dear Parishioner:

Please know our funeral "requests for gifts" and "requests for fees" are customary.

We offer the explanation below as well as the enclosed document titled "Church Offering and Priest/Deacon Stipend Gifts Explained" to explain the "why" for our requests.

Please understand that we do not want our "request for gifts" and "request for fees" to be upsetting to you. Nor do we want them to become a financial burden to you. We do however, due to the poor economic health of our parish, wish to present them for your consideration as your ability to respond favorably to these requests would certainly benefit the financial solvency of our parish.

Requested Gifts:

"Requested gifts" require no mandatory or obligatory payment from the family. These are optional gifts that the family may or may not choose to make to the church, priest, deacon, music coordinator, altar servers, sacristan, and women's club. Families may choose to make the full gift amount requested, partial, and/or none at all. Although these gifts are given as an expression of support for the church or gratitude to the priest, deacon and/or lay minister, they are not payments for the liturgical services received and the family may choose to give no gifts at all.

Requested Fees:

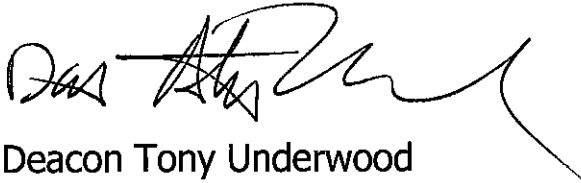
The only "fees" that the parish really needs to collect are; the Parish Hall Setup/Teardown Fee, the Hired Musician Fee, and Fees for Crucifixes purchased. The church keeps none of the Parish Hall Setup/Teardown Fee, or Hired Musician Fee; these are paid out totally to those who have been hired. If payment of these fees is a financial burden to the family, the fee will be waived and the parish will cover payment accordingly.

We hope you find these explanations helpful.

We wish we did not have to make these requests at all. Unfortunately the poor economy of Bisbee, our declining congregation with shrinking offertory and ever pressing operational costs cause great challenge to our budget and give us little choice.

Please let us know if we can be of further help and know that we remain committed to compassionately, sincerely and lovingly serving you and your family in your time of need.

In the His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deacon Tony Underwood', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Deacon Tony Underwood
Pastoral Administrator



Church Offering and Priest / Deacon Stipend Gifts Explained

St. Patrick Roman Catholic Parish St. Michael Mission

Does the parish/mission charge for sacraments or liturgical services?

No it does not, can not, and will not (Can. 848). Parishioners seeking a sacrament or liturgical service from our parish/mission often times use these occasions to gift the church with an offering or the priest / deacon with a stipend. Although these gifts are given as an expression of support for the church or gratitude to the priest / deacon, they are not payments for sacraments or liturgical services received.

Why does the parish/mission ask for my gift offering?

The parish/mission wishes that it did not have to ask, but unfortunately due to limited income and rising costs it must ask, as some individuals would otherwise never contribute to the support of the parish/mission (CCC 2122).

Does the church really need my gift offering?

Yes, it most certainly does. Our parish/mission depends on your gift offering to supplement income for the upkeep of its buildings and other operating expenses. Our budget is extremely tight and all income is needed in order to remain financially solvent. Your gift matters, is important and is appreciated.

Are parishioners who are seeking a sacrament or liturgical service required to gift the church with an offering?

Although it is appropriate, much needed, and asked that a parishioner consider a gift offering to the church upon receiving a sacrament or liturgical service (like baptism, marriage quincieñera, funeral etc.) it is not required. No one pays for a sacrament or liturgical service.

Are parishioners who are seeking a sacrament or liturgical service required to gift the priest or deacon with a stipend?

Although it is appropriate that a parishioner consider a gift stipend to the priest / deacon upon receiving a sacrament or liturgical service (like baptism, marriage quincieñera, funeral etc.) it is not required. No one pays for a sacrament or liturgical service.

What is a gift offering?

A gift offering is a financial donation that a parishioner gives towards the financial support of the parish/mission in exchange for use of the parish's buildings for a requested sacrament or liturgical service.

What is a stipend?

A priest or deacon does not receive payment for administering a sacrament or liturgical service; salvation is not only for the rich. It is recommended, however, that a donation called a "stipend" be given if it is within the means of those who have requested the sacrament or liturgical service. While a priest is given an allowance to meet his needs and a deacon receives compensation through employment, stipends allow the priest or deacon to have a supplement to their income.

Can a parishioner be denied access to a sacrament or liturgical service due to their inability to gift the church with an offering or the priest / deacon with a stipend?

No, especially if those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them (Can. 843). In all situations of true financial difficulty, the overriding principle is that a parishioner must never be denied access to a sacrament or liturgical service because of money. Those experiencing financial hardship are asked to confidentially make their situation known at the time of planning and scheduling with the parish/mission secretary so that all requests for an offering or stipend can be reduced or waived.

What is an appropriate gift amount for the church offering or priest / deacon stipend?

Parishioners can call the parish office and ask the secretary what the recommended church offering or stipend is for a specific sacrament or liturgical service in our parish/mission.

I already give weekly to support the parish/mission, why should I consider another church offering or stipend gift?

These requested gifts are distinct from other common forms of giving in parish life (i.e. Sunday Offertory, Annual Catholic Appeal etc.). These gift offerings express one's gratitude to God. The portion one returns to the Lord recognizes that all good things come from Him. The offering also expresses our collaboration in the building up of the Kingdom. The extensive sacramental, teaching, and charitable works of the Church are a reflection of the generous, sacrificial offerings of the People of God.