

Bishop's Office

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Diocese of Penang

18 October 2016

Dear Fathers,

Re: Mass Intentions and Priests' Monthly Allowance

Greetings of Peace!

In view of the above and after reflection, I would like to remind us of the following from Vatican II, Vol. I regarding the DECREE ON THE MINISTRY AND LIFE OF PRIESTS, **PRESBYTERORUM ORDINIS** PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS, POPE PAUL VI ON DECEMBER 7, 1965 no. 20 and Vatican II, Vol. II on the THE MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD, Synod of Bishops, **ULTIMIS TEMPORIBUS** on November 30, 1967 no. 4.

20. (Providing equitable remuneration for priests.) As those dedicated to the service of God and the fulfillment of the office entrusted to them, priests deserve to receive an equitable remuneration, because "the laborer is worthy of his hire," (Lk. 10:7)(61) and "the Lord directed that those who preach the Gospel should have their living from the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). Wherefore, insofar as an equitable remuneration of the priests would not be provided otherwise, the faithful themselves—that is, those in whose behalf the priest labors—are truly obliged to see to it that they can provide what help is necessary for the honorable and worthy life of the priests. The bishops, however, should admonish the faithful concerning this obligation of theirs. And they should see to it whether each individual for his own diocese or, more aptly, several together for their common territory—that norms are established according to which suitable support is rightly provided for those who do fulfill or have fulfilled a special office in the service of the People of God. The remuneration received by each one, in accord with his office and the conditions of time and place, should be fundamentally the same for all in the same circumstances and befitting his station. Moreover, those who have dedicated themselves to the service of the priesthood, by reason of the remuneration they receive, should not only be able to honorably provide for themselves but also themselves be provided with some means of helping the needy. For the ministry to the poor has always been held in great honor in the Church from its beginnings. Furthermore, this remuneration should be such that it will permit priests each year to take a suitable and sufficient vacation, something which indeed the bishops should see that their priests are able to have. Special importance ought to be given to the office fulfilled by sacred ministers. Therefore the so-called system of benefices should be relinquished or at least so reformed that the place of the benefices, or the right to revenue from the endowment attached to an office, would be held as secondary, and the first place in law would be given to the ecclesiastical office itself. From this it should be understood that whatever office is conferred in a stable manner is to be exercised for a spiritual purpose.

Economic Affairs

- 4. The remuneration of priests, to be determined certainly in a spirit of evangelical poverty, but as far as possible equitable and sufficient, is a duty of justice and ought to include social security. Excessive differences in this matter must be removed, especially among priests of the same diocese or jurisdiction, account also being taken of the average condition of the people of the region.*

It seems greatly to be desired that the Christian people be gradually instructed in such a way that priests' incomes may be separated from the acts of their ministry, especially sacramental ones.

The above texts will be our guiding principle with regards to the distinction between the remuneration of priests and the celebration of the Sacraments especially of the Eucharist.

Thus, in order that there will not be any more link between the priests' monthly allowance and the Mass offerings and intentions celebrated at the Parish, Chapels, outstation centers or BEC Masses, all of Mass intentions will be centralized at the Parish office. There can be multiple intentions for all Masses on weekdays as well as weekends as per request of the people. As a result, there will be no surplus Mass intentions, which are not celebrated, to be sent to the Diocese. Each Mass intention will remain at RM10.00 and this would mean that your Parish income would increase. Therefore, I strongly recommend that you use your discretion and use the surplus funds for formation, ministry to the poor and maintenance of the Parish.

With regards to the priests' monthly allowance, all priests will receive an increase from RM300.00 to RM 500.00, which is to be taken from the Parish funds. Also, the annual holiday allowance will increase from RM1000.00 to RM1500.00. These changes will take effect from 1 January 2017 and will also apply to the retired priests.

I thank you for your patience and collaboration. I wish you God's blessings always!

Sincerely in Christ,



Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang