

## Ask Fr. James

### What are the Spiritual Benefits of offering Masses for loved ones?

One of the principal functions of the priest is to pray for all of the faithful people, including offering the Holy Mass for the both the living and the dead.

Canon Law # 534 obliges the priest to offer Mass for those entrusted to his care and that he can also accept offering for Masses applied to the intentions of the people entrusted in his pastoral care. The Biblical practice of making an offering to the priest when he offers a sacrificial offering started with

Melchizedek the first Priest:

*After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.' Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.(Genesis 14:17-20).*

The Catholic Church from its earliest origin thus have always encouraged parishioners to ask that a special intention be remembered in prayer, particularly in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. A particularly efficacious way of doing this is by offering a Mass. Pope Paul VI explains Mass request in this way;

*The faithful generally make an offering, called stipend to the priest in order to apply the Mass to a specific intention. By making this offering, the faithful, by parting with something that is their own, associate themselves more intimately with Christ who offered himself in the sacred Host and obtain the*

The Mass is the highest form of prayer in the Catholic Church. Masses can be offered for any person, living or deceased. We can also honour our loved ones and mark a special occasion like birthday or anniversary—by having Masses said by your parish priest. Masses can also be requested for God's healing for a sick person or for success of a planned venture. It is also a wonderful way to remember our deceased friends and family members or parish members and souls in purgatory.

In our diocese, Mass intentions are offered at \$10 offering per mass. This amount is set by the Catholic Bishops of the province. The priest adds these names and intentions to his daily prayers and they are left on the relic on the Altar for the whole week. The intentions are published in the bulletin and mentioned at the Mass. To avoid the appearance of commerce in sacred things, the church regulates Mass offerings by the Code of Canon Law ##945-958 and also by later decrees from the Vatican.

***You may email/send your faith questions to Fr. James and he would answer them in our Sunday Bulletins***