

Mass offerings: Vital support for the Church in Need

Mass intentions are of vital importance. This fact was so self-evident to the founder of ACN, Father Werenfried van Straaten, that in his last will and testament he stated: "Any financial means remaining to me I hereby bequeath to our section for Mass intentions".

As a priest himself, Fr Werenfried was always conscious of the words of his friend, Pope Saint John Paul II, who wrote: **"The Church draws her life from the Eucharist"**, and likewise of the words of Vatican II which describe the Eucharist as the **"source and summit of the Christian life"** (Lumen Gentium, 11). So he understood that Mass intentions were a vital aid, that has unfathomable depth. For the Church is both divine and human, and her priests must live, both spiritually and physically. Often Mass offerings are their sole material support. Without this support, those who raise up the Lord with their hands would have no bread, no roof, no clothing. Without it some might be tempted to seek paid work and would then have less time for ministering to souls.

But it is not only the priests who benefit from these offerings. As Bishop Wilfredo of the diocese of Guantánamo-Baracoa in Cuba informs us, his 15 priests also use the Mass intentions you give them to help the poor, with food for the elderly and catechesis for children.

In Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in the world, the Catholic faithful cannot support their priests, for they themselves have nothing. Some are unemployed, others mere day labourers. And legal barriers in this Islamic country prevent them getting help from neighbouring India. Your Mass offerings are helping 24 priests in the diocese of Khulna to care for and provide instruction to the poor, and another 18 in the diocese of Sylhet to do the same.

Fr Maurice Edoula of Owando, Republic of the Congo, describes the plight of his 49 fellow priests. Many villages in this region can only be reached by canoe, and swarms of malaria-carrying mosquitoes are everywhere. Gales and storms are frequent and sudden. There is a shortage of food; healthcare insurance is an unaffordable luxury; the local people live in great poverty and survive by hunting and fishing. **"We are holding out our hands to you once again – for their sake"**, writes Father Maurice.

These hands also bless and raise up the Lord. Without them, entire villages would fall prey to the innumerable sects. **"We must strengthen them in their faith; they must not be allowed to give up"**, he adds.

Your Mass offerings can open the wellsprings of grace and redemption so that they can pour out on all, even in the most adverse of circumstances.

Father Werenfried would have been delighted.



Who takes away the sins of the world: Mass in Ethiopia



One fruit of your Mass offerings - priests have more time to hear confessions, as seen above in Indonesia



...which will be given up for you: a Mass being celebrated in Brazil



...grant us peace: Mass in a make shift chapel in the Democratic Republic of Congo

What is a Mass offering?

A Mass offering is a gift or alms offered to the priest who celebrates Holy Mass for our intention. We cannot purchase the spiritual fruits of the Mass, but the offering does unite the donor more intimately with the Holy Sacrifice. This practice has its roots in the early Church. Canon law lays down how such offerings must be administered.

Saint Paul says ...

“Do you not know ... that those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?” (1 Cor 9:13). He says this not only to the Corinthians, but also to us. Your Mass offerings are a part of this. Of course we cannot “buy” the spiritual graces of the Mass. But the offering made to the priest unites the giver, by virtue of his intention, more intimately with the Holy Sacrifice.

Every 26 seconds, somewhere in the world, Mass is offered for the intentions of our benefactors, and one priest in every nine is supported in his priestly ministry. Last year you gave 1.2 million Mass intentions. Yet the need is still great, above all for priests in the Islamic countries. We could even distribute 2 million intentions, if we had them...

The above picture shows Father Werenfried offering holy Mass before his death in 2003.

When sending us your Mass Offerings

- Please tell us how many Masses you wish to have offered by priests in need.
- You may add your intentions but this is not necessary. God knows them and the priest offers Mass for the intention of the donor.
- In Australia the customary offering that accompanies your request for each Mass to be celebrated is \$10.00. However we will always continue to offer Masses for the intention of our benefactors, irrespective of the amount offered.
- The Mass offerings that Aid to the Church in Need sends to poor priests overseas are as follows:

\$10.00	for each Mass
\$36.00	for a Triduum of 3 consecutive Masses
\$108.00	for a Novena of 9 consecutive Masses
\$400.00	for a Gregorian series of 30 consecutive Masses
- Unfortunately we are no longer able to have Masses offered on a specific date due to the administrative workload and costs involved in personally finding priests who are free to celebrate Masses on specific dates.

You can now donate and request Mass offerings online at www.aidtochurch.org



Aid to the Church in Need PO Box 7246, Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153

Phone/Fax No: (02) 9679-1929 E-mail: info@aidtochurch.org Web: www.aidtochurch.org

* I would likeMass/es offered for my intentions and I enclose as an offering \$..... to support poor priests overseas to enable them to proclaim the Good News of Christ.

* Charity donation for the Projects of Aid to the Church in Need (optional) \$.....

Total enclosed \$.....

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to Aid to the Church in Need OR please debit my Visa or Mastercard:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Expiry Date _____ / _____ **Signature**

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