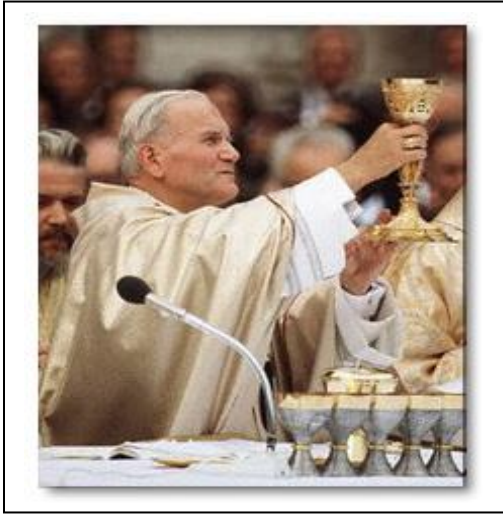


Mass Intentions

What does it mean to have a Mass "offered" for someone?



An individual may ask a priest to offer a Mass for several reasons: for example, in thanksgiving, for the intentions of another person (such as on a birthday or special event), or as is most common, for the repose of the soul of someone who has died.

One must never forget the infinite graces that flow from the Sacrifice of the Mass which benefit one's soul. Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical "*Mirae caritatis*" (1902) beautifully elaborated this point and emphasized the connection between the communion of saints with the Mass: "*The grace of mutual love among the living, strengthened and increased by the sacrament of the Eucharist, flows, especially by virtue of the Sacrifice*

[of the Mass], to all who belong to the communion of saints. For the communion of saints is simply ... the mutual sharing of help, atonement, prayers and benefits among the faithful, those already in the heavenly fatherland, those consigned to the purifying fire, and those still making their pilgrim way here on earth. These all form one city, whose head is Christ, and whose vital principle is love. Faith teaches that although the august Sacrifice can be offered to God alone, it can nevertheless be celebrated in honor of the saints now reigning in Heaven with God, who has crowned them, to obtain their intercession for us, and also, according to apostolic tradition, to wash away the stains of those brethren who died in the Lord but without yet being wholly purified."

In his encyclical "*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*," our beloved late Holy Father, Saint Pope John Paul II, taught, "*In the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Church prays that God, the Father of mercies, will grant His children the fullness of the Holy Spirit, so that they may become one body and one spirit in Christ. In raising this prayer to the Father of lights, from whom comes every good endowment and every perfect gift, the Church believes that she will be heard, for she prays in union with Christ her Head and Spouse, who takes up this plea of His Bride and joins it to His own redemptive sacrifice*" (No. 43).

Therefore, when a priest offers the sacrifice of the Holy Mass, he has three intentions: First, to offer the Mass reverently and validly in accord with the norms of the Church. Second, to offer the Mass in union with and for the good of the whole Church. Third, to offer the Mass for a particular intention [not for a general "*special intention*"—because what and who are the Mass' priest and participants praying for?], such as the repose of the soul of someone or an anniversary.

We find not only the origins of this practice dating to the Jewish temple and the early Church, but we also can understand its continued importance today. When we face the death of someone, even a person who is not Catholic, to have a Mass offered for the repose of his soul and to offer our prayers are more beneficial and comforting than any 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. Please contact the OLV Parish office to schedule a Mass intention.

(SR: <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0812.html>)