

## *Ascension Sunday*

Last week we ended with a quote from the Second Vatican Council Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 07 December 1965, which sounded similar to the Code of Canon Law, 1983. Here again is that quote: “Therefore, in no way placing their heart in treasures, priests and bishops should avoid all greediness and carefully abstain from every appearance of business.” (See §17, ¶3). Now listen to Code 947: “Any appearance of trafficking or trading is to be excluded entirely from the offering for Masses.” Unlike the Second Vatican Council Decree, Canon 947 applies to parishioners as well as to the priests and bishops. One of the forms of trading happens when a parishioner expects or requires that his/her private intention be announced at the Mass for which the Mass Offering is applied. The trading comes about in that the parishioner feels entitled to the announcement based on the fact that an offering has been made. This is what I have termed ‘buying the Mass’. No teaching of the Church suggests the announcing of the intention. In fact, the teachings imply that such an action can give the appearance of trading. Nonetheless, no teaching forbids the priest from announcing the intention for which he is receiving a stipend. Father Dunn, JCD/PhD, Dean of Studies at St. Peter’s Seminary in London, Ontario wrote an article in October 2007 titled: A Review of the Law on Mass Offerings for the Newly Ordained Priests. He writes, “While there is no obligation to announce the intention, many parishes remember such persons as part of the prayers of the faithful, where the final petition mentions the person.” This practice has been my preference whenever the person is recently deceased. I also refuse to accept any Mass Offerings as part of my personal income. This goes for all Masses and sacraments, including weddings, anniversaries, baptisms, and funerals. All Mass Offerings at St. Margaret of Scotland Parish enter into the overall parish income. I feel that accepting a monetary offering adversely affects my devotion at Mass. Yet, I do believe that the same Mass Offering can positively affect the devotion of the parishioner. Canon 945 speaks clearly: “That priests celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially for the needy, even if they have not received an offering, is recommended earnestly to priests.” As we move along in the Canon Law we will see that priests are not permitted to keep all of an offering when the offering is large. Canon 946 states, “The Christian faithful who give an offering to apply the Mass for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by that offering share the concern of the Church to support the ministers and works of the Church.” We will continue from here next week.