



CHRIST OUR KING CHURCH
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ST. BENEDICT CATHOLIC CHURCH
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STELLA MARIS CATHOLIC CHURCH
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July 27, 2003

Dear Parishioner,

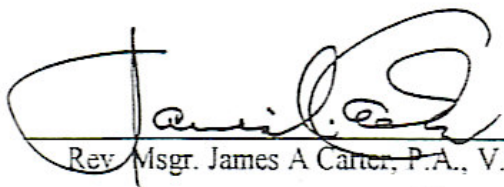
It has come to our attention that there seems to be some misunderstanding regarding the need for parishioner registration in a parish, and what it means to be an "active" parishioner within one of our parishes. This concern becomes particularly apparent when parents are considering enrolling their children in our Catholic schools and are wondering what they must do to get preferential treatment and also the right to discounted fees. To clarify the position we enclose a statement of our common policy regarding parishioner status and invite you to study it carefully, and to make any adjustments in your standing as necessary to ensure that you and your family meet at least the minimum requirements for "active parishioner" status.

The parishes of Christ our King, St. Benedict and Stella Maris are all "families of faith". As with all families, they are only as good as the members make them. This has to do with commitment and perseverance rather than with size and equipment. As with all well ordered families, there are certain clearly defined givens and expectations of our members that ensure our healthy family life and coherence.


Our parish families only flourish to the extent that parishioners invest in them, both spiritually and materially. Parishes can only give to the community what, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they have first received from the community. The leadership of the community has the obligation of careful stewardship of the spiritual, human and material resources of the parish. However, it is only by the generous participation of all parishioners in its life that we can hope to be the spiritual and material resource that we all expect and we would like it to be.

In the light of the above, we hope you will appreciate the real importance of your involvement and your parishioner status – to you as well as to your pastors. We ask your help in building up the community as together we work to share God's gifts generously and as widely as possible.

Sincerely,


 Rev. Msgr. James A Carter, P.A., V.G.


 Rev. Msgr. Lawrence B. McInerney, J.C.L.


 Rev. Paul A. Brenninkmeijer

PARISHIONER STATUS

The question of parishioner status is important. Active parishioners of Christ Our King, St. Benedict and Stella Mans Parish rightfully look to their parishes for any number of services. Among these services are:

- Parishioner tuition rates in our Catholic Schools
- The use of our facilities for liturgical services such as Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals
- Certification as sponsors at Sacramental celebrations.

These rights and services within the Church bring with them certain obligations, as hi any form of community. The criteria for active parishioner status reflect these. They are articulated every Sunday in our parish bulletins. In the following paragraphs, these expectations are set forth hi greater detail.

Active Parishioners

To be considered "active", parishioners must be registered in their parish for a sufficient period of time, (six months), attend Mass faithfully, support the life of the parish and use the envelope system.

The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is a serious one. This is not merely a matter of parish policy. Divine Law sets forth this expectation in the Third of the Ten Commandments: "Remember, thou, keep holy the Sabbath".

The Churches Law states:

On Sundays and other Holy Days of Obligation, the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass; they are also to abstain from those labors and business concerns -which impede the worship to be rendered to God, the joy which is proper to the Lord's Day, or the proper relaxation of mind and body. (Canon 1247)

This is the ordinary expectation of Catholics. Obviously, extraordinary circumstances excuse the faithful from this obligation. The elderly or disabled are not bound to Sunday Mass attendance. But where it applies, disregard of this precept is a grave matter. If done knowingly and willingly, missing Mass on Sundays constitutes serious sin.

Hopefully, we live beyond the minimal dictates of the Law. It simply follows that if Sunday Mass attendance is an important Catholic value, then parents who want a Catholic education for their children will see that this value is lived out in their family, and that both parents and their children will attend Mass faithfully on Sundays and Holy Days. Otherwise, perhaps one might appear to be not so much interested in Catholic education as in subsidized private education!

Attendance at Mass is the most important consideration. However, among the criteria for "active" status hi the Church, the obligation to support the Church is not to be taken lightly. Canon 222 of the Church's Law articulates the obligation of the faithful "to assist with the needs of the Church". The monetary support of our schools is an important aspect of parish finance. Those receiving education in our schools at the discounted "parishioner rate" are in fact heavily subsidized by their parishes.

Christ Our King, St. Benedict, and Stella Maris parishes have a common understanding that the minimum expected financial contribution of "active" parishioners is ten dollars per week.

Parishioners who have difficulty meeting this minimum should simply contact their proper pastor to make this known.

All are urged to use the envelope system. The use of envelopes is not primarily about money; the envelopes provide a record of Mass attendance. When the office staffs are asked to certify active parishioner status, they first look to the frequency of envelope use, not to the total amount given. If you cannot make the expected contribution, you need to let your Pastor know, and be sure to drop in an envelope every Sunday anyway, even if it just contains a minimal contribution. With a record of regular Mass attendance, you will not have difficulty being certified as an active parishioner of Christ Our King, St. Benedict, or Stella Maris Parishes.

Those who do not meet the expectations of "active" parishioners can be classified as "inactive". In-active parishioners do not qualify for parishioner tuition rates hi our schools.

Provisional Certification

In cases where active Parishioner status is not verified by a regular record of Mass attendance, Parishioners can be given "Provisional" certification. In such cases, the record of Mass attendance will be re-evaluated every semester. If parishioners have not been attending Mass and using the envelope system, Christ Our King, St. Benedict, and Stella Maris Parishes reserve the right to withdraw certification of active parishioner status at any time. In such an event, tuition will be charged at the non-parishioner rate and the responsible parties will be billed accordingly. If families are changed to "inactive" or "non-parishioner" status, younger siblings of students at Christ Our King-Stella Maris School will not be given priority for admission.

Inactive Parishioner Status

Those who do not meet the expectations of active parishioners can be classified as "inactive". Inactive parishioners do not qualify for parishioner tuition rates in our schools.

Non-parishioner Status

Non-Parishioners are those who do not live within the geographical boundaries of Christ Our King, St. Benedict, or Stella Maris Parishes, or have never registered as members, or have been removed from the parish roster.