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Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.



Ordinations to Subdiaconate and Diaconate



*Rev. Mr. Michael Oswalt is ordained
to the Subdiaconate*



*The new subdeacon reads the
Epistle with the Bishop*



*The imposition of hands for
the ordination to the Diaconate of
Rev. Brendan Legg*



*The new deacon reads the
Gospel with the Bishop*

St. Ambrose's famous discourse "Virginibus" on the virtues of St. Agnes

This is a virgin's birthday; let us, then, follow the example of her chastity. It is a martyr's birthday; let us, then, offer sacrifices; it is the birthday of holy Agnes; let men, then, be filled with wonder, little ones with hope, married women with awe, and the unmarried with emulation. But how shall I set forth the glory of her whose very name is an utterance of praise? It seemeth to me that this child, holy beyond her years and courageous beyond human nature, received the name of Agnes, not as an earthly designation, but as a revelation from God of what she was to be. So that this saintly maiden is known by the very title of chastity; and when I have added thereto the word martyr, I have said enough. She needeth not the praise which we could utter, but do not. None is more praiseworthy than she who may be praised by all. As many as name her, so many exalt her by the noble title of martyr.

We learn by tradition that this holy martyr testified in the thirteenth year of her age. We will pass by the foul cruelty which did not spare her tender years, to contemplate the great power of her faith whereby she overcame the weakness of childhood and witnessed a good confession. Her little body was hardly big enough to leave room for a sword thrust. Place for the sword she had not, but what she had was a courage which could conquer the sword. She had no fear when she found herself grasped by the bloody hands of the executioners. She was unmoved when they dragged her with clanking chains. Hardly entered on life, she stood fully prepared to die. She quailed not when the weapons of the angry soldiers were pointed at her breast. If they forced her against her will to approach the altars of devils, she could stretch forth her hands to Christ amidst the very flames which consumed the idolatrous offerings, and trace over the heathen shrine the victorious Cross of the Lord. She was ready to submit her neck and hands to the iron shackles, but they were too big to clasp her slender limbs. Behold a

strange martyr! She was not of age to be punished, but yet she was ripe for the triumph; she was too weak to run in the race, but yet she was entitled to the prize; unable from her years to be aught but a learner, she is found none the less to be a teacher.

She went to the place of execution a virgin, with more willing and joyful footsteps than she would have gone with to the nuptial chamber as a bride. Her hair was not trimly



braided and coiled, for the spouse she sought to please was Christ. She was decked not with flowers but with virtues. The spectators were all in tears, but she alone did not weep. They beheld her with wonder laying down the life of which she had hardly begun to taste the sweets, as freely as though she had drained it to the dregs and was weary of its burden. All men were amazed when they saw her who was not yet her own mistress or of age to testify, nevertheless bearing witness to the Most High. Though her testimony was inadmissible, she spoke of man, she was credited concerning God, for that which is above nature can only come from the author of nature. Consider how many threats the executioner used to excite her fears, how many promises to win her compliance, how many suitors were present who were eager to claim her as a bride. But she answered:

"It is an insult to my Betrothed to expect that I could favor any other. He that first chose me, His will I be. Executioner, why waitest thou? Perish the body which draweth the admiration of eyes from which I shrink." She stood, prayed, and then bent her neck for the stroke. Now mightest thou have seen the executioner trembling as though he himself were under sentence of death, thou mightest have seen his right hand quiver and his face grow pale at the thought of her doom, while the maiden alone stood undismayed. Here, then, you see that this one victim rendered to God a double testimony, that of her purity and that of her faith. She surrendered not her virginity and she achieved martyrdom.

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

Grouping of Mass Stipends

Question: A large number of Mass cards is left near the coffin of a deceased Catholic. Each card contains the statement “The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for the repose of the soul of...” and the usual offering of a low Mass is enclosed. Is it permissible for the members of the family to group these low Mass stipends and have High Masses celebrated for the stipulated High Mass stipends? This refers particularly to a parish where it is the custom to have a daily High Mass.

Answer: If those who give the stipends have the intention of having their offering combined with several others so that the one High Mass will be celebrated instead of several low Masses, the arrangement described in the question is fully permissible. But such an intention cannot be presumed on the part of the donors' individual Mass cards. Each one is supposed to desire a separate low Mass, unless the contrary is clearly indicated. The relatives of the deceased person have no right to take the matter into their own hands, nor is the fact that a High Mass is offered daily in the parish church sufficient to determine the intention of the donors as desiring the coalescence of the stipends. If the pastor cannot celebrate the Masses himself, he can send them to some other priest who will offer them or have them offered. In any event, it must be regarded as the normal procedure for those who arrange for the celebration of the Masses to have as many Masses said as will correspond to the number of offerings “for a Mass.”

Two Stipends on Sunday?

Question: Since it often happens that parishoners wish Masses for their intention on a Sunday when they can be present, I wonder if it would be permitted to say two Masses on Sunday for two stipends. In order to cover the law, I would say a Mass on one of the following weekdays without a stipend.

Answer: The Code of Canon law expressly forbids a priest to take a stipend for the second Mass if he has already celebrated a Mass from a title of justice (Pro Populo or for a stipend). According to Abbo-Hannan, a grave sin of disobedience is involved in the violation of this prohibition. An exception is made only for Christmas, when three stipends may be taken, and for the case of the priest who received an indult to accept two stipends for bination (generally on condition that the second is sent to some pious cause). Hence, if a priest says all his Masses during the coming week without stipends, he may not follow the procedure described by our questioner.

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MATER DEI SEMINARY
7745 Military Avenue
Omaha NE 68134-3356