



JOHN *the Beloved*

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Parishioner Tuition Rate Requirements

Parishioner Tuition Rate is an option and a privilege granted to those families that fulfill all requirements on a regular and consistent basis.

The criteria for eligibility for the parishioner tuition rate for St. John the Beloved Parish are evaluated before each semester, and any family not fulfilling all requirements will be assigned the non-parishioner rate. The requirements to meet Parishioner Tuition Discount are as follows:

To qualify for the parishioner rate, a family is required to:

- 1. Be registered in the parish a minimum of six months. If transferring from another Catholic parish, written confirmation from one's previous parish needs to be supplied to the pastor of our parish that the family was active, known and in good standing.**
- 2. When in town, be faithful to Mass every weekend and on Holy Days of Obligation. (At least 75% attendance) Attendance is recorded by use of envelopes.**
- 3. Be financially supportive of the parish. The recommended minimum gift is \$15 per Sunday plus for additional children enrolled in a Catholic school.**
- 4. Be involved in parish activities, ministries and programs. Minimum of 10 hours per year.**

For families experiencing financial strain, our parish has available a process to determine whether financial assistance may be available by utilization of the FACTS system. Please contact the pastor or his designee directly.

Supporting one's parish through prayer, action and financial support should come naturally. However, parish participation activity is also monitored throughout the year. The pastor reserves the right to suspend or discontinue the parish's endorsement of a family's parishioner status at any time.

The monetary support of our Schools is an important aspect of Parish finance. However, the use of envelopes is not primarily about money; the envelopes provide a record of Mass attendance. When the Office Staff is asked to certify active parishioner status, they first look to the frequency of envelope use, not to the total amount given. As many parishioners have been told, if you cannot make the expected contribution, let the Pastor know and be sure to drop in an envelope every Sunday even if it just contains a minimal contribution.

The obligation to attend Mass on Sunday 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." Exercising the "Power of the Keys" given to the Church by Christ, Himself, Canon 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 such as sickness, travel, or bad weather excuse the faithful from this obligation. The elderly or disabled are not bound to Sunday Mass attendance. While an individual disregard of this precept would not constitute grave matter (and thus serious sin), habitual disregard for God's Law and the Law of the Church would.

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 they attend Mass faithfully on Sunday; otherwise, perhaps people are not so interested in Catholic education as they are in subsidized private education.

Parents should also note that the expectations regarding Mass attendance do not apply simply to the Catholic parent or parents, but to the students as well. All Catholic students enjoying the benefits of parishioner tuition rates are expected to attend Mass faithfully.

Frequently Asked Questions about eligibility for parishioner tuition rates:

St. John the Beloved parish is eager to subsidize a Catholic education for your children, provided you as the parents are truly committed to a Catholic upbringing. The most critical aspect of this education is Mass attendance on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

What is the parishioner certification committee?

The parishioner certification committee serves in an advisory capacity to the pastor. This committee does not make decisions regarding individual cases

How often am I evaluated regarding my parishioner status for purposes of retaining the privilege of lower tuition rates?

The re-evaluation will take place twice a year, in December and in May. If at any time you believe your circumstances prevent you from meeting the definition of parishioner, please contact the parish office to schedule an appointment with the pastor or his designee. If your extenuating circumstances are on record, they can be included in the review.

What if I forget to bring my envelope to Mass?

There are extra envelopes in the back of the church, Please write your name in and place the envelope in the collection basket so that we can record your attendance.

With as much travel as occurs in the summer, are these months part of the equation?

Yes. The calculation of the annual average is based on 52 Sundays plus the Holy Days of Obligation

What if I attend Mass at other Catholic churches?

During those times (hopefully, no more than 25% of the time) you must be out of town, we certainly encourage you to attend Mass. However, we have no way of recording your attendance and therefore cannot count it toward your parishioner status. If you are in the greater Charleston area, we expect that you are close enough to home that you can come to St. John the Beloved for Mass. Occasionally, you may choose to go to Mass elsewhere, but on the whole, parish membership means you think of St. John the Beloved as your spiritual home. We expect you to attend your parish's Masses.

What if my spouse is not Catholic and the responsibility for church attendance rests solely on me? What can I do if I must travel or am ill?

Your spouse enjoys the benefits of the lower tuition rate for their children, too. In signing them up for those rates, they are making a commitment to support a Catholic upbringing, not a private education at a lower rate. They should be willing to bring the children to Mass or make arrangements for a friend or neighbor to take them.

What if we have financial difficulties and cannot meet the minimum contribution expected?

Please call the parish office and make an appointment with our pastor or his designee.

What if illness prevents attendance?

For the usual, simple illnesses, absence should not generally exceed 25% of the time. Even if one parent is ill, the children can come to Mass with the other parent. In the case of critical illness which affects the entire rhythm of family life, please call the parish office. First of all, we would want to know in order to provide support as needed. Secondly, your circumstances can be kept in mind when the next review is conducted.

What if, because of family circumstances, I in effect have to be a member of two parishes and support them both?

You must attend Mass 75% of the time to obtain parishioner tuition rates.

Are these policies in place at other parishes?

Yes, other parishes also require participation in the life of their parishes in order for parishioner tuition rates to apply.

What if I work on the weekends?

You must attend Mass 75% of the time to obtain parishioner tuition rates.

What if I prefer to make my church contribution once a month, or even less frequently, but my total is still within the expected amount?

You may still continue to make your contribution in the manner that best fits your family's financial situation. Remember that to record your attendance, we still need you to deposit your envelope in the offertory basket, with or without a contribution.

I don't like being required to account for my attendance. Isn't this rather bureaucratic for a church?

We must have a manner to determine eligibility for parishioner tuition rates. The only means we have to keep track of attendance is the envelope system. With a parish of over 1800 families, please understand that it is humanly impossible for our staff to truly know who has been present without the envelopes.

What if I have a friend/relative who is ill and lives out-of-town, which necessitates my travel out-of-town almost every weekend?

Such a situation would hopefully not go on indefinitely. If you anticipate that it will preclude you meeting the 75% attendance rate, please contact the parish office to make an appointment with our pastor or his designee.

What are all the envelopes that come in the mail - I thought they were all donations to my church?

Each envelope is marked in the monthly envelope mailing. The stewardship envelopes are the ones that are counted for "offertory". There are also special collection envelopes that go to support diocesan collections, St. Vincent de Paul collections, and property improvement collections.

We travel for sports or long vacations - can I bring in a bulletin of the church attended with name on it?

Please provide a letter from the team association, roster list and game schedule along with a bulletin from the weekend Mass that was attended out of town with your family's name on it to the parish office within 2 weeks.

How does the church plan to track Mass attendance?

The parish uses a "Church Management System" which is a database computer system for registrations, sacraments, collections, attendance, faith formation, etc.