

# Courier proposed fixing stipend system that works

By Father Paul Cuddy  
Courier columnist

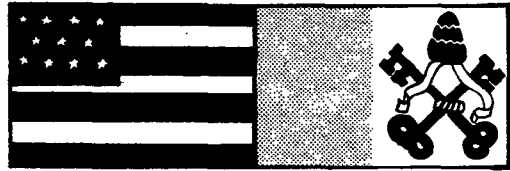
The title of the lead story in the February 22 *Catholic Courier* is "Fees Spawn Confusion." The article itself spawns confusion to the reader.

Instead of a clear-cut presentation of the teaching and practice of the church regarding Mass stipends, the article contains snippets of conversations from priests who evidently oppose the system of stipends.

Although the article does mention that "older priests" seem to approve of the present system, there are no quotes from priests who approve of the practice. An adroit manipulation to pit the young against the old.

"The Christian faithful who make an offering so the Mass may be applied for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by their offerings take part in the concern of the Church for the support of its ministers and works," Canon 946 states.

This has proved to be true over hundreds



## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

of years. Mass stipends have contributed to the support of missionary priests working among poor, native people who could never contribute enough to keep a church and a priest in their midst.

For hundreds of years, Mass stipends have contributed to the support of priests working in sparsely populated rural parishes whose members could never have given enough to support a priest and a church.

Over the years Mass stipends have contributed to the support of pastors of large urban parishes and in this way have freed the contributions of parishioners to build

Catholic schools and convents and pay teachers' salaries. Yes, "the Christian Faithful who make an offering so that Mass may be applied for their special intentions contribute to the good of the Church."

To do away with Mass stipends will certainly do harm to our missionary priests. Over 20 years ago, I was a member of our Diocesan Priests Council. One of our congenial agitators began the agitation for changing the stipend system.

Archbishop Sheen listened as the discussion progressed. Finally he interposed quietly: "Fathers, the matter of stipends may mean little to you, but they are the means of food for many of our missionaries."

The matter was dropped, but like the skunk weed, thrusts its head to the uneasiness and confusion of the faithful.

To do away with Mass stipends will certainly do harm to missionary priests. It will do harm to retired priests who are not on a parish payroll, and may depend on these stipends for part of their support.

Yes, stipends are open to misunderstanding and abuse. But we can abuse our ability to eat and drink, or to drive an automobile. Should we do away with these on the possibility of abuse? The church surrounds Mass stipends with many safe guards. There are at least 14 canons regarding the acceptance and the fulfillment of the obligations in accepting stipends for Masses.

The late Father John Tressy, nephew of the late Father John Smith of Corning told me this, "My uncle had a classmate who died and his folks gave Uncle John his cassock. Every night he dreamed of his classmate. One day he found in the sleeve of his cassock a stipend for two Masses to be said. He said the Masses and never dreamed of his classmate again."

Priests whose delicate sentiments are upset by the stipend system are free to make their own private arrangements. As one weary parishioner groaned: "Why this constant agitation within the church? Why fix something which isn't broken?"

# Holy Spirit quenches soul's thirst for living water

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) John 4:4-42; (R1) Exodus 17:3-7; (R2) Romans 5:1-2, 5-8.

The theme of Sunday's readings is water. The thirst for water (R1) symbolizes the living water Jesus gives (R3), namely, the Holy Spirit, given in baptism (R2). Did you ever ask for directions? When you followed them and discovered they were wrong, did you ever say, "Why did I listen to him? Now I'm worse off than before?" After all the miracles in Egypt, the Hebrews listened to Moses. Now they had second thoughts. They had no water. They blamed Moses. "Why did we ever listen to him?" they said.

The thirst of the Hebrews for water symbolizes the thirst catechumens should have for the living water of baptism, flowing from the Rock, Christ. Jesus talks about this living water to the Samaritan woman.

The gospel incident is divided into three acts: (1) the pointed, sometimes ironic conversation between Jesus and the

woman; (2) the return of the apostles and their surprise and confusion; and (3) the response of the Samaritans.

At the well of Jacob, Jesus is really tired and thirsty, but the well is deep and He has no bucket to draw water. He shatters custom by talking to a woman — a Samaritan one at that — in public.

Quite sarcastically, she says, "How is it you, a Jew, asks me, a Samaritan, for a drink?" Jesus piques her curiosity by answering, "If you knew who I am, you would ask me for a drink; and I would give you living water." Eagerly, the woman pleads, "Give me this water, sir."

She is thinking only of flowing water whereas Jesus means the waters of eternal life. To give her this, she needs to set her personal life in order. So Jesus tells her to go call her husband and come back.

This subject is embarrassing to her so

she changes it to a question about worship. Out of respect and love for her, Jesus reveals Himself to her: "I who speak to you am he" — the Messiah.

At that point the disciples arrive from town and are surprised at what they see. The woman, however, transformed by her encounter, takes her leave and runs off to town to share her discovery.

The Samaritans come to Jesus, and they too are convinced, as was the woman, that He is the Messiah.

The living water Jesus gives us is the Holy Spirit through baptism and the other sacraments. In Hebrew the word for spirit is *ruah*, which means "breath."

There are three things about breath. First, it is a life force. If you stop breathing, you die. Secondly, your breath gets into you. There is a double rhythm to breathing: inhaling and exhaling. Thirdly,



## A WORD FOR SUNDAY

breath is needed to speak. If you are out of breath, you cannot speak.

So the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, gives us divine life at baptism. He enters into us by pouring love into our hearts, and He enables us to be witnesses of Christ by speaking of Him in word and deed.

For our spiritual life, then, the Holy Spirit is more important to each of us than is water for our physical lives. Since He comes to us not only through the sacraments, but especially in answer to prayer, we, like the Samaritan woman, ought often to pray: "Give me this water, Lord."

**RIDGEMONT PARK**  
E. Ridge Rd. & Carter St.  
Spacious 1 & 2 Bedroom  
Garden Apts.

- Offering heat & hot water
- 24-hour maintenance
- Sr. Citizen Discount
- Laundry
- Storage facilities
- FREE 18-channel satellite TV
- Great location for shopping, x-way & bus.

56 BRAMBURY DR.  
544-1600

**EXPERIENCE CLOUD 9...**

EXTRADEPTH  
**PILLOW BACKS**  
P. W. MINOR & SON, INC.

It's like walking on air! Stylish PILLOWBACK® shoes, cushion, cradle and support your feet. You'll see and feel the difference. And, available in a full range of men's and women's sizes, widths, styles and colors.

**LOTEPIO SHOE STORE**  
Rochester's Finest Orthopedic Shoe Store  
Makers of Custom Casted Shoes & Arches  
790 Ridge Rd. Webster • 671-8289  
Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. & Fri. 9-6. Sat. 9-5

"On my fixed income, I need an investment with high rates and no risk. But where can you find both?"

Right here, with a St. Joseph's Gift Annuity. Our returns are highly competitive with CDs and other safe investments. And your monthly payments are guaranteed for life, no matter what happens to the stock market or interest rates. You'll earn even higher rates if you're over 70. And most rewarding of all, your principal will support the mission of St. Joseph's Indian School and its work to give Lakota (Sioux) children a better chance for the future. If financial security is the last thing you want to worry about, St. Joseph's is the first place to write. Send for your free Gift Annuity kit today.

### Free information on high rates and iron-clad security.

Yes, please send me free information about the benefits of a St. Joseph's Gift Annuity. I understand I am under no obligation. RC02150

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Mail to: St. Joseph's Indian School  
Box 89  
Chamberlain, SD 57326



**THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER**

**EDWIN SULEWSKI**  
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

**When a pet dies what can I do for my child?**

A child may be quite upset when a pet dies. One way you can help is to plan a ceremony with the child for saying goodbye. A pet funeral gives the child a feeling of being in control and allows him to express some feelings about the loss. Finding a box to place the pet in, digging a grave, and holding a ceremony also satisfies a child's natural curiosity about the physical aspects of death. When a pet dies a child may continue to be sad for several days then, as a rule, they turn their attention to other matters. Listen to your child when he expresses his feelings and be available to answer any questions your child might have.

We purchase all forms of insurance to protect our family & assets not because we expect the worst to happen but to be prepared. Doesn't it make sense then to prepare for what will happen. Let our trained counselors assist you with the many options available in planning for a worry free future.

Burial      Cremation      Entombment

**SCHAUMAN-SULEWSKI**  
FUNERAL HOME  
2100 St. Paul St.      342-3400