

The Parish Rights To Sacraments And Sacramentals
Circular 2004-48

To: All Priests, Diocesan or Religious:

The recent controversy during our last several meetings about where our parishioners should go for the sacraments has convinced me more than ever how important is our constant reminder to our people that they should go to their own Parish for all their spiritual needs. Please announce this again and again at Mass and every important gatherings like Novenas, weddings, and funerals -- in season and out of season – until it sinks in our people’s consciousness.

The Latin *dictum Summum jus, summa injuria*, however, should also make our Pastors understand that the canonical principle of territoriality in a Metropolis like Quezon City and Caloocan accepts more human consideration like compassion and other pastoral, even personal, exigencies, especially of the poor! In this case insisting on the rights of a parish may cause greater harm to our poor people who may feel the priest’s rights as mere red tape or simply lack of care and concern of the Church to their plight.

In view of this above consideration but always aware of our duty to evangelize our own people, I urge and appeal to all our priests, especially the Parish Priests, to exercise compassion and understanding to non-parishioners seeking for sacraments and sacramentals like blessings. The minimum courtesy to our brother priests demands to at least inform the parish where the person belongs about the sacrament and sacramentals the later received. I do no more require a percentage of the fees to be paid to the parish where the recipient belongs or resides but just to help the parish concerned like giving some modest financial contribution on occasions like Christmas or Easter. I am sure following these guidelines will foster the brotherhood among the Clergy and even the Religious in the Diocese.

The question of Common Fees in the whole Diocese for the sacraments is an altogether another matter that the Clergy, after a thorough reflection, will have to come to an agreement some time in the future. For the moment, I would be content if each Vicariate determines a fixed Fee for a Sacrament in the whole Vicariate, without prejudice to the possibility of the adoption of Tithing in lieu of the *Arancel* in the near future.

Given in the Chancery in Fairview, Quezon City, this 15th day of December, in the Year of Our Lord, 2004.

Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, DD
Bishop

Attested to by:

Rev. Fr. Jaime Z. Lara
Chancellor