

## Explanation of Parishioner Status

The question of parishioner status is important. Active parishioners of St. Pius X rightfully look to their Parish for any number of services. Among these services there are:

- Parishioner tuition rates in our Catholic School
- 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 in any form of community. The criterion for active parishioner status reflects these.

## Active Parishioners

To be considered “active”, parishioners must be registered in the Parish for a sufficient period of time (6 months), attend Mass faithfully, and support the life of the Parish and utilize the envelope system.

The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays & Holy Days of Obligation is a serious one. This is not merely a suggestion from your pastor. Precepts of the Catholic Church & Divine Law set forth this expectation. The Third of the Ten Commandments is “Remember to keep holy the Sabbath”.

Exercising the “Power of the Keys” given to the Church by Christ, Himself, Church 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 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 a grave matter (and thus serious sin), habitual disregard for God’s Law and the Law of the church would.

It is my hope that we live beyond the minimum 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 (whether through parochial school or PSR) will see that this value is lived out within their family, and that both parents & children will attend Mass faithfully on Sunday and Holy Days.

Attendance at Mass is an important consideration. However, among the criteria for “active” status in the Church, the obligation to support the Church is not 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 school is an important aspect of parish finance. Those receiving education in our school at the discounted “parishioner rate” are in fact heavily subsidized by their parish. Additionally there are expenses associated with our PSR program that are not covered by the registration fee. Heat, electricity, paper, supplies, books. The PSR registration fee paid by PSR parents does not cover the cost of the book.

The monetary support of our church is an important aspect of Parish Finance. 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 staff is asked to certify active parishioners, they first look for frequency of envelope use, not the amount given. If you cannot make a contribution, let your pastor know, and be sure to drop in an envelope with your name and address. With a record of regular Mass attendance, you will not have difficulty being certified as an active parishioner of St. Pius X.

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 students who are Catholic, whether attending St. Pius X School or public school are expected to attend Mass faithfully.