

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ELIGIBILITY FOR ACTIVE PARISHIONER TUITION RATE:**

The Church of St. Raphael 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 once a year, on April 28, 2020. 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 at the information desk in the East Gathering Area. Please write your name in and place the envelope in the collection basket so that we can record your attendance.

**What if we have financial difficulties and cannot meet the minimum contribution expected?** There is no minimum contribution amount expected. The level of financial support would vary from family to family depending on the family's income. The biblical tradition of tithe is 10% of one's income – Catholic guidelines generally recommend an ideal of 5% given to support one's parish, 5% given to support other charities.

**What if I attend Mass at other Catholic churches?** During those times (hopefully, no more than 30% 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 metro area, we expect that you are close enough to home that you can come to the Church of St. Raphael for Mass. Occasionally, you may choose to go to Mass elsewhere, but on the whole, parish membership means you think of St. Raphael 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 illness prevents attendance?** For the usual, simple illnesses, absence should not generally exceed 30% 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 70% 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 70% of the time to obtain parishioner tuition rates.

**What if I prefer to make my church contribution once a month, or even less frequently?** 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 1200 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 70% 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 and other charitable organizations.

**We travel for sports or long vacations – can I bring in a bulletin of the church attended with a 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 "Parish Data System" which is a database computer system for registrations, sacraments, collections, attendance, faith formation, etc.