

Update and guidelines for our valued international customers (February 2012)

On May 14, 2007, the US Postal Service imposed new mail classifications and services, and drastically increased rates, for international mail; further increases and changes in rate structures have followed. Due to the complexity of the options, it is impossible for the web site to automatically calculate international shipping & handling costs, as both the weight and the physical size and shape of an order determine the costs.

While postal M-bag service still exists (11# minimum weight charge), its cost almost doubled to Canada, tripled to Europe, and quadrupled to Australia, New Zealand & Japan. As a result, it will now be rare that this is a reasonable and economical choice for book shipments (further, this service is not insurable).

A bit on the brighter side, international Priority Mail service has been greatly expanded. It now serves all countries where we have customers, and is available in several flatrate formats (rate determined by capacity, not weight).

The flatrate packet has a capacity of up to 4 pounds, and whatever can be fitted into a fiber envelope or padded mailer 9.5"x12.5" without undue risk of damage to the contents. In practice, this might mean as many as six or eight small books, or one or two larger ones (8.5x11" hardbound or comb-bound items cannot usually be shipped this way). To Canada, \$25; elsewhere, \$30.

The medium flatrate boxes allow for up to 20 pounds of goods, in two formats: 8.5x11x6", and 12x14x3.5". The former will hold a considerable number of "ordinary" books, calendars, etc; the latter is required for large-format items such as bound Menaion volumes. To Canada, \$65; elsewhere \$95.

The "large flat rate box", 12"x12"x5.75", has the same weight restriction (almost impossible to exceed with books). This carton is most useful for larger orders of bound Menaion volume and/or comb-bound music books. To Canada, \$80; elsewhere, \$120.

Obviously it is to your advantage to "pack to the max" for all these services, especially for the pricier boxes.

For smaller orders, First Class Mail International (actually airmail; limit 4 pounds) is sometimes more economical. In practice, this will likely be used only for very small orders weighing under a pound, or for lighter-weight items which for some reason cannot be shipped in a Priority Mail flatrate envelope. As this service is weight-based, cost will vary, but only in exceptional cases would exceed the cost of a Priority Mail flatrate envelope.

Regrettably, when our website was designed, information as to the size, page count and weight of the books and audio materials was not included. Obviously, this information would be helpful to you in "sizing" an order. We hope to correct this lack before too long, and apologize for the inconvenience it creates.

So what does all this mean for you (and us)?

First: We recommend that for all but the simplest orders, you contact us by e-mail (frgregory@sjkp.org) with your "wish list" (we can best handle this if you provide stock numbers as well as titles, preferably with priorities assigned (e.g., I *really* want these items, but would also like to have these, and if there's enough space/weight available without increasing s&h costs, these

also...., etc.). Alternatively, you may go ahead and place the order, but at checkout select for "Payment Method" the "Check or Money Order" option from the pull-down menu, then send us your credit card information by e-mail, fax (615-536-5945), or telephone (615-536-5239).

Second: You *must* provide us with either an e-mail address or fax number, so we can communicate with you concerning possible revisions to your order and s&h costs. If you fail to do so, you are authorizing whatever s&h charges may be necessary.

Third: When you place your order (using a MasterCard or VISA) without any prior communication, you are authorizing up to \$120 in shipping & handling costs for the order, which will be run as a supplemental charge to your credit card. If s&h costs will exceed \$120, we will contact you before proceeding with processing of the order.

In many cases, shipping & handling costs will be considerably less than the authorized maximum, and you may opt to just leave the decisions with us (we will always try to serve you the best way possible, of course!). If you have specific requests concerning shipping, please either e-mail them to us (referencing the order number if you've already placed the order) or put them in the notes field at checkout.

Please bear in mind that actual postage costs are only a fraction of shipping & handling costs, which include order pulling and packing time (which can be quite substantial in the case of international orders which often require two or more "trial pack" operations), packing materials, postage meter lease and web shipping facility fees, funds "lifted" by credit card processors, and on and on, to say nothing of general overhead costs.

All international orders are insured for full value (part of the s&h cost), either by commercial insurance or our own self-insurance.

Despite these difficulties, we will continue to try to serve you the best possible, keeping our prices as low as possible... consistent with staying in business!

With many thanks and blessings!

Fr. Gregory+