

Update and guidelines for our valued international customers (May 2009)

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 followed a year later (and again this year). Due to the complexity of the options, it is completely impossible for the web site to automatically calculate international shipping & handling costs, as both the weight and the physical size of an order can dramatically affect 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.

A bit on the brighter side, international Priority Mail service has been greatly expanded. It now serves all countries where we have customers, and a flat-rate box (two different profiles, essentially the same cubic capacity) service has been added. The flatrate packet continues to be available (though at increased cost), with a capacity of up to 4 pounds, and whatever can be fitted into a fiber envelope 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). The 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.

A third format is now available (at higher cost), the "large flat rate box", 12"x12"x5.75", with the same weight restriction (almost impossible to exceed with books). This carton is most useful for larger orders of bound Menaion volume or comb-bound music books.

For smaller orders, the only service now available is First Class Mail International (actually airmail), for parcels up to 4 pounds. In practice, this will likely be used only for small orders weighing under a couple of pounds, or for lighter-weight items which cannot be shipped in 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 (info@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 dramatically increasing shipping 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.

Third: When you place your order (using a MasterCard or VISA) without any prior communication, you are authorizing up to \$80 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 \$80, we will contact you before proceeding with processing of the order.

Most orders will be shipped by either Priority Mail International or First Class Mail International. 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), packing materials, postage meter lease, funds "lifted" by credit card processors, and on and on, to say nothing of general overhead costs.

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+