



Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

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Moderator of the Curia

Bulletin Article

What is the Diocesan Assessment? How is it used? Is it true that parishes benefit most?

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

To promote full disclosure and transparency about the diocesan assessment, all parishes are being instructed to include this article in their weekly bulletins.

Catholic parishes of any diocese traditionally support the church on three levels:

1. the local parish (e.g., the regular weekly collection, fuel collection, fundraisers, etc.),
2. the universal church (e.g., special collections for Peter's Pence, the foreign missions, etc.), and
3. the diocesan church (please see the next paragraph).

The annual operating budget of the diocesan church in Maine receives support for its mission and ministries from two main sources:

1. the annual Catholic Appeal, formerly known as the Bishop's Appeal, and
2. the diocesan assessment or tax, which in this diocese is 12.75% of a parish's operating income (weekly collections, etc.)--the assessment rate is recommended by the Diocesan Finance Council (made up of laity with business backgrounds) and the College of Consultors (made up of priests).

People often ask two questions about the diocesan assessment: "Why is it so high?" and "Can the assessment be cut/reduced?" What most people don't know is that

- **More than ½ of the total diocesan assessment (6.75%)** is used for the direct benefit of parishes, helping to pay the salary, health and pension costs of priests who serve in our parishes and hospitals. In other words, this portion of the assessment does not stay with the Diocese/Chancery.
- **Less than ½ of the total diocesan assessment (6.00%)** is used to help administer the diocese. Yet even this portion of the assessment benefits parishes because it helps to pay legal costs incurred by parishes, provide assistance for personnel/human resources matters, and support both our diocesan-wide computer and video-conferencing systems.

The actual breakdown of the diocesan assessment is as follows:

- 5.75% - Diocesan Services (e.g., administrative costs of running the diocese, including payment of parish legal costs and providing support for parish personnel issues)
- 0.25% - Information Systems (diocesan-wide computer network, video-conferencing equipment in Caribou, Brewer & Portland)
- 4.25% - Priests Payroll Program
- 2.00% - Priests Health Program
- 0.50% - Priests Pension Program
- 12.75% - Total Assessment**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Chancery.

Sincerely,
Msgr. Andrew Dubois
Moderator of the Curia