

POLICY 3.1.1 Parish Financial Procedures

The matter of money and financial management is one of trust. Parishioners make financial donations to the Church in the confidence that their donations are well managed. Because we give receipts for income tax purposes, federal legislation also directs the proper handling of such donations. Past experience tells us that, in the vast majority of cases, this trust is honored. However, in some few situations, parishes that have lax practices in the handling of money, experience very unfortunate consequences, sometimes with the innocent feeling accused and parishioners as a whole feeling violated. It is with such consideration that the following policies are decreed for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan.

Bank Accounts

Every parish is to have only one current bank account. All transactions are to take place through this one bank account: receipts (regular collections, special collections, fund raising revenue, miscellaneous donations, hall and other rentals, cemetery plot leases) and disbursements (salaries, supplies, ministry expenses and utilities). The chart of accounts for the current account must be set up so that the various types of receipts and disbursements are clearly identified.

Those parishes which take part in the RBC/UMC cash management program may also have a local bank account for their regular deposits.

No other bank account may be opened without the express permission of the archbishop.

The collection and counting of money

It is imperative that at every step from the point that the collection is taken up until it is counted and that count verified, more than one person must handle all money. In almost all parishes, ushers take up the Sunday collection at the Preparation of the Gifts. Subsequent steps might include:

- Placing the collection in a basket or sealed bag to be brought up with the bread and wine;
- Taking this basket or bag into the sacristy after Mass;
- Putting it in a secure place until it can be counted and deposited in the bank;
- Counting the money, ensuring that donation envelopes reveal the proper amount given;
- Completing a collection report (form 3.1.1.a);
- Making out the deposit slip;
- Depositing the collection in the bank.

With each step until a tally has been taken and verified, it is important that more than one person be present and alert. Our Insurers require that the persons counting the collection not be of the same immediate family.

Other Revenues

The procedure for counting and depositing other revenues shall, as much as possible, follow the procedures for the handling of collection revenues.

The signing of cheques and other transactions

There must be two signatures on every cheque and transaction. If the parish has a priest or deacon, he must be one of the signatories. If the parish does not have a cleric as spiritual leader, then the pastoral animator would take his place as signatory.

The other signatory must be a lay member of the parish or mission: the secretary, finance officer, chair of the parish council, or other parishioner that the parish council designates. Thus, every cheque must bear the signature of one priest (or deacon or pastoral animator, depending on your circumstance) and one lay parishioner.

Cheques are not to be signed in advance. Notwithstanding the above provision, in the prolonged absence of the pastor (or deacon or pastoral animator) (e.g. holidays), two other authorized signers may sign routine cheques. All such signed cheques must be reviewed by the pastor (or deacon or pastoral animator) upon his/her return.

The archbishop must have signing authority on all parish and mission accounts in the archdiocese.

Bookkeeping and financial records and documents

- Bookkeeping
 - All parishes, quasi-parishes and missions (“parishes”) are to maintain their own financial records. Bookkeeping tasks may be handled by the parish itself or may be handled by the Finance Section of the Archdiocese (cf. Policy 3.1.6).
 - Parish financial records, instruments and documents must be kept up-to-date and financial statements are to be issued regularly (cf. Policy 3.1.6).
- Charitable status and issuing receipts
 - All parishes are charitable organizations and can issue charitable receipts for monetary donations. They all have their own charitable registration number, issued by CRA.
 - All parishes, as part of their financial recordkeeping, are required to keep information about donors confidential, using it only to issue charitable receipts.
 - Charitable receipts may be handwritten, computer-generated, or produced from Parish Friendly. Parishes have the option of issuing receipts at the time the donation is received or annually, after the fiscal year is closed and before February 28 of the new year.
 - For regular Sunday donors, parishes should issue one receipt, following the close of the fiscal year and before February 28.
 - Parishes must keep all collection envelopes and a copy of all charitable receipts, for at least 3 years.

General

Any variance to this policy must receive the written approval of the Finance Administrator.

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