

**RESOLUTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES DIVISION (DMMD)
ON JUST COMPENSATION
July 12, 1991**

In 1963 the bishops of the Second Vatican Council, in their desire to renew the life of the Church, called for the "full, conscious and active participation" of the faithful in the liturgy (Constitution on the Liturgy 14). This active participation of the assembly was to be accomplished first of all through the musical elements of the rites, by "acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons and songs" (CL30).

The Council affirmed that "the musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for the preeminence is that, as sacred song closely bound to the text; it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy" (CL112).

Because music is integral to the liturgy, the training of pastoral musicians is a pressing concern for the life of the Christian community, while the need for fostering musical art in the liturgy is more critical than ever, the number of competent musicians available to direct parish music ministries is declining. In part, this decline is due to the failure of the Catholic community to adequately address the issue of just compensation for those willing to stake their livelihood on the ministry of music. A survey conducted by the Professional Concerns Committee of the DMMD last year found that salaries of pastoral musicians in the United States fall well below those of other lay and religious employees. The lack of financial security associated with low salaries and poor benefits is unfortunately a disincentive for young people to pursue the extensive and highly specialized training required for professional music ministry.

In their 1986 pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, the bishops of the United States directly applied Catholic social teaching to the just treatment of the church's own employees. The Church itself, the bishops argued, ought to provide compensation similar to that provided by "responsible employers in our nation."

In light of this position of the U.S. Bishops, we call on the Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy (BCL) to join us in seeking ways of implementing the Church's social teachings as they relate to the just compensation of pastoral musicians.

We support the conclusions of the "National Project on Just Wages and Benefits for Lay and Religious Employees" (1990), and call on the BCL to join us in seeking to implement its recommendations at the parish, diocesan and national levels. In particular, we urge the bishops of the U.S. to provide for portability of benefits, so that those who have served different dioceses may be assured of reasonable retirement benefits.

As professional full-time directors of music ministries, we are enthusiastically committed to serving the Church at prayer. At the same time, we are concerned that the ministry of music will continue to grow and flourish in the future. We seek the support not only of the bishops, but of the entire Catholic community, in addressing the concerns we have raised.