

Social Justice in the Third Millennium: Salary Guidelines

By Kathleen DeJardin

Kathleen DeJardin is the director of music ministries at Santiago de Compostela Catholic Church in Lake Forest, CA, and a member-at-large on the DMMD Board of Directors.

One of the church's major focuses during the Jubilee Year is justice, a concept with many facets. For example, "justice" is one appropriate response to the recurring question that musicians hear: "Why do you need salary guidelines?"

There are many justice issues that still must be addressed in terms of the ministry of pastoral musicians:

- A large number of church musicians work without a contract
- There are still church musicians who are not paid a decent living wage-some are practically donating their time and talent, and in many cases, members of their communities expect or presume such donations
- Many church musicians must work multiple jobs to "make ends meet"
- The talents and skills of a church musician are difficult for many members of the clergy and many lay people to understand, assess, and assign an adequate dollar value

Two Documents

The DMMD members' *Resolution on Just Compensation* of July 12, 1991, reports a survey conducted by the DMMD Professional Concerns Committee in 1990 that found pastoral musicians' salaries in the U.S. were well below those of other lay and religious church employees. Almost ten years later we continue to address this same and very serious problem.

Now, in response to this continuing unjust situation, the Director of Music Ministries Division of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians has drafted a new document: *The Director of Music Ministries in the Parish: Work and Remuneration*, which will provide those in need with a practical, straightforward tool to use when they are considering a new position or renegotiating their present one. This document lists the pastoral, liturgical, musical, and organizational skills necessary for the typical full-time pastoral musician, and it discusses the importance and value of music in the life and liturgy of a parish.

The *Work and Remuneration* draft document also provides a basic job description for the director of music ministries which outlines possible job responsibilities and other aspects of the work. As a tool for determining an appropriate and just salary for a director of music ministries, the DMMD draft endorses the American Guild of Organists salary guidelines, which are provided in the statement with an explanation of the salary table. There is also an example of a sample contract for a director of music ministries and organist.

Connected to Certification

The training of the director of music ministries is also covered in this new draft document, and that part of the text brings us to the DMMD certification program. NPM has instituted a certification program that is vital to our continued quest for acceptance, excellence, and just compensation. Because it is so difficult to assess the qualifications and skills of a music minister and assign a fair salary, as noted above, NPM has adopted the American Guild of Organists Salary Guide. But in order to adopt and institute these new salaries with any

success, they must be linked somehow to the certification process - a connection of extreme importance. By raising the educational and musical quality of our musicians and directors through the certification process, we will justify the minimum salary expectations and increases. With the adoption of the certification program, not only will the quality of our music ministries be raised, but we will know that all certified directors will have met the high standards that we, as an organization, agree should be required of all professional pastoral musicians. As more directors are certified, this standard will become the norm across the country.

If we are going to increase our salaries, we must have a documented plan that substantiates our requests. This document will go a great distance in helping us to do that. When the salary guidelines come up for a vote, make sure that you vote "yes" and then use them!

On the Verge

As we continue our journey into the third millennium, let us also continue to strive for the economic justice we have been seeking for so many years. We are on the verge of realizing our goals; together, we will achieve them in God's name. "The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:8-9).

To get more information on the [*Statement on Just Compensation*](#), the draft text of [*Work and Remuneration*](#), and the [certification process](#), please check these documents on this website.