



DIOCESE OF CHARLOTTE
Communications Office

February 4, 2021

Statement from the Diocese of Charlotte in response to AP story

CHARLOTTE — A Feb. 4 Associated Press story about the federal Paycheck Protection Program mischaracterizes the financial picture of the Diocese of Charlotte, incorrectly conflating its finances with assets owned and controlled by more than 100 separate Catholic entities within the diocese. The story overstates available assets, ignores financial liabilities and erroneously suggests that restricted donations and designated funds could have been used to cover payroll costs as the economy shut down due to the pandemic.

Accurate information is provided in the diocese's [2020 annual report](#) published on our website. As explained to the AP, we are grateful that a number of entities within the diocese received funding from the Paycheck Protection Program – keeping more than 1,000 teachers, counselors and other staff fully employed and insured across western North Carolina.

When the pandemic hit last spring, church offertory and other income fell dramatically, as it did for businesses and organizations nationwide. As separate employers, each of the 92 parishes and missions, 19 schools and other ministries within the diocese had to evaluate whether they met federal criteria to apply for Paycheck Protection funding. Overall, 45 parishes, nine schools, Catholic Charities and the diocese's central office received separate Paycheck Protection loans to cover their payrolls – with the average parish loan, for example, totaling \$72,180. To date, all of those loans have qualified for forgiveness following compliance reviews by the entities' financial institution and the Small Business Administration.

Without this assistance, these parishes, schools and ministries would have had to consider layoffs, furloughs and pay cuts – the very impacts the PPP was designed to help employers avoid. Instead, they helped the Church find new ways to provide comfort through livestreamed, outdoor and other safe religious services, and through essential programs such as in-person education, emergency food and utility assistance, mental health counseling and spiritual guidance, and the provision of sacraments such as baptisms and last rites.

Several parishes ultimately were able to return some or all of their funding, thanks to the generosity of parishioners and donors, who have rallied across the diocese to help the Church weather the ongoing effects of the pandemic – and remain a beacon of hope throughout this dark and uncertain period.

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