

## **A Note on Payments to Music Ministers**

*By Paul Mason, Diocesan Coordinator of Liturgy*

The Church is most grateful to the many people who see liturgical music ministry as one of the ways of expressing their stewardship of the gifts God has given them. Our celebrations of Mass would be very much impoverished without the ministry provided by the many musicians and singers who regularly give of their time, talent and treasure to lead our singing. The time given includes the hours spent each week in preparation and rehearsal. The talent contributed includes the money and time spent with music teachers and professional support in developing their God-given musical gifts. In addition, music ministers often contribute money to the costs of musical instruments, music manuscripts and other music ministry resources.

For those who are professional musicians by trade, whose remuneration is dependent on charging for their musical skills, their gift is often more than a tithe (four hours a week). The Church is always very grateful for all professionals - architects, teachers, builders, electricians, plumbers, florists, etc. - who donate their labour to the Church free of charge as part of their contribution to the stewardship of the Church.

In justice, the Church recognises that it has an obligation to remunerate appropriately qualified professional services. Canon Law addresses this area specifically:

Can. 231 §1. Lay persons who permanently or temporarily devote themselves to special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation required to fulfill their function properly and to carry out this function conscientiously, eagerly, and diligently.

§2. Without prejudice to the prescript of can. 230, §1 and with the prescripts of civil law having been observed, lay persons have the right to decent remuneration appropriate to their condition so that they are able to provide decently for their own needs and those of their family. They also have a right for their social provision, social security, and health benefits to be duly provided.

For these reasons the Church employs paid full-time and part-time permanent and casual professional lay persons in areas such as education, accounting, law, secretarial and administration services. So too, the Church expects that professional musician services be appropriately remunerated for weddings, funerals and major events. Professional musicians by trade are invited to donate a portion of their time to Church ministry as part of their stewardship of God's gifts. However, when the Church has a need for many hours of service per week from a professional music teacher, voice trainer, music director, singer or musician, it expects to pay an appropriate level of remuneration.