



February 8, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

Recently, the Associate Press (AP) published a story on the Catholic Church's participation in the United States CARES Act Payroll Protection Plan (PPP.) Despite our best efforts, the article mischaracterizes the financial position of our Archdiocese and other Catholic organizations.

Of course, the basic premise that Catholic institutions are less worthy than other organizations to receive PPP funds for which they are statutorily qualified is discriminatory and ignores the fact that these institutions educate children, serve the poor and marginalized and provide employment to many thousands of Americans.

We understand the media attention given to this article may cause concern among the faithful. Below are points that will help you to address their questions.

- Parishes that received PPP funds did so because they met the criteria for the loans as outlined in the CARES Act. The Act required that the loans be used only for payroll and essential expenses such as utility bills. The funds kept hundreds of people employed during the pandemic and enabled the Church to provide much needed aid and services during this difficult time.
- The AP article focused on "ample" Archdiocesan assets but did not reveal that, for every dollar of Archdiocesan asset, there is a corresponding dollar of liability. The assets of the Archdiocese must be used to cover these liabilities, including pensions, pre-need cemetery services, deposits of parishes that cannot be commingled, debt and insurance claims.
- The consolidated financials of the Archdiocese also include a group of separately incorporated not-for-profit charities. The assets of these charities belong to those charities and are not available for general Archdiocesan purposes.
- In short, our parishes used the funds for which they qualified for the purposes the Act intended – payroll and essential expenses such as utilities.
- The Archdiocese of Chicago educates nearly 45,000 children in its 162 schools—students who do not use the resources of their local public schools—and serves Cook and Lake County communities through its 290 parishes. Those parishes and schools pay payroll taxes on many thousands of employees. In a normal year, the Archdiocese provides more than \$15 million to support parishes and schools in need, placing significant strain on the Archdiocesan budget. In a year that saw a sharp decline in parish revenues when our churches closed, the CARES Act PPP loans allowed our parishes and schools to retain most of their staff, protected those employees from needing to seek unemployment and other benefits, ensuring that those institutions could continue educating children and providing services and pastoral care to their communities in this time of extraordinary need.
- We are grateful for the support this program provided and are confident that, with the diligent stewardship of resources by our pastors and Archdiocese personnel and the generosity of the faithful our parishes, schools and agencies will continue to be bright spots amid the pain and confusion of these difficult times.

As the pandemic continues, the loans helped our parishes and school to provide education, services and pastoral care to the people of the Archdiocese.

Peace,
Bishop Robert Casey
Vicar General