

Common Questions and Answers about PFGM Finances

Why do we need to pay an Annual Contribution

The successful operation of the Passionist Family Group Movement involves costs for Travel, Communications, Facilities, Administration Office etc. Currently some 12240 people belong to 408 Passionist Family Groups in 70 New Zealand parishes. Included in these numbers are approximately 820 Group Coordinators, 140 Parish Coordinators, 26 Regional Coordinators and 8 Directors. Passionist priests make themselves available constantly from Australia to conduct Formation training weekends or days in at least ten regions, They make extensive resources available to those attend. They also conduct Adult and Youth Retreats.

There is a standard cost to each parish of \$950 per annum associated with administering and pastoring this large number of people spread over a large Australasian area.

Does the money all go to the Passionist Order in Australia?

A minor percentage of the funds raised go as a stipend to the Passionists, contributing to administrative costs they incur on the New Zealand Movement's behalf.

What does a parish get for its money?

During the past 21 years, parishes have received a well-orchestrated and effective Formation training programme for all coordinators in the Movement - driven by National Directors Lynn & Rob Hill with Fr Brian Traynor CP & Fr Kevin Hennessy CP- for folk who in the main may never have become involved in a leadership role in our Catholic Church. The Movement has aims to build community, and is operating in every Diocese in New Zealand; each Diocese has expressed support for this positive approach in our modern Church and every parish which has requested the Movement's presence has been briefed on the expectations of the Movement regarding Parish Formations, Formation Training, Leadership Reviews within the parish & Annual Contributions to fund the Movement.

The massive training effort is integral to the ongoing success of the Movement . A poor attendance at the Formation Training sessions in no way reduces the cost of holding them, and we constantly remind parish priests and coordinators that failure to make use of this annual formation training programme, which accounts for a considerable part of the annual budget, will inevitably result in the parish suffering from not taking full advantage of the available resources. Area Directors are available to every parish, as are the services of fully trained and experienced Regional Coordinators.

How can you expect parishes to pay \$950 all at once?

We don't - to avoid the strain of an annual one-off payment, we offer an automatic payment facility of \$80 per month or \$225 per quarter (+ gst). Many member parishes have taken advantage of this offer.

If the parish can't afford to pay - are the groups expected to pay?

The commitment to the annual contribution prior to formation is made by the parish - not the group members. However where the parish has difficulty in meeting its commitment, we encourage parishes PFG's to organise some painless fundraising, remembering that the object of running the groups is to build community. Examples of successful fundraising efforts being painlessly carried out are: [1] invite all parishioners to an annual celebration of the formation of the groups, using a modest door charge for adults; [2] run a Fruit & Vege Co-op open to all parishioners, whereby food costs can be halved; [3] Organise a combined garage sale, cake stall (etc)

How do we know whether the money we pay is well spent?

The Movement has gone to a great deal of trouble to provide ‘user-friendly’ information to show not only how income has been distributed in the form of expenditure, and how this compares with past years, but also how budgeted funds collected in the present year will be distributed. Further we offer each participating parish a set of the complete Audited Financial Statements and Balance Sheet. All parishes have been and will continue to be supplied annually with (i) Statement of Accounts & Cashflows for past years; (ii) Budget for present year.

Why do we have to pay an annual contribution, and pay for Training?

The Annual Contribution goes towards making sure the Directors, Passionist Priests & Regional Coordinators can coordinate the training; the cost of attendees is funded on a user-pays basis, and is always kept to a bare minimum. Parish & Group Coordinators are being encouraged to bring their children, to avoid any inconvenience, and so that the children can experience the Catholic church in action in their formative years. Many parishes elect to pay for the adults’ attendance, while expecting the parents to pay for their children.

Why is there an ongoing financial responsibility?

During 1996 & 97 the Movement suffered a financial deficit, caused in the main by approximately 15% of participating parishes failing to meet their original contribution commitment, and 5% failing to make any contribution at all. In the main, this shortfall was met by Coordinators & Directors giving their time and transport freely, and by the Passionist priests receiving negligible stipend for their contribution. The Movement managed to reverse this trend, with the more reluctant parishes meeting their contribution, overheads being minimised and a small surplus being managed. We have since then strived to maintain this progress and build a stronger Movement.

Isn't the Movement big enough to reduce the Annual Contribution?

Since the Movement was established in New Zealand, the standard Annual Contribution has dropped by approximately 25%, and has not increased for more than 15 years.

'What if we can't afford to pay the full stipend?

There are parishes which are unable to contribute a full stipend and where there is this sort of hardship we are happy to come to an alternative arrangement with that parish. Please don't hesitate to contact us either by email or phone if this is the case for your parish. We would never stop support/ formation etc because of a parish's inability to pay a full stipend.

Is there a facility for people to make donations to the Movement?

Yes! Tax-deductible donations can be made to our Charitable Trust, and currently these are deposited into an interest-bearing account.

We invite interested parties to include the Movement in their preferred charities by annual or one-off donations. We also have facilities for donations to be made on a monthly basis and this is a great help to us. Tax Receipts are issued for all donations. For more information or to make a donation please contact us at P.O. Box 74, Waihi Beach, or email at passionistnz@xtra.co.nz