

From Deacon Fred

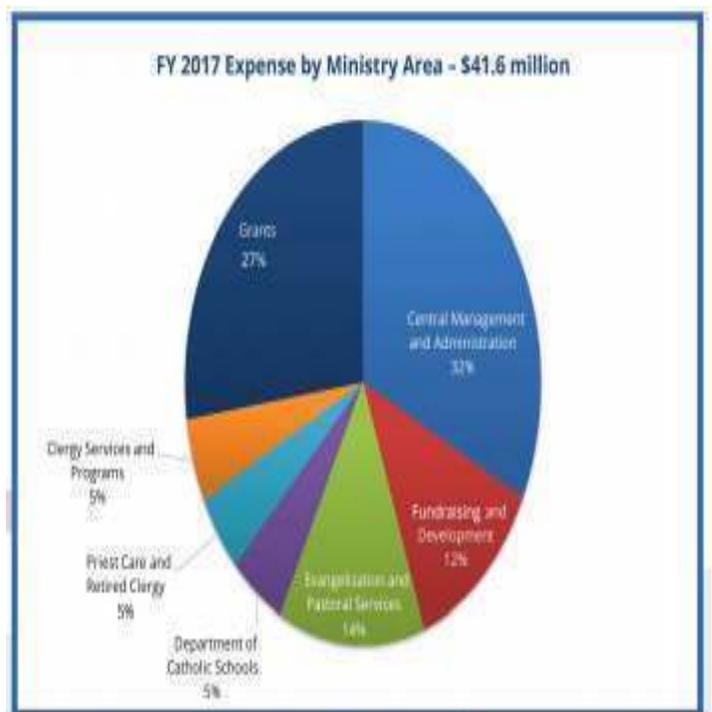
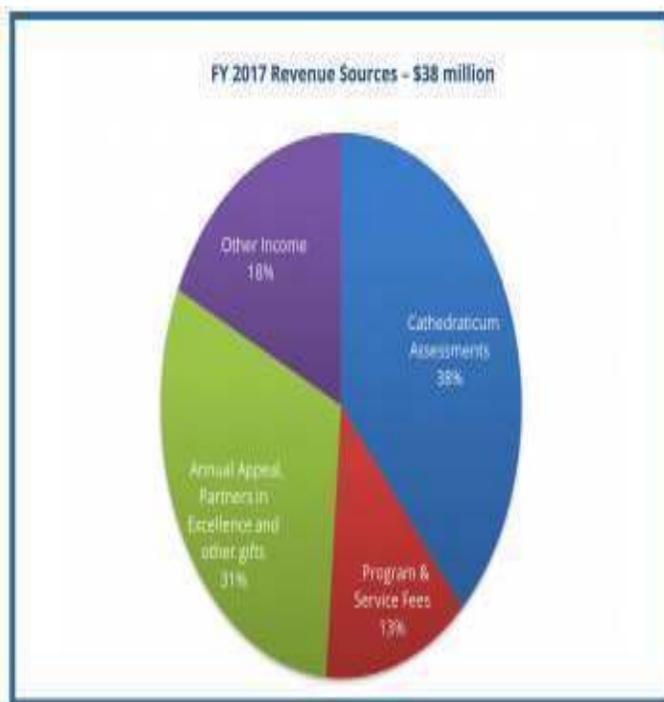
Dear Friends,

Catholic News Service reported on October 20, the firestorm surrounding the clergy sex abuse crisis and the way some bishops handled allegations of abuse against priests will be an important part of the agenda of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' fall general assembly. The bishops have had to deal with seemingly endless revelations of allegations of abusive clergy since June, most of which referred to long-past incidents. New reports from media outlets are expected as the Nov. 12-14 assembly in Baltimore approaches.

A very critical part of our parish commitment to be vigilant regarding the abuse subject is to stay informed. We have weekly posted on our website <http://www.stbernadette.org/> updated information and articles on the abuse crisis to aid in this process. We will continue as news from this bishop's meeting is released. Given the importance of the dialogue that needs to occur at the bishop's fall meeting we continue to offer this prayer.

For victims of abuse by Catholic clergy. May they receive the emotional and spiritual healing they need, redress that is appropriate, and accountability from those who enabled their suffering by their silence, we pray to the Lord.

In addition, there continues to be questions that are not addressed in the media or by the church. One such questions "Should my family stop contributing financially to the church?" or "Can I give to Saint Bernadette only and not the Archdiocese of Baltimore?" First, let me begin by acknowledging that we have seen a slight decline in offertory giving. Is it a result of the abuse crisis? It is too early to tell. Secondly, I know that for many, the question remains, "where do my offertory contributions go?" Approximately 90% goes directly to our parish. See the Annual Report (again, posted on the website) as to the breakdown of how your generosity is used. The remaining 10% is paid as cathedraticum tax to the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The percentage is based on the amount collected for our operating income. What does the Archdiocese of Baltimore do with these funds? Below are two charts illustrating the 2017 Archdiocesan Income and Expenses.



What occurs if there is a downturn in income? The result is not that it “punishes the hierarchy,” but that it negatively affects the people of God.

Our Archdiocesan assessment is used to support programs that serve members of our community’s Catholic schools, parishes, and organizations. Plainly speaking, if we discontinue our financial support to our parish or the greater church: yes, the bishops will take notice, but they will also continue on with their work as bishops. Instead, if income decreases, *the people served will be the ones who suffer*. We in the parish leadership of Saint Bernadette Parish respect the choices our parishioners make, and we know you do not make them lightly. Our responsibility is to provide the best information to make informed decisions, and we think it is important you are aware of the real impact of those decisions.

Others have asked, “Does my offertory donation to my parish or to archdiocesan campaigns fund settlements or abuse-related legal fees?” In short, settlements, counseling assistance, and related legal costs are paid through the Archdiocese’s insurance programs. The Archdiocese has operated a comprehensive insurance program for many years that provides a range of coverages including health, auto, workers’ compensation, directors and officers, employment practices, property, casualty, and sexual misconduct. Less than 1/3 of 1% of what we at Saint Bernadette Parish are assessed goes to cover the sexual misconduct insurance endorsement, and what is paid out of that insurance includes funds provided to victims of abuse to cover the cost of counseling.

The history of crisis in the Catholic Church is that the faithful speak with their feet, wallets, and purses. We here are fortunate that the tradition and culture embraces the reality that “*We are the Church*” and as such “*We further the presence of God in the world.*”

Especially in times when the institutional Church so clearly shows its flaws, we the Church as the people of God recognize even more clearly the need to offer our time, talent, and treasure in pursuit of justice and holiness!

Let us continue to be joined as one in the life of discipleship, and continue to invite all to encounter the Light of the World, our Lord Jesus Christ, who transforms our darkness into the brilliance of day.

With sincere hope for the future of the Church,

Deacon Fred Passauer, Parish Administrator

Fr. John Schulmeister, Staff Friar

Fr. Jim Donohue, Weekend Presider

Dan Miller, Pastoral Associate

Rena Black, Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Pat Radford, Coordinator of Religious Education

Geoff Rohrbach, Director of Music Ministry