



THE BISHOP OF ST ALBANS

The Rt Revd Christopher Herbert

To All Clergy

17 June 2008

Dear Colleague,

The Board of Finance has recently reviewed the Diocese's policy on the payment of parochial fees and, pending the outcome of a national review, agreed to make two changes to the current arrangements.

Firstly, the amount payable to retired clergy for occasional offices will change to bring the Diocese into line with the existing national guidelines. Currently £20 is paid for each service with the balance being passed to the incumbent or priest-in-charge who, in the majority of cases, will have assigned their fees to the diocese for the benefit of the Diocesan Stipends Fund. From 1st July 2008 retired clergy will be entitled to receive two-thirds of the statutory fee payable to an incumbent for an occasional office provided that the appropriate pastoral visiting before and after the office is undertaken by the retired clergy person. The Incumbent is responsible for payment to the clergy deputising for them, the balance of the fee then being assigned to the Diocese, or, where fees have not been assigned, declared on the annual return of income and expenditure. The Table of Parochial fees setting out the amounts to be paid is circulated in December each year and is available on the Diocesan website.

Secondly, the Board of Finance needs to ensure that all sums due to the Diocesan Stipends Fund have been received. Currently it is very difficult to reconcile the fees received to the Mission Statistics returns from parishes which include details of the occasional offices taken during the year. It is essential that all clergy have proper records of fees due, received and assigned to the Board so that they can respond to enquiries from HM Revenue and Customs, if asked to do so. From 1st July clergy who have assigned their fees to the Diocese are therefore asked to complete the enclosed form to send with their cheque each quarter. Where fees are handled by the PCC treasurer or other parish officer they may complete the form instead. Please pass this letter to them for information.

If you have any queries about the new arrangements please contact Susan Pope, the Diocesan Secretary, or Mrs Janet Hurley, at the Diocesan Office.

In making these changes I would like to record my appreciation of the invaluable contribution made by retired clergy in assisting parochial clergy in their responsibilities to provide for the occasional offices in their benefices.

Yours
+ Christopher