

(i) GIFTS FOR USE IN CHURCHES: ARCHDEACONS' DIRECTIONS

From time to time benefactors wish to make gifts to parish churches such as furniture, ornaments, fittings or other objects of use or embellishment. Sometimes incumbents and PCCs are placed in a difficult and embarrassing position when a donor offers a gift, already purchased (perhaps at considerable cost), or object which is itself of value and may possess artistic merit, but is entirely unsuitable for that particular church building or where there may be no appropriate place in which to put it.

To save incumbents and PCCs from appearing discourteous or insensitive in refusing such gifts, it should be clearly understood by all, and explained to intending donors at the outset, that nothing may be introduced into a church without proper authority. This means a faculty must be obtained before the introduction of any gift, except where the item is covered by the de minimis rules (Handbook Section C4a and C4b). Not only should a donor consult with the incumbent, therefore, but also approach the Secretary of the DAC to ascertain whether the proposal is likely to receive the committee's recommendation for approval to the Chancellor. If, of course, the proposed gift is already one which is acceptable and would be welcomed by the PCC, the Faculty Petition may be sought by the incumbent and churchwardens in the usual way; in which case no fee would be payable.

(ii) RECORDING GIFTS TO CHURCHES

1. Any gift to the church received in accordance with the laid down procedure should be entered in the Log Book and the Inventory of the church.
2. It has long been the practice of the DAC to discourage the proliferation in churches of small plaques commemorating gifts given in memory of a deceased loved one or past member of the church. A satisfactory alternative may often be a well presented Book of Gifts in which these are recorded in much the same way as in a Book of Remembrance. If such a book were to be displayed in a specially designed case, a faculty would be required.
3. In some instances it is possible for the commemoration to be incorporated into the object given, either by carving or by a tasteful and worthy plaque.
4. We draw your attention to the Earham Judgement in the Court of Arches in 1981, which states that a faculty for a wall plaque can be granted only in very exceptional cases such as outstanding service to church, country or mankind, or a desire to record some important aspect of local or national history. The burden of showing that the case is exceptional rests on the Petitioners, and even where such exceptional circumstances exist, incumbents and registrars have the duty of warning the Petitioners that a faculty will not be granted as a matter of course.

Any question concerning these matters should be discussed with the archdeacon as soon as it arises.

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