

FAQ about church dues

1. What are Church dues?

In accordance with Canon Law, all Catholics over the age of 18 are required to support the church financially. The Nordic Conference of Bishops has decided that the local bishops in each Nordic country are allowed to determine how this should be done. In Sweden, bishop Anders Arborelius has decided that we should use the tax collection assistance offered by the Swedish state to Registered Religious Communities. This has been approved by the Vatican.

2. How is the income from Church dues used?

Church dues enable us to get financial stability and the vast majority goes to parishes and national missions. There are many duties for which we have a common responsibility and many duties that a parish can't handle on its own. These duties – such as salaries to priests, maintenance of buildings and the work of the diocese – we share together.

Church dues are also used for building churches and parish centres as well as payments of salaries to priests and laity. In addition, grants are given to the Church's aid organization Caritas Sweden, to the diocese conference centre in Stockholm, to Veritas Publishing company, to the Catechetical Centre (KPN), to the Catholic News Magazine and to SUK (society for young Catholics) for its work with young people.

3. Who is required to pay Church dues to the Catholic Church?

All Catholics should support their Church in accordance with Canon Law. In Sweden we do this by paying Church dues.

Church dues are paid by members of the Catholic Church that live in Sweden, are over the age of 18 and have taxable income.

4. Who are considered members of the Catholic Church in Sweden?

All those who have been baptized in the Roman-Catholic Church or have converted to the Roman-Catholic Church are considered members. You are a member of the local parish where you reside. If you have been baptized or have converted you are a member of the Catholic Church until you choose to leave the church and inform your parish about this.

You can't defect from the Catholic Church in Sweden and still be a member of the Catholic Church in another country. The Catholic Church is a universal community not connected to national borders.

5. How many registered members does the Catholic Church in Sweden have?

The Catholic Church in Sweden has approximately 120 000 members.

6. Isn't it enough to give in the collection at Sunday mass?

Unfortunately church-goers don't donate so much that it's sufficient for all the work that is done in all the parishes, missions and organizations of the diocese. Also, the money from the collection often goes to the local parish and not to the whole diocese. Contributions from other countries don't cover all our costs.

7. Have all Catholics in Sweden been asked to approve the Swedish system Church dues system?

No, the leadership of the Church chose to assume that if you are a member, you also want to severally contribute financially to all the activities of the Church.

8. How much are we to pay?

We pay 1 % of our taxable income from employment, which is the same level as members from most other religious communities in Sweden pay. Every person who is registered in Sweden also pays a funeral fee to the Swedish church that is responsible for the funeral administration in Sweden.

9. What do you do if you can't afford to pay 1 % of your taxable income?

The Catholic Church offers a unique possibility to apply for a dispensation from paying church dues via the taxation system. You apply by completing and submitting a special form that you send directly to the Diocesan Chancery in Stockholm. People who apply are often persons with low income; retired people, students, people that are ill or unemployed.

When you have been granted a dispensation you are removed from the file with personal data that is sent to the Swedish Tax Agency each year and includes those that are supposed to pay via the taxation system. If you are granted a dispensation you choose by yourself how and how much you want to pay to the church. One option is to give a donation to the diocesan account for solidarity Ansgarsgåvan (pg 70 13 40-2) or to some other project within the church.

10. How do you apply for dispensation?

You apply by contacting your local parish and asking them to send you form that is called "Application for dispensation". Complete the form and send it to the Diocesan Chancery, Box 4114, 102 62 Stockholm. The form must be correctly completed and submitted by mail no later than October 31.

When the Chancery has assessed the application you get the decision about dispensation.

11. What does it mean that the Catholic Church gets tax collection assistance from the state?

Everybody that is in our directory, is over the age of 18, has taxable income from employment or pensions and is resident in Sweden pays Church dues through a monthly deduction from the income, just like ordinary taxes. The amount deducted is shown on the income tax return that all citizens that are liable for tax get from the Swedish Tax Agency in March or April each year.

12. Is the tax collection assistance free of charge?

No. The Catholic Church in Sweden pays 21 SEK in administration fee for each church fee paid to the Swedish Tax Agency.

13. How much money does the Church get from Church dues each year?

In 2017 the amount was 204 MSEK. The church dues are paid out to us by the Tax Agency on a monthly basis.

14. When did the Catholic Church start to collect Church dues through the tax certificate?

From the income year 2001.

15. What happens if you have wrongly been registered in the Catholic Church?

If persons have been wrongly registered as Catholics and therefore incorrectly have paid money to us, they will be removed from our directory and get their money back. Information about wrongly charged church dues are sent to the Tax Agency for recount of the tax return and removal of church dues.