

STATEMENT from Most Rev. Peter M. Muhich, Bishop of the Diocese of Rapid City.

The Diocese of Rapid City is a mission diocese that serves Catholics of Western South Dakota. It includes five reservations and some of the poorest counties in the United States. A mission diocese is a diocese that encompasses a large area of territory with relatively small communities and relies heavily on grants from Church entities in more prosperous regions for its basic operations. Most of the assets of the Diocese of Rapid City are tied up in buildings which serve the people of western South Dakota. About half of its operations are funded by annual donations by diocesan parishioners. These donations were down substantially during the pandemic.

The Diocese of Rapid City was treated as any other non-profit and applied for and received funds from the PPP. The PPP funds were used to keep full time and part time employees working during the shortfall in donations thus relieving the public burden of unemployment. The diocese was required to prove that it used these funds to keep its employees working during the pandemic or the PPP payment remained a loan and not a grant. One wonders why the Catholic Church which complied fully with the law is being singled out and targeted in the AP article.

The audited financial statements of the Diocese of Rapid City are available on its website at [Finance - Diocese of Rapid City \(rapidcitydiocese.org\)](https://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/finance) On page 26, note 13 addresses the PPP funds.