

Archdiocese of Dublin

OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Dear Father,

As you are aware, the current situation in regard to Church collections is particularly alarming. The Common Fund and Share collections during Mass have decreased dramatically with the Common Fund down 68% between March to September and the Share Collection down 75% for the same period. The current lockdown will exasperate matters further. Even after the reopening of Churches for public worship, numbers who will be able to attend Masses will remain well below normal levels.

As a Diocese we rely financially principally on the generosity of parishioners, especially Mass-going parishioners. That generosity has always been extraordinary. We know how, even in the current pandemic, many parishioners are willing to give - to support their priests and the charitable activities of the diocese. The generosity of parishioners is exemplary and heartening and deserves to be fostered and appreciated by enabling the processes of making offerings as straightforward as possible.

At the same time, we are all acutely aware that the reduction in parish income and in the remuneration of priests is taking place when families are undergoing similar, if not even more dramatic, reductions in income. In such a situation, priests are naturally reticent in talking about collections.

We have to take an innovative and urgent look, together, at shaping a new infrastructure for the diocese to generate sustainable income. The Diocesan Office for Financial Development would greatly welcome your comments and ideas on how to generate income to support the mission of the church in the immediate and long-term context. I am well aware that each parish is different and what works in one may not be as successful in another. Hopefully this office can establish a fruitful dialogue with you on a way forward. You can now contact us directly at financialdevelopment@dublindiocese.ie

In this letter I wish to address the question of **Standing Orders**. Our suggestion is that we offer a *Standing Order Form* to as many parishioners as possible, asking them to support the collections at Sunday Mass with a monthly amount.

What we are proposing means asking for a monthly Standing Order which would replace the cash gifts they would ordinarily make at Mass each Sunday. The Standing Order amount will be divided into 60% for the Common Fund and 40% for Share, which reflects the current provision.

I appreciate many parishioners may already have an existing Standing Order for the Family Offering for their parish.

Avoiding cash collections, already a fact of financial life, is now also a public health priority.

To help you in this process, in the next few days we will be sending you by post:

- **Standing Order forms for distribution to parishioners.**
- **A legacy gift brochure to encourage further support**

Over the coming months we will be providing suggestions regarding other fund raising possibilities, such as use of different types of envelopes, online donate buttons, tap & go machines, legacy gifts, tax back ability and donating via telephone are all practical and convenient ways of giving.

I would also like to bring to your attention that we hope to launch a pilot programme shortly of installing contactless donate machines in parishes which allows parishioners without cash in their pockets, or a recurring gift in place, to make an offering when in your Church for private prayer or at public Masses.

I look forward to continuous collaboration with you in 2021 looking at creating awareness of our current financial situation, enabling people to support us, building on existing income streams and planning more focussed fundraising campaigns to encourage broad support for the Church into the future.

Yours very sincerely,

Father Andrew O'Sullivan

Office for Financial Development.

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