

PARISH FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2017

DEAR PARISHIONER

I am very pleased once again to present to the parish a financial report for the year 2017. You will also see the figures for the previous three years which will enable you to make comparisons. This report has been prepared by the Parish Finance Committee whose names are included below. It is the function of the Committee to ensure that effective controls and procedures are in place in regard to all financial matters in the parish. The Finance Committee is responsible for authorizing all major expenses in the parish.

I wish again to thank all the members of the Committee for their generous service to the parish and to thank them for the time they have given to the work of the Committee over the last couple of years. Maintaining a high standard of financial administration is an obligation to you, the parishioners of St. Patrick's parish who continue to contribute generously in spite of the demands on your own family and personal purses. The Charity Act (2008) is the standard by which all financial matters relating to charities are governed.

ST. PATRICK'S PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE: Aidan Vance (Chair) Thomas Gibney, Fr. Maurice Henry, Michael McGrady, Cathy Murphy, & Fr. John Murray PP

DIOCESAN CONTRIBUTION: Every parish in the diocese (of which there are 88) has to make a contribution to the overall running of the diocese. Over the three years the figure has varied from £23,561 to £24,647. In the past year the figure went down to £21,938. This covers the cost of the running of the Diocesan office and the various diocesan ministries – university chaplains, vocations commission, Marriage tribunal, child Safeguarding office, ACCORD, youth Commission, Family Care Society. The employees of these various diocesan bodies rely on the diocese for payment and this comes from the parishes. The amount is usually given to the Diocese on three occasions during the year, working out at roughly £7500- £8000 debited from the parish account. The parish of course benefits from the ministry of all these diocesan bodies.

PARISH PROPERTIES AND PLANT: Currently the parish properties are in good shape. However this is an ongoing task. Maintenance - as people will know from their own homes - needs to be kept up to date - and is not cheap. Even the annual insurance bill for the parish runs to £21,000 – again paid in instalments. Parishioners will note that the bill for insurance and rates in the past year has actually gone down to £20,912.

Thanks to our two counting teams – we appreciate their hard work. They provide invaluable service each Monday in the weekly count. They are always looking for new members. If you are retired and have some time on your hands why not give a couple of hours every other Monday ? If you think you could help in this way just go to Patrick's Place (the church crypt) any Monday morning and offer your services.

While contributions are important it is equally important that you know that the parish is constantly trying to get the best value for your money. In the last year the parish has switched electrical supplier to ensure a better deal and it also shops around regularly in order to obtain the best deal for oil since all our parish properties are heated by oil. We purchase oil on a rota basis spreading the purchase over several local companies.

A year ago we changed our telephone network from Pace Telecom to Simplicity – a new digital operator in this field. There were a lot of technical issues at the beginning ! Apologies for any inconvenience parishioners may have suffered in getting through to us. However these have all been resolved. We also experienced some issues with their billing system but these too have been resolved. Despite the technical and other problems the staff of Simplicity were excellent and we always found them to be most personable and helpful. You will note from the figures for 2017 that our costs for telephone and postage have gone down substantially last year.

MERCY CONVENT SALE: Most parishioners will know that the Mercy convent (a listed building) was on the market for sale. A lot has been happening in the last year. Early on in the year Sr. Consilio of Cuan Mhuire fame in Newry arranged a lease with the Sisters of Mercy to allow her to take over the convent for a project involving rehabilitation of people recovering from addiction. The Sisters are happy with this arrangement in that Sr. Consilio is also a Mercy sister and that the convent building will be maintained and put to good use. The hope at this stage is that Sr. Consilio will take over our parish centre and that an exchange can be made between the parish and the sisters – we take over the older part of the convent and they take over the centre. Once this exchange is made the parish would hope to renovate the interior and make of it a more purpose built parish centre. So as you can see a lot is happening and 2018/19 will be a busy parish year in terms of negotiations and refurbishment.

BALLYKILBEG HOUSE AND LAND: The land at Ballykilbeg which for many years has been rented out to local farmers has now been sold. The sum realized came to £180,000 (before fees). The house in which the late Fr. Glavin lived has also been sold for the sum of £148,000 (before fees) These monies will go into the parish and will most certainly be needed when we come to renovate the old convent. These transactions have only been completed in the last ten days and so the figures will not be reflected in the accounts until next year.

OTHER EXPENSES: Many parishioners will have noticed – with awe – the scaffolders on the tower and spire of St. Patrick's in recent months. This was all necessary work. Birds fly, drop seeds into drains, seeds grow and gather dirt and silt and so drains are blocked and water gets into places it shouldn't - and so on. The work the steeplejacks were doing was to remove any vegetation from the spire and also to reconnect any drainpipes which had been damaged through storms and high winds. The total cost came to £4094.

Recently the fence at the Patrician Youth Club had to be repaired. It had been in place since the start of the PYC. This is now taking place at a total cost of £13,000.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT YOUTH WORKER: You will recall the wonderful Mission we had in September 2016 given by the Ceili Community. This was followed up in late January and early February by a visit from the NET people (National Evangelisation Teams). They visited all the secondary schools in our pastoral area including the three in the town and spent two weeks engaging the young people there. Both visits were well worth while. However we need ongoing youth faith development formation if we are to have a church in ten or twenty years time ! The Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Committee – in separate meetings – have agreed to finance two paid Youth Workers (one full time and the other part) starting in September 2018. They will work closely with the Parish Pastoral Council and with the priests of the parish. This venture which will be reviewed from year to year will cost roughly £25,000 per year. It is hoped that the PARISH DRAW can be specifically earmarked as a contribution to that particular enterprise in the future.

CONTRIBUTION PROFILE: Currently there are about 3500 households in the parish. About 786 of these households take the weekly envelope. However only 480-500 of these are returned regularly. The outlay on envelopes which are not used is £715 per year. Of these 319 have completed a Gift Aid declaration. I would seriously ask you to consider taking a set of envelopes next year – the envelope 'year' runs from April to April. YOU will notice from the figures that the weekly collection has gone down substantially in three years.

Putting money in the envelope before we leave for Mass (whether for the church needs or for the particular charity e.g. Trocaire) helps one to be more focused on one's giving rather than simply placing a coin from one's pocket onto the plate when it passes. When we give generously to God's church and the various charities, the Lord is not outdone in generosity.

I would especially ask the young wage-earning people in our congregations – sadly a disappearing phenomenon – to consider taking a set of envelopes. The act of giving in the church is not just for parents and grandparents. What if you were able to give the price of a pint or even a packet of crisps and a coke – about £1.50 to £2. Is that too much to ask ?

HOW CAN YOU HELP ? Gift Aid is one very simple and harmless way of helping the parish. By Gift Aiding your contribution the parish or charity can receive a further 20%. For instance if you give a £1 a week in the envelope this becomes £1.20 with a further 20 pence donated by the Inland Revenue. This Gift Aid covers also the extraordinary collections of the year such as the monthly contribution to the priests' salaries and our collection for Trocaire, the Diocesan care Homes etc. For instance in the financial year 2017 the parish received an extra £17242. To be eligible for Gift Aid all you need to do is to ensure that you pay basic tax equivalent to the value of the Inland Revenue refund to the parish. If you want to find out more just ring the parish office at 44612084. If anyone wishes to ask about a specific item on the report please feel free to contact me. Also if anyone wants a printed copy of the report you can also obtain this by asking at the parish office.

Once again THANK YOU to one and all for your generosity as we seek together to serve the Lord and His kingdom in this part of the world.

Fr. John Murray PP VF

July 22nd 2018