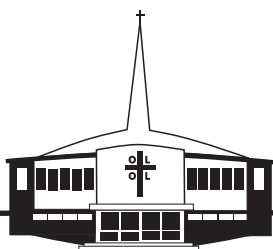


1 October 2017



OUR LADY OF LOURDES
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dear Parishioners

We've been back in our church for just over a year since its refurbishment. And, thank God, the works to renew our worship-space seem to have been a great success. Visitors often comment on how much nicer and brighter it is now. That transformation came about through the generosity and the hard work of very many parishioners. Our fund-raising efforts have raised over £324,000 in the last 3 years - a wonderful achievement. I thank everyone involved once again.

However, our Jubilee works emptied (and more than emptied!) our coffers. Moreover, the works were really more about 'recapitalising' our plant (playing catch-up on maintenance and replacing worn-out furnishings after half-a-century) than getting on with the real work of the parish - which is to share the Gospel. The pledges people made for the duration of our Jubilee Appeal are also coming to an end, so now seems the right time to ask you to reconsider your general level of financial support for our parish's ministry.

It's actually six years since we last asked you to reconsider your levels of planned giving (by standing order or envelope system) to our offertory. That's more than two governments ago, and how much has changed in that time! Now I want you

to look forward six years, because much is going to change in the years ahead, too. Bishop Richard is launching a new programme, 'The Word Who Is Life', in which he challenges us to be more missionary (more 'outgoing', if you prefer), both in our outlook and in our organisation. We've brought our building up to scratch. Now it's time to invest in our ministry.

There is so much scope for developing our work - deepening our own faith; creating space for those seeking faith; developing a more effective ministry to our young parishioners; reaching out to those in need around us; developing our prayer and worship - but with fewer clergy available this will increasingly depend on you - and probably mean us paying people to take on some roles we used to get for free, too. That is why I am unashamed to ask you to dig deep. We have Good News to share, a source of hope for our troubled world, a source of joy for those willing to commit to Jesus Christ. Please reflect and pray about how much you should give. This isn't about preserving our past. It's about creating our future together.

Wishing you every blessing

Fr. Rob, Parish Priest

PLANNED GIVING CAMPAIGN

What does Our Lady of Lourdes mean to you?

During the coming week, we ask that you think hard about what Our Lady of Lourdes means to you. Is it:

- A spiritual home for you?
- The place where you join in the mass and receive the sacraments?
- A meeting place for you with the parish family?
- A vital source of help and support in times of trouble or distress?

If Our Lady of Lourdes ranks among the important things in your life, please consider whether your contributions to its upkeep and continued existence also rate as a priority among your outgoings.

If that is the case, then decide, after prayer and reflection, what is a fair amount for you to contribute each week or month. Remember this is not written in stone - the amount can be adjusted or cancelled at any time.

What return shall I make to the Lord for all He has given to me?

(Ps.116:12)

How much should I contribute?

Each of us has to consider our personal circumstances in making this decision. Conscience and common sense should determine what you can afford to contribute regularly to the parish. Only you can decide this.

How should I contribute?

Ideally we would like families to contribute regularly via standing order though numbered envelopes are still available. In both cases, donations should be Gift Aided where possible, so the Parish can recover a further 25% of the donation from the Government.

But I am already in the Planned Giving scheme and / or donate to the Golden Jubilee Fund

The last Planned Giving Campaign in this parish was in 2011. Since then, the annual Offertory has decreased by almost 13% while costs have risen significantly. If you are one of the 71 families donating via Standing Order to the Golden Jubilee Fund, please remember that the fundraising campaign ends of 31st December 2017.

So we are asking everyone to think (again) about what they contribute and to fill in a new promise card. Please give it serious thought.