



# BEAUMONT PARISH

Church of the Nativity of Our Lord

## Financial Update – October 2022

Dear Parishioners,

Having managed our way so far through the Pandemic, a new crisis has arrived on our shores in the form of inflation. I write to give an update on the Parish's position and to share some thoughts on how we will try to weather this new storm together. On the pages that follow, I include information on the rising costs and on some steps that we are taking to maintain our financial viability.

As I write, I am acutely conscious that every parishioner, your priests included, is struggling with rising bills. I am therefore all the more grateful for our local Conference of St Vincent de Paul who continue their discreet and supportive work for those who are suffering the most. Thank you to those who give to the monthly collection. For those who may need assistance, the contact details are in the church porch and on the weekly bulletin.

### **Appeal to all parishioners to consider the Family Offering**

This week, letters of thanks were prepared for the households who support the Family Offering either by weekly envelope or monthly standing order. This is the main source of income for the Parish. 419 out of the over 2,100 Catholic households support this collection and without them, we couldn't open our doors. Sincere thanks to you all.

If you don't currently support the Family Offering (planned giving) and you are in a position to do so, please consider signing up for a standing order contribution. More information is available at the back of the church.

### **Other ideas?**

I'm told that in the past, there were fairs, raffles and other community activities which were fun and memorable for the participants and which helped to raise funds for the Parish. If you could help to organise something, please contact me or any member of the Finance Committee.

Sincerely,

Fr Robert Smyth.

## **Rising Costs in the Parish**

### **Energy Costs 428% Increase**

The Parish is classified as a “small business” by energy suppliers which limits the discounts available to us more than it does to households generally. As things stand, parishes don't qualify for the Government assistance announced for employers in the budget. Even with VAT and PSO reductions, if we were to keep using gas and electricity as before, our bill would increase from €8,900 in 2019 (the last full year before the Covid restrictions) to €38,100 in 2022.

### **Insurance 48% Increase**

Our insurance premium has increased significantly this year principally because the estimated cost of rebuilding or repair (the insured risk) has risen so dramatically.

### **Altar Breads up to 40% Increase**

We were notified in July that the cost of breads has increased by up to 40%.

### **Candles 30% Increase**

The Government introduced a new 23% tax on white candles in January. Combined with an increase in the cost of wax, candles are up 30%.

### **New Costs**

Since the pandemic, new costs are appearing on our budget that the Parish didn't face before - the webcam broadcast (approximately €1,500 / year), telephone broadcast (€230 / year), alcohol hand sanitiser, masks, signage and more. Regulatory compliance costs now amount to €3,900 per year.

### **Pending Repairs**

The church roof still needs major attention (as do the church windows, parish centre doors, sacristy, church heating, car park and more). If you look up, you can see that the beams are getting blacker with mould and there is now a water streak down the right-hand wall. We have saved about €100,000 towards our goal of €200,000 for the roof repairs thanks to the generous contributions to the Parish Upkeep Fund. Ideally, we would not “throw good money after bad” by making more temporary repairs to the roof and so we keep trying to raise the funds to do the job properly.

## **Our Initial Response to the Crisis**

### **Tax Back on Collections**

The Parish can receive up to 31% back on the money donated by parishioners at no cost to the donor. We already apply for this for those who give to the family offering. We will introduce the option for parishioners to give to the First and Second Collections at Mass with an envelope – generating income for the parish at no cost to the donor.

### **Heat and Light**

We are using fewer lights in the church and greatly restricting the use of heating. We simply couldn't afford the estimated bill so will have to wear extra layers this winter in the church. The unit price of gas offered to the Parish is now more than six times higher than it was just over a year ago.

If the gates to the Parish Campus are open, we are implicitly inviting the public to enter and have an obligation to offer a safe environment which includes outdoor lighting after dark. With great regret, we will start to close the church at **4pm each afternoon** and will seek to be prudent about evening activities to reduce the cost of car-park lighting.

### **Candles**

We pre-purchased candles for the year in December 2021 before the VAT increase was applied. This helped us keep costs at the same level as last year. As that stock is now coming to its end, we will have to increase the suggested offering for a candle to 60 cent.

### **Mass Cards**

Requests for Masses at the Parish Office are typically made with a €10 offering. Each request is for an individual Mass celebrated by a priest for the specific intention requested. As we receive more requests for Masses than Fr Dominic and I could celebrate in a year, we send most of the Mass requests to priests overseas. In each case, the full €10 is sent. Until now, the Parish has absorbed the cost of the cards themselves – unfortunately we can no longer afford to do so and the cards will be sold for €2.

### **Parish History Book – *The Beaumont Butterfly***

We have reduced the price of the remaining copies of our parish history book, the *Beaumont Butterfly*. It is now available at the back of the church for €10.

## Where do the Collections go?

### PARISH COLLECTIONS

**The Family Offering** (weekly envelope or monthly standing order) is the principal source of income for the Parish. It is from this that we pay for insurance, energy, Parish Office wages, maintenance and related costs.

**The Parish Upkeep Fund** was introduced to invite parishioners to contribute to capital projects in the Parish – a list of the repairs associated with this fund is posted at the back of the church.

### MASS COLLECTIONS

*You may have noticed that we switched from using baskets to new closed bags for the collections at Mass. This was a regulatory requirement and is matched in the sacristy by the use of sealed bags for the collections so that we can demonstrate that every cent received in collections is used for the purpose for which it was collected.*

**The First Collection** at Mass, **Dues Envelopes**, and a portion of the “stole fees” (offerings at Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals) are sent to the “Common Fund” in the Archdiocese. It is from this fund that the priests – active, sick and retired – are paid. Until recently, the amount given to priests was reduced by 25% because of the fall in income over the pandemic.

**The Second Collection** at Mass is sent to the Archdiocese, usually for Share which funds the central services in the Archdiocese and supports poorer parishes. Occasionally and as announced, this collection is substituted by special collections for St Vincent de Paul, Crosscare, Accord and other purposes.

We will shortly introduce the option to place the offerings for the First and Second Collections into an envelope. This simple step will enable us to demonstrate to the Revenue Commissioners the person from whom the donation was received and to claim back tax of up to 31% for the Parish at no cost to the donor. Parishioners must be registered and complete a “CHY” form every four years.