



Rt Rev. Joseph Toal STB KC*HS Bishop of Motherwell

22nd August 2017

Letter from Bishop Toal to be read and distributed in all parishes on 27th/28th August

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Proposals on Financial Support for your Parish and Diocese.

Since the Finance and General Purposes Meeting in June I have been wondering how to approach the subject of the on-going financial support necessary for the work of the Diocese of Motherwell. I have concluded that the most appropriate way is to encourage you, the faithful of the Diocese, to support your own parishes as best you can, recognising that the Diocese will also benefit from these contributions through the levy collected.

The most important contribution you make to your parish is the weekly offertory collection and it is essential that you assess from time to time what your contribution is and whether it can increase in order to help meet the rising cost of running a parish today. One proposal is that people be encouraged to give the equivalent of what they are paid for one hour's work per week as their basic offering. I would ask that you consider this or determine your way of measuring what is a just contribution for you to give to the Church's mission locally – for your parish and your diocese. This has to be your most significant contribution before the other good causes which we are asked to contribute towards.

It is a great help also to your parish and Diocese if as a tax-payer you can Gift-Aid these weekly collections, so that the parish can receive the additional benefit of reclaiming the tax paid on your contributions. If you don't already gift-aid your contributions could you please consider doing so and. If necessary, ask how to go about it.

We live in a world now in which some people no longer carry much cash and make payments electronically or by standing order. People move around a lot as well and may not attend Sunday Mass each week in their own parish. Alternative means can be arranged for you to make your regular contributions to your parish other than putting cash or an envelope in the basket. If you wish to make your basic contributions to the parish through means other than cash please speak with your parish priest or a member of the parish finance team.

This year the Diocese is levying between 22 and 26% from the offertory and offertory equivalent income of parishes. It is a significant amount but is necessary in order to meet the

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diocesan expenses (which include staff wages, caring for retired priests and seminarians, and the diocesan contribution to the Bishops' Conference). We have managed to reduce the diocesan expenditure in recent times but it is difficult to see where further cuts can be made, and impossible to see parish expenditure falling as most costs rise year on year. We need your support more than ever and I hope you will consider a generous response to what I am asking. I thank you for your loyal support for the local church in Motherwell, in the parishes and as a Diocese, and hope you understand the priority this must have in the sometimes multiple demands made upon our charity within the Church and beyond.

With my prayers and very best wishes,

+ Joseph Toal