

Income for Skibbereen and Rath and the Islands parishes - 16th October 2020

Many of you have been asking about 1. Parish Finances and 2. Income for Clergy so it seems an obvious day to address these questions. (Today's Gospel Matthew 22: 15-21)

Parish Income: A word first about Rath parish. Since May 2019 we have been working with people about contributing through a direct debit system. Of something around 300 households, 35 of you have signed up to a monthly contribution to the parish and a quarterly contribution to the priests of the parish.

In Skibbereen parish we have not started this yet but Cork and Ross Diocese is going in the same direction now under Bishop Fintan. You will be hearing more about this in the next six months.

To give you the cold figures:

Skibbereen parish income from collections and shrine candles at the end of September 2019 was €68,400.00. This year, September 2020, this is down to €36,500.00.

In Rath parish income to the end of September 2020 is down from just under €33,300.00 to €15,500.00.

Because of the direct debit system in Rath, and because Skibbereen parish have some monies in hand, there is no immediate crisis in the day to day work of either parish. However, we are keeping a close eye on what is a deteriorating situation.

Clergy Income: Priests, as you know, don't get a cheque from Rome or from the Bishop. We are given an appointment to one or two parishes and are totally dependent on you, the people of the parishes, giving us an income each year.

- Monies given at weddings, funerals, baptisms and Mass stipends contribute about 20% of the priest's income.
- The other 80% comes through the traditional system of Christmas Day and Easter Sunday collections, the Spring and Autumn 'Dues' Envelopes and the November Novena Offerings.

This system has worked well up to this year. The Covid restrictions have changed everything.

Our thanks to the people who contribute to the clergy through - the direct debit system in Rath and - the 70 households in Skibbereen and Rath parishes who chose to put their contribution in an envelope and put it through our letterbox. Up to September 2019 you had contributed €42,200 towards the income of the two priests of the parishes ie €21,100.00 each. For 2020 this is down to €17,800 for the two priests ie. €8,900.00 each.

We need your help. Would you, or someone in your locality, be willing to distribute envelopes to each Catholic household in your townland or area? This will include a letter from us and two envelopes, one for the Autumn Dues and one for the November Novena. You will not be asked to collect the envelopes. In the letter we will ask people to return them to the Presbytery letterboxes in North Street or the Sacristy letterbox in the Cathedral. If you are willing to help please leave your name, contact number and the area/townland you can distribute to on the Parish Office number - 028-22828.

Fr. Evin and Fr. Michael will continue to do as much of the normal work of the parish as can be done. We continue to say Mass each day including the intentions you have asked for. We will continue to keep in touch with you through the Facebook pages and parish website. The Masses of the November Novena will be said as usual. The Blessing of the Cemeteries will be done as usual. However, it now seems unlikely that we are able to gather as a community for these.

We are aware that so many are struggling with income pressures at this time but you have said to us that we need to provide a method so that you can make your contribution.