

St Gerard's Parish
Finance Report
Year Ended 31st December 2009

Dear Parishioner

As many of you will be aware, the administration of our parish, including responsibility for all assets of the parish, lies with the parish priest. However, Church Law requires that each parish has a Parish Finance Committee, which acts as an advisory body to the parish priest in the sound administration of the assets of the parish. The Parish Finance Committee is a separate body to the Parish Pastoral Council and assists the parish priest in his task of administrating the parish finances, maintaining the parish properties, planning for future capital works and formulating strategies for raising funds. The Parish Finance Committee is not directly involved in the day to day management of the parish finances and the parish bank accounts and parish funds continue to be under the control solely of the parish priest. However, the Finance Committee members are now co-signatories of the bank account as required by the Diocese of Down & Connor.

The Terms of Reference of the Parish Finance Committee are to assist the parish priest with the following matters:

1. To ensure that all parish income and expenditure is properly recorded in line with the Diocesan accounting system.
2. To maintain appropriate safeguards and controls with regard to handling, recording and lodging cash.
3. To prepare and present an annual financial statement to the parish.
4. To prepare an annual budget.
5. Sundry other financial matters.

Recently, the Diocese of Down & Connor has had to revise its rules and regulations in order to be fully compliant with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. To this end, a new set of Diocesan Financials Regulations were introduced and have been implemented throughout all parishes in Down & Connor – including St Gerard's. These regulations are designed to bring about important improvements in the overall governance of the parishes. The regulations should help endorse the integrity and trust of clergy and those involved in supporting parish activities through the identification of responsibilities. They will strengthen accountability and also provide adequate protection against potential fraud and negligence.

The revised regulations have been introduced into St Gerard's parish and now dictate how parish finances are to be administrated by the parish priest and overseen by the Parish Finance Committee.

In our report for the year ended 31st December 2009, we will highlight some of the significant features of the St Gerard's parish finances as summarised in the attached financial statement.

Significant Features

1. Parish Collections.

The total raised from the weekly collections amounted to circa £100,000 for each of the years ended 31st December 2008 and 2009. This represents approximately £2,000 per week. At present, the parish has 990 families on its register. In effect, it would appear that each family is only contributing £2.00 per week. However, this is not the case. At present, only 409 families receive the weekly envelope box. Of that, only 140 envelopes are regularly returned each week. In effect only 14% of families are regularly contributing to the parish in the weekly envelope. They contribute on average over £10 per week each. The rest of the 850 families contribute about £500 per week in loose change – the equivalent of about 60p per family.

2. Gift Aid

Gift Aid is a very simple concept. By signing one sheet of paper, a parishioner who pays tax can increase his or her contribution by approximately 25% via a tax refund paid to the parish. Unfortunately, only those parishioners who contribute to the parish via the weekly envelope scheme can be recorded as making Gift Aid payments as there is no means of recording amounts of cash which are put directly into the collection bag. The parish finance committee would appeal to families who are not signed up to the Gift Aid scheme to consider doing so and to sign up to the weekly envelope programme. Gift Aid forms will be made available at the end of Mass today, or can be obtained at any time from Kathleen at the parochial house. In order to help those who may forget their weekly envelopes, blank envelopes will be left at the entrance to the Church and parishioners can pick one up, put their envelope number on the envelope and submit this in the collection bag.

3. Priests Income

The priests of the parish are supported by the special monthly "stipend" collection (the green envelope). This money effectively pays the priests' salary. However, for a number of years, the monies collected in these monthly collections (and the collections in the Autumn, at Christmas and at Easter) are insufficient to cover the monthly salary of our priests. You will see that in the accounts summary a Priest' Welfare Grant has to be obtained from the Diocese to top up our contributions. Given the size of our parish, the number of families we have, we only effectively need £60 per family each year to pay for our priests. At the minute we are getting less than £30 per family.

4. Expenditure

As you will appreciate, the cost of heating, lighting and administrating our parish is something that we, the parishioners, have to pay for. The costs of running the parish are paid out of the weekly collections. Whilst the Income of the parish exceeded the Expenditure in 2009, the surplus was used to pay off the parish debt (see note below).

However, as the expenditure is calculated on a cash basis, any capital expenditure is accounted for as it is paid. So future capital expenditure (such as the cost of the new toilets) will be shown as a one off cost in the year it is paid. Thus a deficit can be expected whenever capital expenditure is incurred or major repairs are carried out to the Church.

5. Parish Bank Balance

The parish funds are held in four bank accounts being the general Parish account, the Community Centre account, a Park Lodge School account and a "Solidarity" account with the Diocese. At 31st December the total funds in the Parish Bank Accounts amounted to a credit of approximately £44,000.00. However, as noted in Section 4 above, these funds will be required to cover future capital expenditure on the Church and to pay for ongoing maintenance costs as they arise.

6. Conclusion

We as parishioners need to understand that it is our responsibility to ensure that our parish is properly financed and we all have a responsibility to make a contribution towards our parish finances.

Thankfully, we have no significant debts and our finances are in a reasonable state of health. Having said that, our Church requires capital expenditure (such as the new toilets) and ongoing maintenance, as a result the current cash surplus will quickly be used up to pay for this.

Our weekly Income could be significantly improved if many more of those who attend Mass were to make regular contributions via the weekly envelope and sign up to our Gift Aid programme. Any surpluses that our generated could then be used to facilitate the work of the parish and assist both our clergy and our parish committees to carry out the work of the parish.

The Parish Finance Committee would like to request that parishioners remember that the monthly stipend is a very tangible means of us appreciating the hard work our clergy do for our parish. It is unfair that our parish should rely on other parishes in the Diocese to supplement the income of our priests!

Finally, we thank all who contribute with generosity and also all those people who work hard behind the scenes to collect, count and administer the finances of the parish.

Yours sincerely

The Finance Committee.

St Gerard's Financial Statements for Year Ended 31 December 2008/2009

	2009	2008
Income	£	£
Collections	99,568	99,019
Monthly Stipend Collections	28,308	28,369
Gift Aid	24,680	25,746
Shrines, Candles & Missalettes	18,590	9,277
Fundraising/Parish Centre	15,045	20,017
Legacies & Donations	2,179	4,653
Planning for Future Distributions	5,858	7,312
Sundry Income	101	853
Priests Welfare Grant	<u>27,925</u>	<u>29,801</u>
Total Income	<u>222,254</u>	<u>225,047</u>
Expenditure		
Priests Stipend	52,600	55,704
Parish Wages & Honoraria	51,338	48,431
Church Supplies	13,941	11,635
Heat, Light, Telephone & Printing	32,789	44,419
Repairs & Maintenance	32,417	15,752
Diocesan Payments	12,655	11,979
Parish Centre	3,352	3,445
Sundry	<u>3,807</u>	<u>9,360</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>202,899</u>	<u>200,725</u>
Nett Total Income	<u>19,355</u>	<u>24,322</u>
Bank Balance 1 January	(3,027)	(25,505)
Nett Income	19,355	24,322
School Funds in Parish Account	<u>28,304</u>	<u>(1,844)</u>
Bank Balance 31 December	44,632	(3,207)