

# ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE DUBLIN 9

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3 June 2021

Dear Parishioner,

In the last fifteen months, we have been unable to do the things we normally do to express our faith and our solidarity with each other. Life's usual patterns have been disrupted, along with the countries of the developed world, our country has been fortunate that people have been supported during the significant economic upheaval and hardship of the pandemic. We have much to be thankful for.

Communities and parishes have shown resilience and imagination in their responses to the challenges of the pandemic. For many this has revealed new ways of working together. We acknowledge that certain aspects of Church life have been severely affected. One of these is parish finances, and while we long for a return to the life that we knew, we also have to ensure that our parishes have the financial support they need to survive.

The restrictions have profoundly affected the two Sunday Mass collections on which parish funds depend. The first collection supports priests ministering throughout the diocese as well as sick and retired priests.

The second collection—the 'Share' collection—supports diocesan services to disadvantaged parishes. In the last financial year, the priests' collection decreased by 54% and the 'Share' collection decreased by 65%. This year the situation is even more serious—with a decrease of 80% and 86% respectively for the first quarter of the year. That this would have happened is not surprising. I am especially grateful to all who have continued to give so generously in the past 15 months.

This initiative will follow the pattern of the Christmas and Easter dues collections giving parishioners an opportunity to contribute to the income that supports priests.

The Summer Offering collection will begin on the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> June. I ask you to remember that the greatest resource of the Church is its people—both laity and clergy—working hand-in-hand. The age profile of the priest is increasing, and there are few vocations to priesthood and religious life. Yet the priests we have in the diocese continue to serve quietly week-in-week-out while more is being asked of fewer and fewer. The ministry and mission of our Church continues with this humble, generous service.

I thank you for continuing to support our parishes and the priests who work among you. This new initiative will provide much needed practical and moral support for priests working at the heart of every local community of faith.

We are into the summer, with its bright mornings and long evenings. May the change of pace that summer brings provide a break from the darkness of the difficult winter we have endured. May the Holy Spirit lift our hearts, and renew our hope so that in 'our common home' we may share the life for which God created us (see Gen 1:3 1, 2:18, and John 10:10).

Yours sincerely,



+Dermot Farrell  
Archbishop of Dublin