



St Joseph's Catholic Church Bilton, Harrogate

St Joseph's Presbytery, 281 Skipton Road, Harrogate HG1 3HD

From the Parish Finance Team

March 2021.

As we reach the first anniversary of lockdown, your Parish Finance Team want to thank all those parishioners who have so generously supported St Joseph's over the past year. Your offertories, donations and giving freely of your time in so many roles has helped keep our Church open for public worship, private prayer and provide live streaming of our services in and out of lockdown. Your support has enabled our parish ministry to continue, and for Fr Stephen to carry on his important work within our local community and beyond, as well as meet our responsibilities to the wider Catholic community and the Diocese.

Like most charities we too have had a challenging year. This has required careful financial management to balance spending within our much-reduced income, and so sincere thanks to those who have moved to standing orders and bank transfers. This regular income has helped greatly our financial planning, as we have lost most of the loose plate, occasional offerings and hall rentals over the past 12 months. In total we estimate that our Parish income has been reduced by almost £30,000, so we have had to cut costs and defer important maintenance.

Live streaming of our Masses was considered a priority to serve the spiritual needs of those who due to the pandemic had to shield or otherwise were unable to attend Church. A special thank you to those individuals who made gifts in kind and special donations to meet in full the costs of the equipment and installation. Please remember them and those who steward our Masses in your prayers as you watch online.

It was also essential to do some planned and budgeted works on the Presbytery, the first for over 15 years! These included external repairs and decoration, internal rewiring, removal of lead piping and the provision of a safe working kitchen.

Much of our spending goes on items unseen, which keep the building safe for public use. Ongoing maintenance of flat roofs, guttering and downpipes as well as the statutory testing of electrical installations, fire protection and gas boilers and annual insurance premiums. This year we have had the added costs of PPE, an industrial fogging machine and the associated cleansing products needed to keep our Church Covid-Secure. All these are all conditions of insurance and needed to meet our statutory obligations.

As our Church building approaches its Centenary and despite good upkeep over the years it is clear things are beginning to age. Our heating system is neither effective nor efficient and needs replacing. The stained-glass windows, such a beautiful feature of our Church, need restoration - window frames are deteriorating and following survey over 5 years ago repair and restoration work was recommended. These works cannot be put off much longer. We need your continued help!

If you are not already doing so, please consider moving to a Standing Order with your bank and if you are a UK taxpayer and haven't already gift aided please consider it. This could increase the value of your donations by 25% at no cost to yourself – great when you can get something back from the taxman!

Once again, on behalf of Father Stephen and the Parish Finance Team, thank you for all your support: prayerful, practical, and financial – without it, we would not be able to manage.

Diocese of Leeds Registered Charity 249404