



Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Renewing Our Parish Commitment
St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth



OUR PARISH VISION

As the Mother Church of the diocese, the Catholic Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Portsmouth, has served town and country in Hampshire, Berkshire, the Isle of Wight, the Channel Islands, southern Oxfordshire and east Dorset for nearly 150 years.

As a registered charity, the diocese and its parishes receive no income from the Vatican or the government: we are heavily reliant on charitable giving as a source of recurrent income to support our objectives, parishes, and activities, in addition to some income from investments, rent and grants.

In our parish, we depend on you, our parishioners, to provide our income for the day to day running of our cathedral and parish through your offertory and regular donations, and on income from hall rental and small investments. In 2024-25, this 'ordinary' income totalled just over £268,000. Our 'ordinary' payments, which include the altar and choir, general repairs and maintenance, insurance, salaries and even postage and printing, cost us around £263,500. This left us with a surplus of £4,745 – an improvement on last year's ordinary deficit of £61,694 but still presenting a challenge in meeting the demands of the year ahead.

Our vision for our parish is that it continues to provide a safe and welcoming place for everyone and anyone, supported by sufficient funds to ensure a vibrant legacy of faith for our future generations.

We will use this campaign to consider: what does my parish mean to me? What is my responsibility to it? What is my commitment to it? What more can I give?

Renewing our commitment to this vision will help us to build a vibrant, Christ-centred community for now and the future.



THANK YOU SO MUCH



Thank you to...

- All our parishioners and families, for faithfully attending Mass and participating in the spiritual life of our parish.
- Our volunteers, who use their energy, time, skills and talents to complete all the important jobs that are integral to the life of our parish.
- Our regular givers, for ensuring we maintain and grow our parish mission.

*Your gifts
make our
parish work
possible*

Your faithful support will:

- Sustain our mission to be a Christ-centred Church, putting Him at the centre of our hearts and our lives; to be missionary communities, going out on Christ's service and mission; and to be prudent stewards of Christ's Church, making wise choices to leave a sustainable legacy for future generations.
- Ensure this parish is at the heart of the community and continues to be a place of prayer and worship.

Together, we are a parish family.
Together, we'll see God at work in our community and in our lives.

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH PRIEST

This month we are renewing our commitment to our Mission Plan, *You Will Be My Witnesses*, which sets out Bishop Philip's vision for our diocese and our parishes:

- To be a Christ-centred Church, placing Him at the centre of our lives
- To be missionary communities, going out in Christ's name
- And to be prudent stewards of Christ's Church, making wise choices to leave a sustainable legacy for future generations.

This new Parish Stewardship Initiative will help us do this more effectively by:

- Helping parishioners understand the financial needs and pastoral vision of our parish
- Encouraging planned giving through sustainable, cashless methods
- Promoting Gift Aid to make every contribution go further
- Emphasising equal sacrifice rather than equal giving, strengthening parishioners' sense of responsibility and belonging
- Encouraging service as people are able.

Our parish would not function without the generosity of our parishioners giving their time and talents and sharing their financial blessings.

Throughout this period, I will be asking all parishioners to reflect prayerfully on their commitment to our parish, why it is important and how each of us can support that commitment to ensure we leave a sustainable legacy for those who follow us.



Thank you.

Canon James McAuley
Dean and Parish Priest

RENEWING OUR PARISH COMMITMENT

Our parish renewal will take place over **three weekends** in October and November, beginning on the 19th of October. We will use this time to consider: What does my parish mean to me? What is my responsibility to it? What is my commitment to it?

1 At Mass during the first weekend, we will explore what our parish means to us, reflecting prayerfully on our commitment to it.

As Stewards of this parish, we are each responsible for its upkeep, with a duty to pass it on to future generations in even better condition than when we received it.



2 At Mass during the second weekend, we will learn more about the status of our parish and what that means for our future.

What must we do to make sure that the parish we pass on to future generations is a wonderful, living church and spiritual centre?

Alongside volunteering, our parish relies on offertory collections and on donations through our digital collection plates and our website to maintain and grow our mission. We do not receive funding from the government, the Vatican or the diocese.

I know that many of you already give generously of your time, talents and treasure and this is received and acknowledged with gratitude. Over this weekend, we will hear more about why our parish needs financial support to cover our costs and secure our future. This will enable our parish to plan for the future with confidence.

3 At Mass during the third weekend, our priests will ask everyone to renew their commitment to our parish.

Many of us already give generously of our time, talents and treasure and this is received and acknowledged with gratitude. This weekend, our priests will ask everyone to renew their commitment to our parish. What will this commitment look like? What are we being asked to do?

We will have heard about the current state of our parish and why it needs financial support to cover our costs and secure our future. What you decide to give is personal to you. The late Cardinal Hume suggested we consider offering our first hour's pay to God each week. Whatever you decide, the amount should suit your circumstances and be meaningful to you.

WHY MAINTAINING OUR CATHEDRAL BUILDING MATTERS

'Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.'
Acts 20:28

As the Mother Church of the diocese, the Catholic Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Portsmouth, has served town and country in Hampshire, Berkshire, the Isle of Wight, the Channel Islands, southern Oxfordshire and east Dorset for nearly 150 years.

But, like any old building, it's showing its age. Just in the short term, over £2.5 million will be needed for essential repairs. The vision for the cathedral is to revitalise and breathe new life into this beloved City landmark, honouring the extraordinary design techniques of the past while improving the functionality, accessibility and comfort of the cathedral and its supporting buildings, and reflecting the diversity of the City itself to deliver ministry and sanctuary for generations, both now and in the future. The overall cost of this exciting project is likely to be around £8.5 million and we are planning a separate, major fundraising campaign to fund these repairs and renovations.

The funding to pay for major repairs like these is called 'extraordinary' and consists of income from legacies, dedicated donations and our share of the Diocesan Closer to Christ Campaign.

However, we need to be able to conserve the cathedral once these improvements are underway, and that requires sufficient 'ordinary' funding. We accept that we cannot stop decay, only slow it down, but we can minimise the risk of extensive high-cost repairs through ongoing maintenance: regularly cleaning gutters and drains is substantially cheaper

than having to replace the nave roof due to dry rot and water ingress that might arise following years of neglect.

Building up our 'ordinary' income will allow us to maintain this beautiful sanctuary, which enriches our worship and enhances the quality of life of our parishioners. Quite simply, it is cherished.

We look after this cathedral not only for us but for our children, and their children, so that they are able to inherit this beautiful sanctuary.

