

13th July 2020

Greetings friends, after yesterday's Mass I took some time to phone around some of the congregation who are not online. It's something I've been doing fortnightly since the lockdown came in to force and just keeps me in touch with them.

During one of the conversations I was asked "what is the church doing about money?" It's a good question and one that all churches, not just the C of E or Ascension with All Saints need to consider. Some people have arranged their giving via Standing order (as I do) and that has kept some money coming in, however, the physical collection in the plate has, of course, completely dried up. This has put the church in general in a very difficult position but that's no different from many of the businesses who have had to close down.

In a Diocese that was already struggling it is a serious problem though and does need addressing. I haven't mentioned it before because I felt that it was a bit crass when people were suffering so much and enduring various kinds of hardship.

Now, however, as we begin the slow emergence from the COVID restrictions it may be time to give the topic of money, some consideration. I do know that some people have been Saginaw their collection money and intend to give when they come back to church and that's very generous. I have heard others say that as they haven't had any engagement with the church they don't feel obliged to give. No one should ever feel 'obliged' to give, giving is something that should come out of a sense of gratitude to God.

I would, however, ask people to consider the issue of giving in, order to support the future of the church where you live. We were already facing the prospect of church closures in some places and certainly reduced numbers of parish clergy. The current situation has exacerbated this. I am fully aware that many people have suffered financial hardship over the last few months and of course people should not put themselves in danger or debt in order to give to the church but it is a consideration we, as Christians, should be addressing.

It's my hope that, the little we have been able to offer our congregations will, nevertheless, have been of value to people and helped them through these difficult days. I know that online services and e-mails are merge fare but we were all caught out by the COVID pandemic and what we have offered from AwAS has been better than nothing...I hope!

I'm not going to put an And finally... on today as I don't wish to detract from the seriousness of the subject.

Stay well, Tom

Sent by Canon Tom Page

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