

St Joseph & the English Martyrs Catholic Church

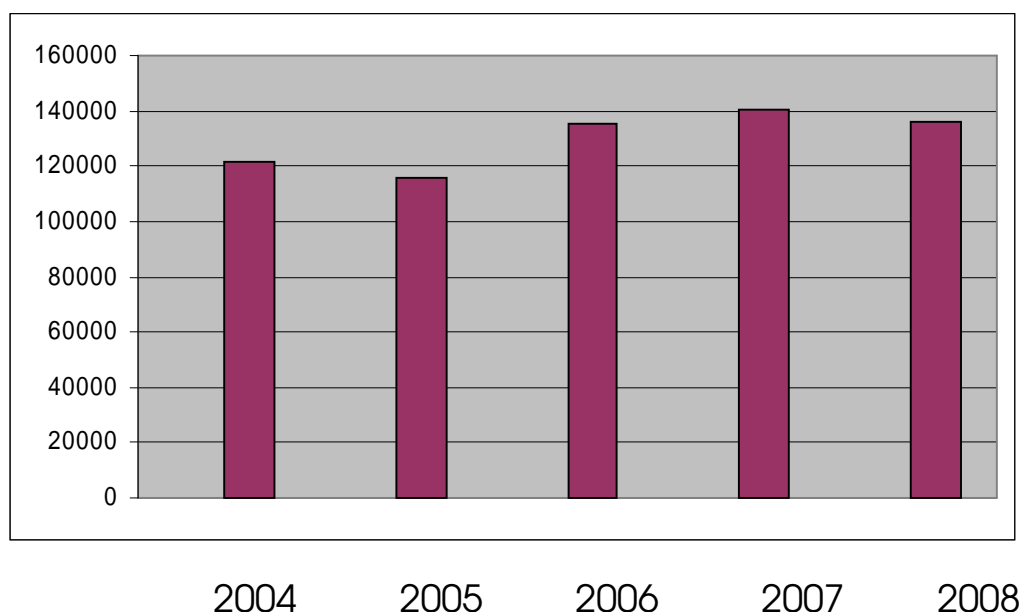
Windhill, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 2ND
Charity number 233699

A message from Canon Eddie Matthews

It is three and a half years since we ran our last campaign to increase our weekly collections and I am delighted to be able to report that, thanks to the generosity of so many of you, we have managed to cover all our costs since then – despite some substantial expenditure on our buildings.

But I am afraid that we can't afford to relax as our weekly collections have started to go down in recent months and this is a worry as we have now begun work on our new Parish Centre.

Weekly Collections 2004 to 2008



We launched our last campaign in January 2006

Could I state very clearly that, while this drop in our collections is a worry, we do not have a crisis as we have been able to put aside £60,000 for the new Parish Centre. We also expect to raise around £730,000 from the sale of the old Parish Centre and we have arranged a bridging loan with the Diocese to tide us over.

But the fact of the matter is that we will need to find an additional £200,000 to pay for the new Parish Centre and we will therefore be launching a new programme of fundraising activities later in the year.

In the meantime, the Finance Committee and I believe that it would be wrong to ignore the drop in our Offertory collections and, over the next two weeks, we would like to invite you to review what you contribute each week to the parish.

Can you help?

Talking about money when times are so hard is extremely difficult and I would like to say loudly and clearly that I do not expect anyone to give more than they can afford – particularly if you have been directly affected by the recession.

But we will need the help of those of you who are in a reasonably strong financial position.....perhaps because you are in a secure job or because your financial commitments have gone down over the last year or so.

Only you can decide if you can do more to help but I would like you to think about three questions:

1. Am I giving the right amount of money each week?

Some people put £1 or less into the weekly collection and, if that is all you can afford, you shouldn't give more. But what I would like you to think about is the place of the parish in your life, what you can afford and then whether you are giving as much as you could.

Cardinal Hume once suggested that people who are in paid work should think about an hour's pay when deciding what to give. If your family income is £10,000 a year that's about £5 a week – which may sound a lot, but it's less than the cost of a take away meal in this area. Could you afford that each week?

2. What happens to the parish when I am not here?

It is not always possible to come here to Mass every week, but the parish is still here and we still need money to pay the bills even when you cannot come. So I would like you to think about giving a regular amount each week, which you would give even if you couldn't come here to Mass.

You can do this by setting up a monthly bankers order (which also has the advantage of reducing administration and bank charges) or by giving when you next return to the Church what you were unable to give while you were away, which many of you do already.

3. Why don't I get the Government to add 28p to every £1 that I give at no cost to myself?

Finally, *if you pay tax in the UK*, I would urge you to consider giving with *Gift Aid* because, if you do, the Government will top up your donation - providing the parish with an extra 28p for every £1 that you give.

All you have to do is to complete a simple form and to use numbered envelopes for your weekly donation (which we will supply) or to pay by Bankers Order, so that we can claim the right amount from the Government.

What Next?

What we would like you to do is to fill in a pledge card telling us what you can do to help (as this will enable us to plan on a realistic basis) and you can, of course, simply write down what you give now if that is all you can afford.

But if you can give a bit more, it will make a real difference and there will be absolutely no problem about changing the amount that you give – at any point - if your circumstances change. All I can ask is that you do what you can and, if this happens, I have no doubt that the parish will rise to the challenge.

***Canon Eddie Matthews
Parish Priest. June 2009***

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What happened last year?

These are the average weekly cost and income figures last year.

Weekly Income		Weekly Costs	
Weekly collections (envelopes)	£1060	Clergy costs (including supply priest, travel and housekeeping)	£350
Weekly collections (loose)	£575	Council tax, electricity, gas, etc	£350
Standing orders	£980	Building repairs	£335
Offerings, stipends and chaplaincy income	£305	Salaries, administration, grants & general expenses	£570
Candles and papers	£200	Candles and papers	£145
Catechetics	£45	Catechetical and liturgical expenses	£215
Parish activities	£40	Parish activities	£75
Parish centre revenue	£310	Parish centre expenses	£25
Bank interest	£100	Purchase of fixed assets	£680
Gift Aid	£470	Grants	£225
Sundry income	£140	Contribution to Diocese	£990
Total Income	£4225	Total Costs	£3960