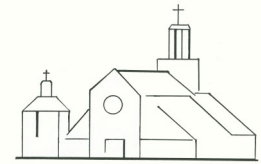


Divine Infant Parish

6658 Bilberry Drive
Orleans, Ontario K1C 2S9



Email: di_office@rogers.com Phone: (613) 824-6822 www.divineinfant.on.ca

Dear Parishioners of Divine Infant:

I am writing to share my concern with you on the worsening of the financial situation of the parish and the negative consequences we are likely to face as a parish community if there is not a significant increase in our income.

Since calendar year 2019, the parish has sustained decreasing income. There have been two major reasons which have affected the parish so negatively. You are well aware of these: COVID which restricted parish life, attendance and support, and second, as we have come out of COVID, inflationary prices and increasing costs for borrowing. These have affected everyone; no less the parish. In fact, our financial situation today would have been made much worse if we had not received **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidies (CEWS)** from the Federal Government of \$47,311 in 2020 and \$118,138 in 2021.

To appreciate fully the decrease in our income, we have to go back to 2019, the last year before the emergence of COVID. The figures below will illustrate:

Calendar Year	Ordinary Revenues	Operational Deficit
2019	\$ 755,245	- \$21,495
2020	\$ 558,621	- \$33,144
2021	\$ 631,199	+ \$53,902
2022	\$ 548,550	- \$69,679
2023 (January 1 to April 30)	\$ 196,769	- \$14,594

In 2020 and 2021, the Archdiocese and the parish had to take several draconian measures to keep financially solvent as COVID worsened and lengthened. These included: reductions in clergy and bookkeeper salaries, the suspension of stipends to regular serving parishioners, the reduction in the number of paid, fulltime parish janitorial staff from two to one and the reduction or elimination of external support services to the parish, including security and waste disposal. During this period, the condition of the Church and rectory continued to physically deteriorate. Much of this was and is completely beyond our control as the weather has become more extreme.

As we have slowly left COVID behind, neither attendance nor financial support have returned to what was the status quo in 2019. Financially, the repercussions of COVID have now been replaced by ongoing inflation, especially core prices for groceries, transportation and fuel as well as the cost of borrowing (for mortgages, vehicles etc). Labour and material costs have jumped dramatically.

With declining income, the parish has had to contend daily with cost increases well above ten (10) percent for external services, insurance and repairs. These most often are fixed expenses and not discretionary expenditures. Parish staff have loyally accepted salary increases and work benefits well below the recent gains of the market place.

In sum, no business, let alone parish community, can continue to operate with a full range of services when confronted with declining income and annual operational deficits. Something has to give unless there is remedy.

To that end, and with hopefully a positive result, I am initiating a three month (90 day) financial appeal beginning the weekend of June 17 and 18, **with the goal to raise \$90,000**. Green renovation and expansion envelopes will be made widely available for this purpose and all donations will be eligible to be included in the annual charitable tax receipts. The progress of the appeal will be regularly shared with you.

Donations received, among other things, will provide the necessary, direct financial liquidity to:

- repair and restore Father John's former suite in the rectory for occupancy,
- meet the expected 30% increase in costs for parish insurance coverage for the year 2023/2024, which began on June 1, 2023,
- put aside funds for the 2023/2024 winter snow removal contract, which extends from November to April inclusive and is anticipated to increase by 15%,
- respond to increased utility and service charges, which are fixed parish costs, and
- to prevent the further withdrawal of parish emergency monies on deposit with the diocesan loan fund.

If your financial situation prevents you from supporting the appeal partly or entirely within the 90 day time frame, I would encourage you to consider as an alternative increasing your weekly or monthly donations by envelope, debit, credit card or online through Canada Helps.

The success and future of the parish depends on your support.

If you have any questions or need more information on donations to the Appeal, please contact **Deacon Jeff**, our parish manager, at **parishadministrator@rogers.com** or at **ext.235** in the parish office. During the Appeal itself, if there is further need to provide information, follow-up messages will be issued.

While I understand the above is difficult news, it is incumbent on me as your pastor to be transparent and to do my best to ensure our community's well being and viability.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Waldemar Podlasz" followed by a small flourish.

Father Waldemar Podlasz SDS
Pastor

June 1, 2023