

## PASTORAL LETTER: END of the MENEVIA JUBILEE APPEAL

*My dear people*

The Menevia Jubilee Appeal began three years ago. No-one knew what it would achieve. Engaging the services of a professional fund-raising company was rejected, and rightly so. Their fees and expenses were estimated at £400,000. Instead, the Appeal was run in-house on our own. So, we stepped out into the unknown, with lots of goodwill, gentle encouragement, and little expertise. Out of acorns grew oak-trees!



I pay tribute to the co-ordinating group whose generosity assured success. Likewise, thanks are due to parish-priests who arranged regular collections. But most of all, my gratitude is owed to parishioners and organizations all over the Diocese – and beyond – who contributed week by week, month by month, or with one-off donations (and in some cases repeat donations too!). There were also some imaginative fund-raising events (e.g. a sky-dive, a theatre performance, and so on). The total raised currently approaches a staggering **£1,100,000** ! It has been invested as reserves for the future. It has put the Diocese on a sounder financial footing.

The Appeal brought in hard cash. It is money in the bank. None of it represents gifts in Pledges or Wills still to come. Only a tiny fraction of what was raised – about £1,500 – was expended on administrative costs (printing, paper, etc). Even the five editions of the Jubilee News were produced at minimal cost, thanks to generous benefactors. The sixth and final edition will appear around the middle of May. It will give a breakdown of how each parish has done.

The Jubilee Appeal has helped to build up a fund to meet the costs of seminary training. It costs £25,000 to train just one priest – each year – for 6 years. As a small Diocese, we have been blessed with a number of vocations. In the last couple of years, three seminarians have been ordained to the priesthood, and a fourth will be ordained on 25 July this year. A fifth student has a further 3 years of seminary formation ahead of him before Ordination. Another candidate has come forward with a view to entering the seminary this coming September. The prayers of so many people are being answered. I ask you to continue saying the diocesan Vocations Prayer at Mass and in your own private devotions. It would seem that the Lord is listening!

The Jubilee Appeal also provided much needed support for our sick and retired clergy. In their active days, they gave so much. Now, in their retirement, we continue to look after them. As more clergy retire, we will care for them too. It is our way of thanking them for their dedication to us in years past.

The Jubilee Appeal ended at Easter this year. In thanking you for your efforts and generosity, I ask you now to focus your support on your own parish. Much needs to be done at the local level. Ageing buildings need on-going repair and maintenance. Some catch-up is needed with educational and pastoral projects, as well as introducing new ones for the benefit of each community. Young people are keen to get involved, when welcomed and given responsibility. Since half our parishes run at an annual deficit, they need extra funds to return to financial viability. Those who have drifted away from the Church need encouragement to come back too. There is much talent out there to be tapped. There are still calls on your generosity, but this time they are to be focused on directly supporting your own parish. Please help to whatever extent you can. One way is to terminate any existing Jubilee Standing Orders and replace them with new Standing Orders payable to your parish. Any Standing Orders still in favour of the Diocese after 31 May 2015 will be credited to the Fund for Sick & Retired Clergy.

All that you have done and will continue to do is very much appreciated. Please be assured that you, your families and loved ones, are remembered daily in my prayers and Masses. I ask you to keep me, and all clergy serving in the Diocese, in your thoughts and prayers too. Thank you.

With every blessing,

**+Thomas Matthew**

Bishop of Menevia

*to be read in all churches and chapels of the Diocese  
over the weekend of 02-03 May 2015,  
and copies to be made available in printed format*