

# DIOCESAN LEVIES AND THE PARISH

Central Diocesan Fund  
&  
Education Fund



An Information Leaflet

February 2025



# INTRODUCTION

by Archbishop Eamon Martin

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Parish is a living community of believers. It is the place where most Catholics first hear the Gospel message, grow in faith and are nourished by God's grace in the sacraments. I acknowledge with gratitude the work of all clergy, religious and lay faithful who strive to make our Parishes true centres of evangelisation and hope.

The Parish is also an integral part of the wider Armagh diocesan family. The 61 Parishes of the Archdiocese increasingly work together and avail of essential support in the form of services and resources offered by diocesan agencies and offices. As the People of God, we are also called to invest in the future and, in particular, to encourage and sustain vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Ongoing formation of clergy and laity is another important aspect in the task of fulfilling the Church's mission entrusted to her by Christ.

This leaflet briefly explains how two diocesan funds – the Central Diocesan Fund and the Education Fund – serve to advance much of this vital work. It also sets out how Parishes continue to generously contribute to this shared diocesan activity by means of a reformed levy system. I hope you find the details informative and helpful in understanding the indispensable bond that exists between the Parishes and the Archdiocese.

May the Lord guide us as we offer our collective labours for His glory and the good of His holy people.

*+ Eamon Martin*

The Most Reverend Eamon Martin  
Archbishop of Armagh

## CENTRAL DIOCESAN FUND

The Central Diocesan Fund financially supports the offices and general activities of bodies such as the Diocesan Curia, the Diocesan Pastoral Office and the Armagh Inter-Diocesan Marriage Tribunal. The personnel who work in these offices are essential to the effective administration of the Archdiocese of Armagh and they provide important assistance to Parishes, such as:

- Safeguarding training and vetting for clergy and volunteers
- Implementation of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, preparation for the Diocesan Congress and the provision of pastoral resources
- Ongoing formation including by means of a diocesan theology programme
- Aiding those entering the Church through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)
- Ensuring Diocesan and Parish compliance with charity legislation
- Overseeing financial, building, property and personnel matters across the Archdiocese
- Insuring Diocesan buildings and property
- Processing marriage-related applications
- Facilitating the integration of clergy from abroad, both on a short and long-term basis
- Encouraging Marriage and Family life
- Rainbows Bereavement Support



A proportion of the Central Diocesan Fund also assists activities carried out by the Church in Ireland at a national level. Such initiatives and agencies include:

- Support for Emigrants, Immigrants and Prisoners Overseas
- Accord NI and Accord CLG Catholic Marriage Preparation and Counselling
- Council for Life
- Council for Healthcare and Healthcare Chaplaincy Board
- National Synod
- Catholic Primary Schools Management Association
- Council for Education
- Council for Catechetics
- National Board for Safeguarding Children
- Towards Healing
- Towards Peace
- Irish Bishops' Drugs Initiative
- Adult Faith Formation
- Council for Vocations
- Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue
- Catholic Communications Office
- Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs



The Central Diocesan Fund is substantially financed by an annual levy paid by each of the 61 Parishes. This arrangement has been in place for nearly 60 years. Until recently the levy was calculated according to the number of families in a Parish. To make the system more equitable, the levy is now a proportion of a Parish's assessable income. The rate – which had not increased for some 15 years - currently stands at 12% and is necessary to meet the ongoing expenses of the activities outlined above.

# THE EDUCATION FUND

The Education Fund provides financial support to services in the Archdiocese which include the following:

- St Patrick's Youth and its associated activities such as the Pope John Paul II Award, Muiredach Cross Award and World Youth Day pilgrimage
- Formation of seminarians and candidates for the permanent diaconate
- Support for Catholic schools including religious education advisors and the Catholic Schools Trustee Service
- Ongoing education of clergy
- Contribution to Youthlink – an outreach service for young people



At present the Archdiocese of Armagh has 19 students studying for the Priesthood. Most are resident at the Redemptoris Mater Archdiocesan Missionary Seminary in Dundalk. Other candidates are or have been trained at Maynooth and Rome. It costs approximately £15,000 a year to educate a seminarian. This expenditure is an essential investment which will bear fruit in the provision of priests for the Parishes of the Archdiocese. Permanent deacons too play an increasingly important role in the pastoral life of the Archdiocese while youth ministry can be critical in helping to engage young people with the life of faith. The continuing formation of clergy ensures that serving priests and deacons are equipped to address the myriad pastoral challenges of today.

The need to meet the substantial costs of this Fund has led to the introduction of an annual Education Levy. It is calculated at 6% of a Parish's assessable income.

## CONCLUSION

By means of the levies, Parishes are able to financially support these important administrative and pastoral works of the Archdiocese of Armagh. While co-ordinated at a diocesan and even national level, these agencies and services help to advance the mission of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ which is at the core of a Parish's life and identity.

## MORE INFORMATION

The 2024 Annual Report and Financial Statements of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Ltd can be accessed on the archdiocesan website at:

<https://www.armagharchdiocese.org/st-patricks-archdiocesan-trust-limited-annual-general-meeting-monday-25th-march/>