



Poverty - where does it hurt?

When reading the various reports on poverty in Ireland and how COVID-19 has exacerbated financial challenges for those already struggling, I am reminded not just of the latest startling statistics on poverty, but also of the voices and stories behind those figures.

As Head of Charitable Services at Protestant Aid, I regularly talk with distraught family members, who attempt to relate their particular situations while endeavouring to fight back tears that seem to flow more readily when met with a word of kindness or reassurance.

The core emotion being expressed is often one of frustration at not being in a position to pay a utility bill, make a mortgage repayment, pay rent or even fund a food shop. The next emotion expressed is usually fear.... **what does the future hold for me and my family?**

The last year has been tough, but for some the pandemic was nothing more than an inconvenience - the inability to dine in a favourite restaurant or a missed foreign holiday. For others, it is yet another obstacle on an already bumpy path of deprivation, hitting those on low incomes with vindictive indifference. Poverty Focus 2020 (published May 2020) advised that,

‘when recovery comes, it is likely that many low-income workers, and employees with precarious employment conditions, will be the last to experience it’.

Basic deprivation rates have soared during the pandemic, again hitting those who are most financially susceptible. Children are also vulnerable at this time and it is difficult to comprehend why almost 200,000 of them appear to be collateral damage in an economy that had been thriving.

The ‘working poor’ is an increasingly used phrase and not without reason. Many of the General Grant Applications we receive are not from those who are on benefits, but from those who have full-time jobs yet continually struggle to make ends meet. The subversive nature of COVID-19 meant that some families were hurled into deprivation with some velocity and it was this which prompted our Emergency Response Initiative.

Situations of need were identified by Rectors and some interim help was provided discreetly and quickly.

We continue to be grateful to so many clergy around the country who help identify situations of need within their congregations and are happy to be their partners in ministry.

Protestant Aid has been in operation since 1836 but the passing of time has not dimmed our determination or vision to bring help where it is most needed. Of course, that vision is not unique to us but is shared by our many generous and loyal donors who don't wait for a pandemic to demonstrate their compassion or their desire to lessen the hurts and suffering of individuals and families.

And that care and compassion is the light of hope..... for us all.

Geoff Scargill, Head of Charitable Services

Protestant Aid wins £1,000 ‘Movement for Good’ award

We were delighted to win an Ecclesiastical Insurance £1,000 Movement for Good award thanks to nominations from the public. Protestant Aid was one of 500 winners in specialist insurer Ecclesiastical's **Movement for Good** awards, which gave £1 million to charities across Ireland and the UK during 2020.

Geoff Scargill, Head of Charitable Services said:

“The award was particularly useful in a year when an increased number of families were under pressure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to thank Ecclesiastical Insurance and, of course, every single person who took the time to nominate Protestant Aid in the Movement for Good awards. £1,000 is a generous and welcome award that will change lives for the better.”



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As my tenure as Chairman of Protestant Aid nears its end, I am happy to reflect on much progress made over that period.

Efficiency is key in any organisation and I can ponder with some satisfaction on the streamlining of operations within PA over the years and the exemplary standards throughout the organisation, thanks to dedicated professionals.

A significant highlight is the completed, refurbished and extended St. John's Nursing Home on Merrion Road in Dublin 4. Notwithstanding some challenges along the way, it is now state-of-the-art and one of the most advanced nursing home facilities in the country.

Despite such positive changes, hardship continues to be a consistent element within our society.

A pro-active Charitable Services Team dealt with a record-breaking number of applications during 2019 and the Grants Committee worked long and hard to ensure financial assistance was given where it was needed most.

We are also grateful to the many clergy who bring cases to our attention and allow us to bring some light into lives that are often in despair.

The financial stress experienced by families increasingly relates to housing issues as well as difficulties with family health and separation. Mental health challenges are also growing including younger family members who suffer stress through social media engagement.

Average incomes may have risen nationally yet there are thousands of people still trying to find a path out of hardship and distress. Older people can often be particularly vulnerable, with the poverty rate for people aged 65 plus and living alone having increased significantly over the last number of years.

While I am grateful for the continued support of our Board members, staff, volunteers and our patron Archbishop Michael Jackson, my final expression of gratitude must go to our donors.

Their generosity not only makes our work possible, but also encourages us in all we do as we attempt to bring some financial comfort and solace where it is most needed.

Thank you as always for going the extra mile.

Arthur Vincent, Chairman

A NEW ERA OF CARE FOR ST. JOHN'S HOUSE

After many years of planning and fundraising, the new St. John's House Nursing Home has opened its doors and it marks a significant moment not only for St. John's House of Rest but also the Molyneux Home and St. Mary's Home.



The new €15 million redevelopment of St. John's House now includes two floors of private rooms all with en-suite facilities and incorporates offices, staff rooms, kitchens, a hairdresser, medical and other facilities. The new building now includes a beautiful two-storey atrium full of natural light which will act as a reception and can also be used for public occasions such as concerts and carol services. The two upper floors will between them accommodate 52 resident bedrooms.

A culture of openness is central to the St. John's philosophy of nurture and it is envisaged that collaboration between the incredible staff, residents, family and representatives will help achieve the best outcomes for the residents.

At the heart of the new building is the beautifully restored Chapel and The Reverend Canon Andrew McCroskery, the Vicar of St Bartholomew's, has been appointed Chaplain of St. John's. Spirituality which offers a sense of faith, meaning, purpose, inner peace and well-being is a key aspect to St. John's and while it upholds the Church of Ireland ethos, all residents are supported in their interactions within their spiritual domain.

The start of this new chapter in the history of St. John's has coincided with the unprecedented challenges faced by Nursing Homes across Ireland and beyond due to the Covid Emergency. The valiant efforts of the staff led by the Director of Nursing Anne Kavanagh and General Manager Simon Homan and continuous attention to detail have helped to ensure that St. John's has so far remained 'covid free'

St. John's continues to adapt and respond, guided by our steadfast mission to serve our residents and the future is bright with the opening of the most comfortable and comprehensive nursing home in the country, bar none.



CEO REPORT

Kindness Prevails.....

It is often said that true character is revealed in the choices we make under stress - the greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation. If we consider this in the context of the impact of coronavirus, the kindness shown all over the world during this most difficult time is both enlightening and inspiring.

People have come together to clap for frontline workers, sing on balconies and collect groceries for vulnerable neighbours - gestures of connection and compassion.

Despite the challenges facing us all, the situation has brought about an overwhelming sense of community spirit and unified urge to help those that need support in our society. What also stands out during this terrible pandemic is a limitless capacity for generosity. So far, we have had a tremendous response to our 2020 Annual Appeal. We are both humbled and grateful for your commitment and it is clear your charitable impulses run as deep as ever. Protestant Aid has been responding to the COVID-19 crisis in many ways, but importantly launching immediate emergency supports to people affected by a sudden loss of a job or income.

Whilst the pattern of employment loss and furloughing suggests that the future economic consequences of the pandemic may be borne by those on lower incomes, we expect many applications for help over the next few months from individuals and families who would never have considered themselves at risk of poverty at the start of 2020.

This is the sad new reality for many who had well paid “safe” jobs in travel, hospitality and service industries until recently, but are now sadly facing a very bleak future.

In our nursing homes in Brabazon and St. John’s House, we continue to work under the severe pressures brought on by the pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 on nursing homes in Ireland has been particularly devastating. We are incredibly thankful to all the staff for their incredible efforts in keeping our residents safe during this extraordinary time. The advantages of our homes being community-led have really come to the fore during the pandemic as a focus on person-centred care and importantly staff retention have helped create a better overall living experience for the residents and ensured we were well positioned to deal with the unique challenges brought on by the virus.

Looking ahead, we know that our resources will be stretched to a maximum in the later part of 2020 as the impact of the COVID-19 crisis unfolds.

Even before the current public health crisis, one in every seven people in Ireland lived with an income below the poverty line; about 680,000 people according to Social Justice Ireland. We are, therefore, well aware that our supports over the coming months will be as important now as at any time in our 180-year history.

Our interventions may be the difference between putting food on the table or heating a family home and as thousands of families’ head into an uncertain and difficult winter, we will be there to provide this essential support in these unprecedented times.

Thank you for allowing us to continue our mission.

David Webb, Chief Executive

COMPASSION IN ACTION

Some Thank You notes received recently and all made possible because you decided to donate.

I appreciate your kindness....

As you know, during the latter part of last year, I had to take time off work for health reasons. I met with our local Rector and in passing I discreetly made mention to some needs that were, to say the least, pressing. He mentioned Protestant Aid and shared with me about the work you do so I applied, via my Rector, for a General Grant.

PA were exceptionally generous and I made a decision that when the metaphorical tide turned, I would contribute towards your work. I really appreciate your kindness.

We are thankful...

I want to thank you for the generous grant you sent to help us through the challenges of COVID-19 - it is very much appreciated. You also helped with education costs and we are grateful for that help also. We can’t thank in person all of those who have donated to Protestant Aid but we are thankful to God for their generosity and to Protestant Aid for administering their kindness to help people in situations like ours.

From a Rector...

I have been hugely impressed with your responsive compassion to the families in the Parish who have been so deeply affected by the impact of the Coronavirus and I would like you to know that in all cases, the support you have offered has been of enormous benefit to each of them. I would like to wish you continued success in all the good work you are undertaking in these challenging times.

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE BATTLE AGAINST POVERTY...TODAY!

We remain very grateful to our donors who consistently dig deep to help Protestant Aid make a real difference to the lives of so many families within our community. Thank you for being our partners.

Donations can be made in a number of ways:

- **By Cheque**
posted to our offices at Protestant Aid, 74 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin D04 K2N6.
- **Online**
at www.protestantaid.org using the

DONATE NOW BUTTON

- **Standing Order**
If you wish to contribute in this way, please find our bank details below, or alternatively use our Standing Order form which is available from Protestant Aid (or can be downloaded from our website).

Protestant Aid Bank Account Details

A/C Name: **Protestant Aid**

IBAN: **IE39 AIBK 9312 9214 7880 64**

BIC: **AIBKIE2D**



Please detach and return with cheque donation

By Cheque

I would like to make a donation of:

€

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Please return to

Protestant Aid

74 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin D04 K2N6.

Thank you for being our partners in tackling poverty.

ONLINE DONATE FACILITY

A feature of the website that has already been widely used is the facility to donate online. This eliminates the need for cheques, envelopes and postage and the entire process is seamless and easy. Please consider donating today at www.protestantaid.org

PA NETWORK VISITORS

We say a fond farewell to Network Visitor Jenny Shaw who has worked so hard with much dedication from her base in Ennis - thank you, Jenny!



Beverley Callender (1) joins a team that includes Elizabeth Temple (2), Mildred Gilmore (3) and Phyllis Grothier (4).

We welcome Beverley Callender as a new Network Visitor and are delighted she has agreed to be part of the team. Beverley's background is in Nursing and she has wide experience of working with various organisations on a voluntary basis. Welcome to the team, Beverley!

Each member of the team works on a voluntary basis, giving selflessly of their time to make visits and write reports. They are generous, talented, professional and caring ladies. Their empathy, sensitivity, diplomacy and confidentiality are important skills that support the work of Protestant Aid as we endeavour to assist in our communities.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Department of Rural & Community Development continues to be a consistent supporter of our work over the years and 2019 was no exception. The Department again provided an annual grant of €150,000 as well as an additional €30,000 amount for those with urgent needs. This grant is of vital importance and we are grateful for this generous partnership in addressing need.

DONORS' GENEROSITY

We are able to provide grants to those in need thanks to the on-going generosity of our loyal donors who consistently contribute every year by cheque, standing order, or online.

Personal donors, both PAYE taxpayers and the self-employed, are reminded that the tax element of donations over €250 can be reclaimed from the Revenue by Protestant Aid at no cost to the donor. There are also tax advantages for corporate donors. Those giving a gift of assets can do so without the imposition of Capital Gains Tax.

LEGACIES

In recent years, legacies have become an increasingly important contribution to PA's funds and because they can be invested wisely for use in the future, they are an invaluable resource. They are entrusted to PA by those who have left provision in their wills for the continuity of PA's work, so current supporters are asked to consider Protestant Aid and its work when making out their Will.