

St Cuthbert's Catholic Church

Bridge Street, Marlow Bridge MB4 2QN · 01632 960 118

From the Parish Priest

17 August 2026

Dear friends,

I have been asked more than once in recent weeks whether the roof appeal is going to succeed, usually by people who are too polite to say what they mean, which is that £96,000 is a great deal of money for a parish of our size.

It is. I will not pretend otherwise. But we are now past £41,000, and I have stopped worrying about whether we will get there. What has changed my mind is not any single large gift, though we have had one and I am grateful for it. It is the standing orders.

There are now sixty-three of them. Most are for ten or twenty pounds a month. Several are from people who do not come to Mass and, as far as I can tell, have no particular religious conviction at all, but who did not want to watch the building fall down. Together they will raise more over the next two years than every raffle, fair and concert combined.

I mention this because a number of people have apologised to me for giving what they called a small amount. Please stop. A regular gift, however modest, is worth more to a parish than an occasional generous one, because it lets us plan. It is also, if I am honest, a rather better expression of what we are supposed to be doing here than a one-off act of rescue.

The architect's report makes uncomfortable reading. The battens are failing, we have lost slates in three separate storms, and the plaster in the north aisle is lifting where water has been getting in. Left another two or three winters, we would be looking at structural repair on top of the roof itself, and a bill considerably larger than the one in front of us now.

The faculty application is with the diocese. If it is granted this autumn, as we expect, scaffolding goes up in the spring and the work takes about ten weeks. The church stays open throughout. There will be noise, and the north aisle will be closed for part of it, but no Mass will be cancelled and no funeral will be moved.

If you have been meaning to set up a standing order and have not got round to it, Angela will do it for you in the office in about five minutes. If you are a UK taxpayer, do please add Gift Aid. It adds twenty-five pence to every pound and costs you nothing at all.

And if money is tight, as it is for a good many people at the moment, then please do not give. Come to Mass, come to the coffee morning, and let somebody else worry about the slates. The parish is not the roof.

With every blessing,

Fr Dennis Okoye

Parish Priest

St Cuthbert's, Marlow Bridge. Registered charity number 1101234. This letter is a fictional example produced for demonstration purposes.