



PASTORAL LETTER FROM BISHOP FREDRIK HANSEN TO THE FAITHFUL OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OSLO ON THE FINANCIAL FUTURE OF THE DIOCESE

Praised be Jesus Christ! Praised be his holy name!

1. Our Lord describes a person who listens to his word and builds his life upon his message as “a house built on rock” (Matt 7:24). To stand securely, to remain firm in rain and storm, and to stand steadfast in troubled times should apply not only to each one of us as disciples of Jesus, but also to our diocese and our parishes. This also means being financially secure.

Concrete challenges: lower income and higher expenses

2. I am writing this pastoral letter to all of you because I believe it is necessary that we together take a closer look at the financial future of the diocese and our parishes. We are not currently standing as firm as a house built on rock.

3. There are several reasons why I believe this. Let me mention three. First, we are entirely dependent on financial subsidies from the state. More than 85% of the diocese’s income comes from public funds. We have become “accustomed to” Norwegian authorities paying for us. There are strong indications that there will be changes to these public subsidies. We do not know how significant these changes will be, or when they will come, but the consequences for our diocese and our parishes could be considerable.

4. Second, our diocese has few accumulated reserves. We do not have an “oil fund” that can help us in difficult times. Should major changes or a crisis arise, we have only one option: to make substantial cuts to what takes place in our diocese.

5. Third, the diocese has significant expenses. The largest expenditure items are connected to our parishes and pastoral ministry, as well as our many properties. Our churches increasingly require maintenance. Most parishes also have too little space, both in the church and in the parish hall, so there is also a great need for additional and larger buildings.

6. You can find more details about these specific challenges in the video presentation on our website and in the fact-sheet being distributed in connection with this pastoral letter.

The way forward

7. There is another reason why we need to think together about the future. We are a diocese and parishes that have grown for many years. There are many Masses, many prayer groups, many confirmation candidates, and many people who want to learn more about the Catholic faith. More and more activity. And we want even more activity. More evangelization, more work for children and young people, more large, warm, and beautiful churches, greater efforts on behalf of those who are poor and in need among us, and more seminarians and vocations. We want a living Church—a light that shines for people both within and outside our Catholic community.

8. In order to continue growing as a Church, we must all step forward and take part in the work. This begins with our prayers. Therefore, pray for our diocese, for our parishes, and for all the good and vibrant things of which we are witnesses. The future of the Church is in God's hands.

9. At the same time, we cannot forget the practical matters, including finances and money. First, we must ensure that our financial management is sound, well-considered, and realistic. We cannot spend money we do not have. We must save and think long-term. We must make plans and stick to them. Second, we must examine our expenses. What is necessary? What can be postponed? What can be cut? Third, there is a clear need for gifts and contributions to the Church. With lower income in the future, we must take greater responsibility ourselves. What we currently receive from collections and donations is not enough to secure our future.

The “A House Built on Rock” Campaign

10. In response to the growth and needs of the Church, and to the financial situation we face now and see ahead, the “A House Built on Rock” campaign begins today. The campaign has two objectives.

11. First, that we all carefully consider what we contribute—spiritually, practically, and materially—to the life of the Church. Put simply, that we ask ourselves: *What is my role in the continued growth of the Church?* We cannot all do the same thing, and not everyone has the same talents, abilities, or opportunities, but we should all contribute. And what can I give in support of the growth of the Church? Such support can be given through the Sunday collection to the parish, through gifts to specific projects, and through regular contributions to the diocese and the parishes. Faithful and regular gifts, even small ones, enable the Church to plan and build securely and confidently.

12. I also ask each of you to make a specific donation to St. Joseph's Building Fund. This is the diocese's common fund for the construction, purchase, maintenance, and expansion of church property. All offerings from this Sunday's collection will also go to the fund, and direct donations can be made via Vipps 42921. The brochure and fact sheet contain more information about how donations can be made.

13. Out of everything that is collected, two-thirds will be returned to the parish from which the donations came, to support specific projects there. The remaining third will go toward future projects that the parishes themselves cannot afford. As a parish in Arendal, we would like to upgrade the lighting in all our buildings. If possible, we would also like to renovate the furnishings of the sacristy.

14. On www.katolsk.no, you will be able to follow the fundraising campaign. Thank you all for contributing to the growth of the Church and for steadily and faithfully building the diocese and our parishes together on rock. May God bless you and may the powerful intercession of St. Olav come to your aid.

Given at Saint Olav Cathedral in Oslo,
29th Sunday *per annum* – 18th October 2026



+Fredrik Hansen
Diocesan Bishop of Oslo