**THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN**

**The Parish of St Mary, Inverness**

**St Mary’s Parish Office, The Presbytery,**

**30 Huntly Street, Inverness, IV3 5PR,**

 **(tel: + 44 1463 233519) (e-mail:** **stmarysinverness@btinternet.com****)**

**Dear Friends, 19 March 2020**

**The Coronavirus is sweeping away many of our accustomed securities. We trust and hope that the Government and the NHS will take care of us as we continue to protect each other as well as ourselves.**

**Although we are now closed for public celebrations of Mass and other services the life of the Diocese, the Deanery and the Parish still goes on. We have buildings to maintain, keep-open, and administer with all the costs involved and with much diminished regular giving.**

**We had a Finance Committee Meeting at St Mary’s last week and we submitted our Budget to the Diocese for the coming year with a projected deficit of £7,000. At the end of the last financial year we had managed to avoid the predicted deficit by increased giving and additional donations. However, now our annual collections have fallen by £5,000. This is caused by falling numbers as families have relocated for many reasons.**

**The main expenses are heating and lighting, and the maintenance of our buildings. The good news is that some of these costs have lowered due to expenditure on our boilers, and heat distribution. The buildings seem to be in reasonable repair, but on-going maintenance is essential to keep them that way.**

**We rely on the dividend from our Investment Funds in the Endowment Trust of the Diocese. This is very well managed by our asset managers, however the recent slump in share prices has caused a total drop of about 16%. This could have a knock-on effect on our dividend income.**

**The parish is fortunate in enjoying seasonal income from the many tourists who visit the Highlands. It is widely recognised that this will be hit hard by the effects of the measures to contain and stop the spread of the coronavirus.**

**In writing this general letter about finance I readily acknowledge that some of you already give by Standing Order, Direct Debit or other planned giving which is Gift Aided. We are all grateful for that, and I thank you.**

**We now need to take some different approaches to our income generation, as at the same time we will endeavour to reduce our overheads. Yet we acknowledge that we will have to meet our financial obligations to the Diocese which are considerable. Every month we pay just over £4,000 in levies and clergy support [from which we benefit].**

**I am requesting several things, even while mindful that for some of it will not be possible:**

**Please consider creating a Regular Standing Order or Direct Debit - see attachment.**

**Please consider making donations to the Fabric Maintenance account (St Mary’s Inverness No 2 account}.**

**Please use the Donations Box in the Church – the income from this is divided evenly for our General Account (no 1) and our Fabric Account (no 2). This box is emptied regularly.**

**If any of you are in a position to make an increase in your giving, this will be welcomed.**

**Please ensure that all your regular plate offerings (these can be put in the donations box} and other giving is Gift Aided if you are eligible. – see attachment.**

**Thank you for your consideration as we try to maintain our ministry in St Mary’s albeit in a restricted way.**

**With every good wish and blessings**

**Aye**

**Fr James**

**(RCDiocese of Aberdeen Charitable Trust, A Registered Scottish Charity, No SC 00512**