



*From the Bishop*

01 April 2020

To all Clergy, Secretaries, Treasurers  
Cc. Diocesan Councillors and FAI Committee

### **Giving During the COVID-19 Crisis**

My dear friends,

I do hope by now you are starting to adjust to the new normal that we find ourselves in. To say that this medical emergency is testing us is an understatement. We are being tested as humanity, as a nation, as a state, as a Church, as a Diocese, and as individuals. I do want to say how impressed I am at the speed with which our faith communities are responding to the challenge of meeting together and taking care of one another. These are early days, and I suspect this will continue for some time, maybe up to six months, before we return to a more familiar way of life.

In my inaugural video message to the Diocese on the Facebook page I noted that we have suspended our church services, but we have not suspended being the Church. We must change the way in which we think about being Church. In Romans 12:1 St. Paul encourages his people to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. We must be transformed as a Church by the renewing of our minds. Even when this is all over, we are deluding ourselves if we think we can simply go back to the way it was. We have been forced to discover new ways of reaching out to people. We are finally using technology to improve our efficiency in meetings. This will inevitably have to continue. Trying to figure out how we get the sacrament to people, how we engage with them at a distance, are all issues that are going to exercise my mind and that of the clergy at least, for the foreseeable future. This is a very good thing. To reflect on who we are as Church is something we don't do very often, and now it is forced upon us, I think this is a good thing.

One of the immediate issues that concerns me is the issue of survivability of our Parishes and Pastoral Districts. If this goes on for six months, then we are going to have a real issue of what will be left at the end. Maybe that is a good thing, I do not know. One of the great truths of our faith is that resurrection only comes after death. Some things may have to die, before they are able to be resurrected. However, while that is all true, it is not axiomatic that anything has to necessarily die. Parishes can continue. Yes, they will continue in a very different way, but they still continue. This means that each Parish and Pastoral District will have to discover for its self how to be the Parish in their context. You will also need to address your financial support which is more vital than it has ever been. The next six months are not just about the next six months. The next six months is about what will continue to go forward after that next six months.



If Parishes and Pastoral Districts are to continue then our giving is going to have to change, both in how we give, and the amount we give. I ask that when you forward this letter to your people that you include the bank details for your Parish or Pastoral District, so that people can give directly through some form of EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) or Direct Debit. You should also give instructions on what should be used as the description for transfers, e.g. "Env 59" if you record envelope numbers, or the postcode for the church that they attend "5253" for St John's Cathedral.

I truly understand that for some of you this does not fit with your understanding of how we should give, and I truly appreciate this, *however, I reiterate, we are not in the old world any more, that ended about four weeks ago.* This is the new normal, and a new normal requires a new way of thinking and understanding how we do Church, from attendance, and participation, through to giving. I encourage each parishioner to prayerfully take to God how they might contribute to their Parish or Pastoral District in this difficult time with their time, their abilities and their financial capabilities so that we can have a good basis from which to grow when this medical emergency lessens.

I encourage you all to keep in touch with one another, be mindful of one another, love and care for one another and, above all, say your prayers and read your bibles.

With every blessing to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name 'Keith' and a stylized surname 'Dalby'.

The Right Reverend Keith Dalby  
Bishop of The Murray