**The Cathedral of St. Mary**

**Of the Immaculate Conception**

279 Johnson Street

Kingston, Ontario K7L 1Y5

(613) 546-5521

March 27, 2020

**RE: Impact of the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 on the Cathedral Parish**

My brothers and sisters in Christ: Parishioners and all the Catholic Community here at St. Mary’s. We need your help. Please read this entire letter.

 In the context of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 epidemic, I am so missing be able to give you the sacraments at this time. Since the sole purpose of my vocation is to be a conduit of God’s grace and mercy to you in the sacraments, it is a very disconcerting time not being able to do so. I know that you are also suffering greatly from not receiving the sacraments.

 I am also very preoccupied with the health and well-being of each of you. I pray that the Lord protects you all and very particularly those of you who are vulnerable or who care for the sick. I stood at the altar of the cathedral today and offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for your intentions.

 The cathedral parish is carefully following the Liturgical Protocol put into effect by the Archdiocese of Kingston to minimize the risk of infection through our liturgical practices. The Archdiocese remains vigilant—to that effect, it obtains information daily from the local, provincial and federal health authorities. Thus, all churches in the Archdiocese have been closed, even for private prayer, until further notice. Admittedly this is shocking and sad but prudent in light of a nation-wide effort to prevent the spread of the virus.

 As the situation evolves, the Archdiocese of Kingston, in consultation with other dioceses, is continually reviewing its protocol. For information on the measures the Archdiocese has taken and to find inspiration in the spiritual guidance resources it suggests to us, I invite you to regularly visit the

Archdiocesan website at [www.romancatholic.kingston.on.ca](http://www.romancatholic.kingston.on.ca) and to subscribe to its electronic Newsletter “Weekly News Bulletin” by sending a request to Elisabeth Santos, at reception@romancatholic.kingston.on.ca

 At the parish level, as you know from my initial few emails that I would also like to stay in close communication with you by sending you pastoral letters to provide you with regular updates and also provide spiritual guidance. ***If you***

***know members of the parish who are not receiving these updates please forward their email address to me or have them send their email address, so that we can include them on our distribution list. To update our files I would very much like each of you to send me your current cellphone number.*** As much as possible, we will also share information with you on our website, [www.stmaryscathedral.ca](http://www.stmaryscathedral.ca) All the pastoral letters from the Archbishop and myself are being posted on the cathedral’s website. Just scroll down and click on the bulletin tab.

 I also have the delicate task of addressing the question of the financial impact of the suspension of Sunday Liturgies because of the pandemic. As you well know, the cathedral parish relies almost exclusively on the Sunday collection to pay its expenses. We will be cutting our expenses as much as possible and like everyone living much more frugally. We will need to consider other forms of cost cutting if the crisis continues for any length of time. A couple of members of the staff have said they won’t take their salary during this time of crisis. God bless them!

 I understand that we are living in a time of crisis and we are all touched in one way or another by COVID-19. In prayer, I invite you to evaluate how you can continue to financially support your cathedral parish to ensure that it can carry on—maybe some of you will be able to do a little bit more than you are right now, while others because of loss of employment or other CoVid-19 related reasons need to scale back. In going through our data base in order to update this email list over the past few days I have once again been astounded by the great generosity of many of you. Thank you so very much. Interestingly, I noted, that a good many give very little and many nothing at all. We really need your help at this time.

The cathedral has been closed but we still have many expenses to maintain it. In order to meet expenses we need your weekly offerings. You can do your part by continuing or starting your weekly offering in one of many ways. All your donations will receive a charitable donation receipt for income tax purposes.

1. You could mail your cheques to the parish office using the address on the letterhead.
2. One of the best means of assisting is by signing up for monthly automatic debit donations via the parish’s financial institution. At the end of this letter please find the instructions to fill out to enroll for an automatic debit from your account.
3. You could place your offering through the mail slot at the front door of the rectory, 279 Johnson Street. You could use postdated cheques so that you only have to do this once.
4. You can make your donation by going to the parish website [www.stmaryscathedral.ca](http://www.stmaryscathedral.ca) on the Refugee Committee page and clicking on the Canada Helps button there. Or simply enter <http://stmaryscathedral.ca/refugee-committee/> and at the bottom of the page there is a donate button. In the Message just say this is a donation to the parish and it will come to the parish and not to the refugee committee.
5. You can e-transfer the money to us. This is very simple. Go on your site where you do your online banking. Click on e-transfers. Choose an amount. You will be asked for the site to which you are sending it. Simply put smarys@cogeco.net

You don’t need a password. Hit the send button and it will go directly in to our bank account and we will receive notification that this has happened and it will be recorded in your file to ensure you receive your income tax receipt for it.

1. Contact the parish office if you have any questions, special needs or if you would like to give assistance in a special way. You can reach myself or Suzanne by phone at 613-546-5521 or rector.smc.279@gmail.com or secretary.smc.279@gmail.com.
2. If you are sick, frail or elderly and don’t want to come out we have had many volunteer to run errands etc. They would be more than happy to come by to pick up your offering and/or pick up groceries or run an errand for you.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in this great time of uncertainty let each one of us do our part in keeping our beautiful cathedral.

Also, as I mentioned, no one should feel alone in this. There are many people who have volunteered to help out. If you are self-isolating or quarantined or don’t have family members in the city to help out please don’t hesitate to call the office and one of those who have volunteered will run your errands and/or get groceries.

God bless each of you and all those you love and please know that my prayers are with you.

Stay safe.  Be prudent.  Wash hands often.  Practice social distancing.

United in prayer in Christ

Father Shawn

together with

Mark Levac,

Chairman of St. Mary’s Cathedral Finance Committee mark@levacsupply.com

**AUTOMATIC DEBIT AUTHORIZATION FORM**

I/We hereby authorize St. Mary’s Cathedral, Kingston, Ontario to debit my/our account on or around the 30th day of each month in the amount indicated below:

Monthly Offering: $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“I/we understand that my participation in the Automatic Debit Plan does not include special collections including Cathedral Restorations.” Please print clearly & attach a “VOID” cheque.

Name(s):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Signature(s):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Suzanne is working from home. If you would like further information don’t hesitate to contact her and she will get right back to you. Email secretary.smc.279@gmail.com or leave a message on the parish phone. She can retrieve both remotely.