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THE BISHOP OF COVENTRY
The Right Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth

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23rd April 2021

To all the Parishes and Church Communities of the Diocese of Coventry

Dear Friends,

It is impossible to express the full extent of my appreciation for the depth and breadth of the work that has been carried out across this diocese in what has been the most extraordinary year.

I extend my thanks to everyone – clergy and laity – who have worked tirelessly in the midst of adversity. Because of you, empowered by the grace of God, we have been able to live out our shared purpose of worshipping God, making new disciples and transforming communities.

I also extend my thanks to each and every one of you who has financially supported the work of the Church in this diocese in whatever way you have been able to do so. I know that many people are facing financial hardship or have seen a drop in their household income. Many churches have also lost income from hall rentals and wedding fees – these are indeed challenging times.

The diocesan accounts for 2020 are still being audited. However, I can tell you that the Diocesan Board of Finance received 90% of the Parish Share contributions that were budgeted for 2020. I am hugely grateful for all the contributions that were received - thank you!

Broadly speaking, Parish Share accounts for about two-thirds of our diocesan income. It is used to pay for the cost of parish ministry for everyone in this diocese, no matter where they live. The costs of bishops and cathedral ministry are funded centrally by the Church of England, and the diocesan office team is funded in a separate way. So your precious gifts of money are there to ensure that our dedicated clergy are trained, receive their stipends and have somewhere to live.

In this year, which has seen such loss and suffering, I find it quite amazing that so much has been achieved. It has been wonderful to see churches, supported by diocesan staff, re-adjusting and re-imagining their mission and ministry. There has been a remarkable movement to delivering much of Church life online, and there are wonderful examples of reaching out through Christian social action to our communities in their need.

To give thanks to God's work among us and through us, a Day of Prayer is being planned in the Cathedral on 25th September. There is much more to be done, and the journey forward will not be without its challenges, but we have much to look forward to, and with our faith rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we thank God for all that is still to come.

Thank you for the part that you are playing in the life of God's kingdom

With every blessing,
As ever, yours,

+ Christopher