



Pastoral letter to be read at the Masses on the weekend 11/12 June 2016

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Edinburgh, 1 June 2016

I am writing to inform you and ask for your assistance regarding the support that we provide to our retired priests within the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh.

These are men who have given their life to Christ and the Church, who have tirelessly and faithfully preached the Gospel, who have enriched and fulfilled the life of all of us through the celebration of the sacraments and provided us with pastoral care for many years.

Take just two examples: Last year we celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of both Provost Philip Doherty and Canon John McAllister. As young men they were ordained on the same day in July 1955 by Archbishop Gordon Gray. In the subsequent years, they served the people of nearly 20 parishes across our vast Archdiocese. Canon McAllister also devoted 5 years as a missionary in the Nigerian diocese of Bauchi. Meanwhile, Provost Doherty served for 30 years as parish priest in Cowdenbeath, retiring at the age of 84. Between them, they gave us the gift of 122 years of priesthood. They - and all our retired priests - deserve our prayers, gratitude and support.

The Archdiocese, through the operation of the Aged and Infirm Clergy Fund ("AICF"), provides a modest retirement allowance, accommodation and support to the retired priests of the Archdiocese upon reaching retirement age, which for the clergy is usually 75 years of age.

As you will know from the ongoing work and information provided regarding our clustering conversations, we expect to have a reduction in the number of Archdiocesan priests to around 33 by 2020. Whilst we continue to discuss and find ways of dealing with this reduction in the number of priests, a further consequence of this is of course that there will be an increase in the number of retired priests over the next five to ten years.

The cost of providing benefits to retired priests will therefore increase significantly over the coming years as more of our priests retire and I point you to a letter prepared by the Archdiocesan Director of Finance which sets this out in greater detail as well as the measures we are taking to address this funding issue. The letter from the Director of Finance is also available today and I ask if you could please take the time to read it.

When I was appointed as your Archbishop three years ago, the financial position of the Aged and Infirm Clergy Fund had been declining for a number of years. The time to address this part of our diocesan finances is therefore overdue and it now falls to me to confront it, and with a little help from yourselves, as well as drawing upon a number of our other financial resources, we will be able to fix the problem. I would therefore urge you to assist us in this important matter, by supporting the second AICF special collection being taken on 12 June 2016 and if possible Gift Aiding your donation by completing the gift aid declaration on the rear of the special collection envelopes which will be available in your parish.

With my sincere gratitude to you for your generosity in helping to care for these men who have served the Church so well during their lives, I am

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Leo Cushley". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a small cross at the beginning.

✠Leo Cushley
Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh

