



November 11, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Another year has passed, and we are again approaching the annual collection for our Retired Religious to be held in parishes on December 7th and 8th. This event has significant benefits for retired Sisters. Here in the Diocese of Erie, there are 175 religious women over the age of 70. That includes 65 from ages 70 to 79, 83 from ages 80 to 89 and 27 sisters over 90. There are 30,000-retired religious throughout the country.

The **Retirement Fund for Religious** offers financial support for those Catholic Sisters, Brothers and Religious order priests who worked for years for little or no money. Your generous gift provides vital support for their health care. Last year the collection in this diocese netted nearly \$166,000 which when returned to the religious of this area helped defray costs of medication, nursing care, medical equipment, transportation, physical and occupational therapy and other necessary needs of our elderly Sisters.

Senior Religious are a treasure in the Church. Their dedication and hard work laid the foundation for Catholic schools, religious education programs, hospitals, social service agencies and countless other ministries, many of which still serve our Church today. This year we are celebrating 25 years of service by the Mercy Center for Women and Erie Dawn, which help with housing and other needs for women, as well as the St. Benedict Child Development Center. These ministries and many others are examples of the tremendous influence that women religious have had in this diocese. I join you in praising God for their faithful and generous service to the Church in the past and continuing in the present.

Please join me in supporting the **Retirement Fund for Religious**. I understand that you are asked to support many worthy causes. I invite you only to give what you can. Most importantly, please pray for an increase of vocations to the consecrated life and for God's continued blessing on all our women and men religious.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Lawrence T. Persico

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie