



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

November 2018

Dear Friends in Christ,

Soon our parishes will be conducting the Retirement Fund for Religious collection. This annual appeal benefits 31,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests—women and men who have consecrated their lives to serving God and the Church.

During the 2018 World Day for Consecrated Life, Pope Francis remarked, “There is no growth without roots and no flowering without new buds.” This analogy has certainly borne out within the life of the Church in the United States. Senior religious were the roots that established Catholic schools, hospitals, and social service agencies—allowing generations of Catholics to flourish. Today, the example of older religious inspires younger members to persevere in mission and ministry.

Yet many religious communities struggle to provide for aging members. Most elder religious served for small stipends, leaving a large gap in retirement savings. Rising health-care costs and decreased income compound the struggle to provide adequate care. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious provides vital funding for medications, nursing care, and more. It also helps religious congregations implement long-range retirement strategies, even as they continue to serve the People of God.

I recognize this is but one of numerous worthy causes in need of assistance; I ask simply that you give what you can. In thanksgiving for their faithful service, please join me in supporting the Retirement Fund for Religious and in praying for God’s blessing on our nation’s elderly religious.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids