



Diocese of Palm Beach

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Office of
THE BISHOP

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December 4, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will take place on the weekend of December 11 and 12. This annual collection provides assistance for the day-to-day care of thousands of elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. In his 2010 World Day for Consecrated Life address, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, underscored the unique role that religious play in our spiritual journeys when he stated, *“The very fact of being consecrated makes the consecrated person, as it were, a ‘bridge’ to God for all who encounter him or her.”*

When we reflect on the various roles that religious have played in our Church and here in the Diocese of Palm Beach, we are reminded of the very many ways these dedicated women and men serve as bridges of faith. Through their service in Catholic schools and parishes, religious offer a bridge to both academic knowledge and faith formation. By means of their corporal works of mercy, religious are bridges of hope, serving as instruments of God’s love to the poor, the sick, the lonely and the oppressed.

While many retired religious continue in active and volunteer ministry, others are frail and need assistance. Nevertheless, they remain committed to their vocation, accepting limitations as they age and fully embrace the opportunity to focus more fully on praying for our Church and the world. Because of this, I ask you to offer what you can to the care of the men and women who have made enormous contributions to our Church. As Saint Paul instructs, *“Let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith.”* Gal 6:10

Together let us respond generously to the needs of our retired religious! Above all, let us pray for God’s continued blessing on our retired religious men and women, and for God to supply many more men and women who will hear and respond to God’s call to a life of service in religious life in the Catholic Church.

With gratitude for your continued dedication and generosity, and with the assurance of my prayers, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito
Bishop of Palm Beach