



## Diocese of Palm Beach

9995 North Military Trail • P.O. Box 109650  
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida 33410-9650

Office of  
THE BISHOP

(561) 775-9595 Fax (561) 775-7035

December 2, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will take place the weekend of December 10-11. This collection is an opportunity to honor and thank thousands of senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests for their faithful service.

While visiting a senior-care facility in 2010, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI noted, “Indeed, the provision of care for the elderly should be considered not so much an act of generosity as the repayment of a debt of gratitude.”

Whether or not we realize it, we are all beneficiaries of the tremendous contributions these women and men have made to the Church in the United States. Through hard work, prayer, and sacrifice, they built Catholic schools and hospitals, initiated programs to promote social justice, and ministered to the neediest among us. As we reflect on the dedication of elder religious, I hope you, too, can recall a sister or brother who made a positive difference in your life.

While many retired religious continue in active and volunteer ministry, others are frail and in need of assistance. There are religious communities that struggle to care for their elderly members. Sky-rocketing health-care costs and decreased income make it increasingly difficult to provide necessary medications, nursing care, and basic services. Aging convents and other facilities pose additional challenges in terms of safety and handicap accessibility.

In thanksgiving for all that senior religious have done, please join me in supporting the Retirement Fund for Religious and in praying for God’s continued blessing on our nation’s elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.

With gratitude for your generosity, and with every prayerful wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito  
Bishop of Palm Beach

**NOTE TO PASTORS:** Please publish this letter in the parish bulletin or have it read at all Masses on the weekend of December 3 & 4.