



Diocese of Palm Beach

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Office of
THE BISHOP

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December 5, 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

The annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious, which helps meet the growing needs of more than 21,000 elderly sisters, brothers and religious-order priests who have been faithful servants of the Church, will be next weekend, December 13/14.

Rising health care costs and the absence of traditional retirement plans have placed significant strain on many religious communities. In 2024, the average annual cost of care for those over age 70 was about \$56,600 per person, with skilled nursing care averaging \$96,000. Also, the average annual Social Security benefit for a religious is \$9,090, while the average lay beneficiary receives \$23,704. The Retirement Fund for Religious helps address these challenges.

Since 1988, the U.S. Catholic bishops have organized a collection to address the deficit in retirement funds among religious communities. Last year, the appeal raised more than \$28.1 million, providing assistance to 266 U.S. religious communities. Beyond financial aid, the collection supports educational programs, empowering religious communities to plan for their long-term needs.

I am grateful for the impact these women and men have had on our faith journeys, inspiring and guiding us all. Your donation to the Retirement Fund for Religious plays a vital role in providing necessary financial support. I invite you to give whatever you can toward this year's collection, and please keep all our women and men religious in your prayers.

With gratitude for your continued support and every prayerful wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito
Bishop of Palm Beach