



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

November 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our parishes will hold the Retirement Fund for Religious collection, an annual appeal that benefits some 30,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests on December 7-8, 2019.

As Christians, we are called to “serve the Lord with gladness” (Ps 100:2). Our elderly religious offer a shining example of what it means to answer this call. During their days of active ministry, they worked tirelessly to build Catholic schools and hospitals, promote social justice, and embrace the neediest among us. In retirement, many continue in volunteer ministry, and all pray for the needs of our Church and world. Inspired by love, their service – past and present – is marked by joy and a deep desire to do the will of God.

As you may know, many religious communities find it increasingly difficult to provide for aging members. Most older religious worked for little or no pay. Today, their communities do not have enough retirement savings. At the same time, health-care costs continue to rise, and fewer members are able to serve in compensated ministry.

Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious provides vital funding for medications, nursing care, and more. It also helps religious congregations plan for future retirement needs, even as they continue to serve the People of God.

I understand you are asked to support many worthy causes. I invite you only to give what you can. Most importantly, please pray for God’s continued blessing on all our women and men religious. Rest assured, they are praying for you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids