



DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

Office of the Bishop

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November 7, 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On December 8-9, parishes in the Diocese of St. Petersburg and around the country will participate in a special collection to benefit the Retirement Fund for Religious. This annual appeal assists 31,000 Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests—women and men who have consecrated their lives to serving God and the Church.

During this year's World Day for Consecrated Life, Pope Francis remarked, "There is no growth without roots." Our retired religious men and women 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 of our elderly religious served for small stipends, or even no stipends, leaving a large gap in funds able to be set aside for retirement expenses. 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.

The Diocese of St. Petersburg donated \$192,641 during last year's collection. I ask that you continue your generosity to this most worthy appeal and give to those who have given a lifetime. To learn more, a website is available with resources and information: retiredreligious.org.

May God continue to bless you.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Gregory L. Parkes
Bishop of St. Petersburg