



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

December 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Pope Francis often highlights the role older adults play in conveying faith from one generation to the next. Recently, he noted that “there is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel.”¹ As we approach the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection — an appeal that benefits some 26,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests — I am reminded that senior religious never retire from their vows.

Instead, the prayer and ministry of older religious are an ongoing witness to the Gospel. In their younger years, they laid the foundation for Catholic schools, hospitals, and works of mercy. Today, many serve in volunteer ministry. Others are frail and need assistance. Yet all remain wholly committed to their vocations, accepting the limitations of aging and embracing the opportunity to spend more time praying for our Church and world.

Most senior religious worked for little pay, and now their religious communities do not have enough retirement savings. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious offers support that helps religious communities provide loving care for older members while ensuring younger ones can continue the good works of their elders.

I recognize you may be experiencing your own financial difficulties. I ask only that you give what you can. Most importantly, please join me in praying for God’s continued blessing on our nation’s elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.

In the Lord’s Peace,

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmone, DD
Bishop of Charleston

¹Pope Francis, *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the First World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*, July 25, 2021 (<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/nonni/documents/20210531-messaggio-nonni-anziani.html>).