



December 4, 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

In 2010, while visiting a senior-care facility, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI observed: *“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.”* Next weekend, parishes throughout the Diocese of Ogdensburg will be taking up the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious, an opportunity to honor and thank thousands of senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests for their faithful service.

We are all beneficiaries of the tremendous contributions these women and men have made to the Church. Through hard work, prayer, and much sacrifice, they built our Catholic schools and hospitals and ministered to the neediest among us. I’m sure that each of us can recall a sister or brother who made a positive difference in our lives.

Sky-rocketing health-care costs and decreased income make it increasingly difficult to provide necessary medication, nursing care, and basic services. Aging convents and other facilities pose additional challenges in terms of safety and handicap accessibility.

I know that this is one of numerous worthy causes in need of support. Many of our neighbors and family members face financial difficulties today. I ask you simply to give what you can to this annual appeal. In thanksgiving for all that senior religious have given, please join me in supporting the Retirement Fund for Religious. Let us continue to pray for God’s continued blessings on our elderly sisters, brothers, and religious priests.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Terry R. LaValley'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg