



2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Soon the parishes in our Diocese will conduct the annual appeal for the *Retirement Fund for Religious*. This annual collection benefits some 25,000 elderly sisters, brothers and religious order priests nationwide.

As Christians, we are called to “serve the Lord with gladness” (Ps 100:2). Our elderly consecrated religious offer an inspiring example of what it means to answer this call. During their years 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. Energized by love, their service, past and present, is marked by joy and a deep desire to do the will of God.

We are so indebted to many consecrated religious. Many religious men and women have served and continue to serve the people of God here in the North Country as teachers, health care providers, pastoral associates, administrators, pastors and parochial vicars. Recently, we welcomed the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Church from Ghana to our diocese.

We are so indebted to these consecrated religious. We have the opportunity to express our appreciation by supporting the annual collection for the *Retirement Fund for Religious*. The fact that these religious worked for little or no financial compensation in years past, means that they are now struggling to meet the costs of caring for retired and infirmed members. The proceeds from this collection offer some financial support for their communities in caring for older members. In addition, it helps to ensure that younger members can continue the good works of their elders.

Thank you for your generous support of this appeal. We continue to thank God for the presence of the consecrated religious among us. We pray for them and for an increase in their number. Know that they are praying for us!

Gratefully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry R. LaValley". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg