



December 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

A very happy and holy Advent to you! For the past two years, at this time, I have asked you and your families to consider what you might do to assist the retired and aging priests who have served at our parishes for so many years. As we come upon this Holy Season, I come to you once again.

This year, of course, with the beginning of Advent, it is impossible to ignore the recent changes we've experienced by way of the new translation of our Roman Missal. These changes certainly will take some time of adjustment, but at the same time, we're faced with the opportunity for renewal and a reexamination of what it is that we are really doing at the Holy Mass. This is, likewise, a great opportunity for our priests, to contemplate and pray in a more reverent and always-deeper way. And so, as we continue to reflect on these changes and as we move together towards greater reverence, perhaps we could also take the opportunity to reflect on the rich heritage of our faith, from our parents and other forerunners to the ministers Christ has chosen to serve us, namely, our priests.

We can all think of numerous great priests who have served, sacrificed and ministered to us and our loved ones. They have celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; baptized our children, been merciful ministers of reconciliation with God, witnessed marriages, anointed our sick, grieved with us as we suffer, and buried our beloved.

Our retired priests continue to be a treasure for us. Besides their constant prayers for the Diocese of Madison, so many of them continue to serve and are so very active in their "retirement," helping at various parishes to give our pastors assistance, ministering to the sick and infirm in our hospitals and nursing homes, and lending support wherever and whenever they can. Truly, so many of these good men continue to pour out their lives for service to Jesus Christ.

For many years we have taken a collection for retired religious men and women, but what you may not know is that this collection, while important, has not provided for the aid for our diocesan priests – those who serve you in our parishes. Please join me in offering our retired priests our appreciation and gratitude for their many years of priestly ministry.

I thank you for your generosity in this Bless our Priest effort. Let us pray together for our priests and for one another as we make our way to the joy of Christmas!

Gratefully Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Robert C. Morlino
Bishop of Madison

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