



Archdiocese of Philadelphia  
Office of the Cardinal  
222 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

November 28, 2008

Dear Friends in Christ,

The **Annual Retirement Fund for Religious Collection**, now in its twenty-first year, continues to be one of the most successful appeals in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. Many religious institutes and societies of apostolic life have received much needed support through your generosity in sharing with them the responsibility of caring for their retired members.

On behalf of all the Christian faithful, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI has thanked God for the precious service which is and has been rendered to the Church by men and women religious. In doing so, His Holiness has also expressed his prayerful remembrance of all “the brothers and sisters who are sick, elderly or in difficulty” [*Message on the Occasion of the XII World Day for Consecrated Life, February 2, 2008*].

Consecrated life in the Church is directed to the contemplation of things divine and to constant union with God in prayer. Though consecrated persons serve in many apostolates of human formation, service to the poor, education and health care, their essential contribution depends more on who they are than on what they do, even though their achievements are enormous.

As part of your support of our men and women religious, I ask for your characteristically generous response to the **Retirement Fund for Religious Collection**, which is scheduled for **December 6 - 7, 2008**. In addition to your financial assistance, I ask for your continued prayers for all our retired religious priests, sisters, and brothers, and for those who selflessly care for them.

Assuring you of my deep gratitude, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

**+ Justin Card. Rigali**

Cardinal Justin Rigali  
Archbishop of Philadelphia

(Please communicate the contents of this letter to your parishioners in the most appropriate manner on the weekend of November 29 - 30, 2008; the collection is taken up the following weekend of December 6 and 7, 2008. Collection remittal should be made payable to ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA and sent to: Office for Accounting Services, 222 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299)