



BISHOP'S OFFICE

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December 1, 2006

My dear friends in Christ:

This year the annual Retirement Fund for Religious will be held on the weekend of December 9-10. The well documented numbers of elderly religious and the rising costs of health care are resulting in a growing need for help. Particularly at some contemplative institutes, as well as other institutes that primarily served in educational ministries, the needs are severe.

Almost without exception, our elderly and infirm religious offer moving examples of aging with grace, dignity and faith. Even though they no longer have the stamina or energy to manage a full schedule of work and prayer, many continue to serve, providing genuine enrichment and encouragement to others who are aging.

Since the National Religious Retirement Office was established in 1988, this annual appeal has raised almost \$50 million; donors often speak of this campaign as a timely response to religious who have ministered throughout their lives to others. Even so, the giving that distinguishes this appeal represents just slightly more than one dollar per adult Catholic in the United States.

I ask you to support this appeal with generosity, acknowledging the elderly religious, who have given their lives in ministry to others.

Wishing God's blessings on you for your compassion and with an assurance of my prayers, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Salvatore R. Matano

The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Burlington

P.S. This collection should be taken up on the weekend of December 9-10, 2006. Returns should be made to the Finance Office, P.O. Box 489, Burlington, VT 05402-0489 no later than January 15, 2007.