



Office of the Archbishop
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December 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Reflecting on the fruits of the Year of Mercy, many of us can recall the example of thousands of now elderly women and men religious who, for so many, were a living sign of God's mercy. These women and men—Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests—were indeed the hands of Christ as they educated the young, cared for the sick, and ministered to the neediest among us. Through their service, sacrifice and witness, they modeled the compassionate love of Jesus and showed us that we, too, could be instruments of peace and mercy.

Today, many senior religious continue to be vessels of mercy, serving in a wide range of volunteer and prayer ministries. Others are frail and need assistance. Most older religious ministered for small stipends, leaving a substantial gap in retirement savings. With the ever-rising cost of health care and the increased number of those needing care, many religious communities struggle to provide for aging members.

On December 10-11, your parish will be conducting its appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious, an annual collection that benefits nearly 33,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. Your gift provides vital support for medications, nursing care, and more. It also helps religious communities implement long-term retirement strategies that ensure both quality eldercare and continued service to the People of God.

The people of the Archdiocese of Chicago have always led the nation in their generous response to this appeal. As not only a matter of justice to care for their needs, but also in thanksgiving for the lessons of mercy senior religious have shared with us, please join me in supporting the Retirement Fund for Religious. With every good wish, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Card. Blase Cupich".

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago