



*Office of the Bishop*

*Diocese of Erie  
P. O. Box 10397  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16514-0397*

April 15, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For 156 years, the priests of the Diocese of Erie have dedicated their lives in service to God and others. Many of these priests are now retired. Even still, they continue to be, "shepherds after the heart of Christ."

Approximately one-fourth of our priests are currently retired, though of course a priest never really 'retires'. He may step away from administrative duties and responsibilities but he continues in lifelong priestly ministry. We are blessed to have many of our retired priests still assisting in parishes, nursing homes and correctional facilities. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their faithful service.

Like those whom they have served, our retired priests are burdened by escalating health care costs and long-term care expenses. The annual December collection for retired religious is for members of religious orders only and does not benefit the diocesan priests who serve in 120 of our 122 parishes. With more of our diocesan priests eligible to retire from active ministry in the next few years, we must ensure that our resources for the Priest Retirement Plan remain adequate to cover their future needs.

I ask that you join me in supporting the **Good Shepherd Collection** on the weekend of May 2 & 3. This important appeal will help to provide for the needs of our retired priests who are now elderly, ill or incapacitated. This Good Shepherd collection is our opportunity to say "thanks" to these priests for their many years of faithful service. Your financial support will help to return to them a measure of the same love and generosity which they have given to us.

Please pray for happy and healthy retirement years for our retired priests and for new priestly vocations in our diocese to continue the work of priestly service. Pray also for our currently active priests who deserve our support, encouragement and care. Thank you for your generous response. May the Lord grant you his Easter joy and peace!

Sincerely in Christ,  
The Most Reverend Donald W. Trautman, S.T.D., S.S.L.  
Bishop of Erie

*The original with signature is on file in the Chancery.*

**This letter is to be read, published, or otherwise communicated to the faithful on the weekend of April 25-26, 2009.**