



April 11, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Since the Diocese of Erie was established on July 29, 1853, we have been blessed with many men who have devoted their lives to the priesthood. These priests have faithfully served and led the faithful in living out their lives as Catholics.

When a priest is ordained, he takes on the pastoral responsibility for the lives of others. He accepts and accompanies those he serves during happy times, such as marriage and baptism, as well as during difficult times of sickness and grief. He leads us in worship, hears our confessions, prays over our loved ones. He is our shepherd, pointing the way to Christ.

Eventually the time comes when a priest will retire, usually due to age or medical challenges. A priest typically retires when he is 75. Even after that age, priests eligible to retire have continued to serve as pastors and administrators in our diocese. The people of the Diocese of Erie are called to share in the care of our retired priests and help provide for the future of those priests who care for and serve you now.

On the weekend of April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> you will have the opportunity to give to those who have faithfully served you throughout their lives, by contributing to our annual Good Shepherd Collection for retired diocesan priests. Every gift is appreciated for this worthy cause.

Pope Francis encourages us: "Dear people of God, be close to your priests with affection and with your prayers, that they may be shepherds according to God's heart. And pray for those whom God is calling to be priests that they may respond to this call with humility and joy."

Thank you in advance for your prayerful and generous support for our retired priests. I wish you and your families a blessed Easter season.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+Lawrence T. Persico*

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL  
Bishop of Erie