

**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA  
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP**

December 2, 2012

Dear Friends in Christ,

From the earliest days of our history, the Catholic church in the United States has been blessed abundantly by God's grace with growth, energy and vitality. We see this quite clearly in the manifold works of charity and concern evident in the ministries of our many religious congregations. Each day these dedicated men and women continue to live out their baptismal and evangelical commitment in caring for the needy, nursing the sick, educating the young and witnessing heroically to the values of peace and social justice. In essence, they have successfully shared the Gospel values within our unique American Catholic heritage.

While those in the active ministry give of themselves tirelessly for the needs of all, our contemplative communities fulfill their role and mission living in solitude, contemplation and prayer. In this, these dedicated persons also participate in and empower the apostolic endeavors of every local church.

The **Annual Retirement Fund for Religious Collection** provides a two-fold opportunity for the entire church community to express gratitude for the labors of our religious, and to assist them in their needs. With the increasing financial pressures in providing for their welfare. Having benefitted so greatly from their self-sacrifice, and recognizing their contribution to the church in America, we must stand ready to assist them as best we can.

I ask you therefore to support generously this **Retirement Fund for Religious Collection** scheduled for December 8-9, 2012. Let us remember them also in our daily prayers.

Gratefully in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia