



April 5, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Since the establishment of the Diocese of Erie in 1853, we have been richly blessed with faithful and talented priests who have nourished our people with the Word and the Sacraments. Our people know and love their priests and rely on them for spiritual care.

Priesthood is a lifelong vocation, which is why so many retired priests in the Diocese continue to give of themselves in countless ways. These priests minister as long as they are physically able, essentially only retiring from the administrative duties associated with being a pastor. They provide valuable assistance to current pastors. They help out by celebrating daily or Sunday liturgies, ministering to the sick and homebound, visiting hospitals and providing spiritual counseling. Some travel throughout the Diocese to celebrate Mass when a brother priest needs to be away from his parish because of illness or family obligation or for vacation.

The annual second collection to serve the needs of retired diocesan priests will be taken up in all our parishes the weekend of Good Shepherd Sunday, May 6-7. Your generous donations to this collection this past year tell me that you love our priests and are grateful for their presence in your lives.

We currently have 47 retired priests, and the number of priests reaching retirement age will only continue to grow each year. I ask that you show your appreciation to our retired priests once again by giving generously to the Good Shepherd Collection at your parish the weekend of May 6-7. Please note: the collection taken in December is for retired consecrated men and women belonging to religious communities and is not to be confused with this collection.

On Good Shepherd Sunday, please pray for all our priests and for more young men willing to respond to the Lord's call to priesthood. In the name of our retired priests, I thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity to them through the annual Good Shepherd Collection.

May the joy of the Risen Christ fill your hearts and homes this Easter Season.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+Lawrence T. Persico*

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