



Diocese of Worcester  
Office of the Bishop  
49 Elm Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

February 4, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of my great joys as your Bishop is to work with so many dedicated priests who have served you and our diocese faithfully throughout their lives. One of my weighty responsibilities is to care for them in their old age.

I write to ask your support for the new Ash Wednesday Collection that will assist the retired priests of the Diocese of Worcester. Unlike the December collection for Retired Religious which supports sisters, brothers and priests of religious orders throughout the country, the Ash Wednesday collection will be dedicated to those priests ordained for the Diocese of Worcester who do not benefit from the December collection.

We currently have 50 retired priests. In the next nine years an additional 42 priests will reach the retirement age of 75. Our annual costs for health insurance, housing and monthly stipends for retired priests have recently run between \$2.2 million - \$2.6 million. While Partners in Charity, Celebrate Priesthood and the endowments from Forward in Faith and Legacy of Hope have and will continue to support priest retirement, we have had annual shortfalls in funding to meet those obligations.

We recently made changes to retirement benefits for priests who have not yet retired. Those measures are expected to save up to \$12 million through 2050. However, in the short run, deficits up to \$374,000 per year are projected through 2031. The purpose of the Ash Wednesday collection is to help eliminate those deficits and strengthen the sustainability of decent care for our retired priests.

Our retired priests have cared for us and our families throughout the decades. Please consider beginning this Lent with a sacrificial gift to the Ash Wednesday Collection on February 17 to support our retired priests.

I am very grateful for your support of all of our Diocesan efforts and for your consideration of this request. Thank you and God bless you.

With every prayerful best wish I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus  
Bishop of Worcester