



THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

September 1, 2022

Dear Friends in Christ:

In my years of serving as a parish priest and now as your Bishop, I have met many priests who have given their lives to the service of our Lord and His people. By their ministry they have made a positive impression on my life and inspired me in my vocation. I imagine that, like me, many of you share feelings of gratitude for the ministry of the priests who have served us so long and so well.

On September 10-11, you will have an opportunity to respond to our priests' lifetime of service, express your appreciation to them and affirm their ministry among us through a gift to our Belleville Diocese's annual Retired Diocesan Priests Collection. This collection will be taken up in all parishes. The proceeds from this collection will be used solely to provide quality health care for our current and future retired priests, including their long-term care in nursing facilities, Medicare supplemental insurance and prescription medications. At present, the Belleville Diocese has 35 active diocesan priests (17 of which are at retirement age but still in active, full-time ministry), and 33 priests who are currently retired.

With the large number of retirement-age priests and escalating health care costs, I am asking for your help. Your gift to the Retired Diocesan Priests Collection will ensure good retirement and health care coverage for them, providing personal dignity for those who are currently retired as well as for our younger priests who will retire in the future. The priests of our Belleville Diocese do not benefit from the December national collection for retired religious, so your support for this special diocesan collection is vital.

I hope you will make a generous gift to this important collection again this year. I also ask that you remember me and all our priests in your daily prayers. Please know that I pray for you, the people of our diocese, and all of our clergy each day.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of Priests, place you close to Jesus her Son.

In our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael McGovern".

Most Reverend Michael McGovern
Bishop of Belleville

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