

# Father's Day Collection for Infirm & Retired Priests

June 2022

Dear Friends,

Many of you know that Father Jim Lennon was called home on May 8 after a long and fruitful life. Father Lennon was so beloved that Joliet city officials in 2006 named the portion of Willow Avenue next to St. Patrick's Church – his final assignment before retirement in 2006 – "Father Jim Lennon Way."

Father Lennon also happened to write a popular article in June 2019 highlighting the annual Father's Day Collection for Infirm and Retired Priests. In honor of Father Lennon and the upcoming second collection taking place the weekend of June 19, we are reprinting his article below in its entirety. Well said, Father Lennon, and thank you.

Paz y bien,

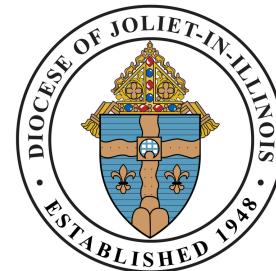
Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks, Bishop of Joliet



## How Can We Thank You?

By Father Jim Lennon

June 2019, *Christ is our Hope*



At the time of my ordination on June 7, 1958, little did I realize the love, support, care and friendship of so many Catholic parishioners in the parishes I have served throughout the Diocese of Joliet.

Now after 61 years of priesthood, I still love my ministry, and I thank God that I am able to serve in the Joliet area. When I visit our young priests, I tell them how blessed they should be to touch the hearts and souls of so many of God's people.

I continue to be convinced of the prayers of so many people for their priests, present and former parishioners, religious men and women, retired and infirm priests, parish shut-ins and (the list could go on), sustaining both active and those of us in the senior-priest category (far from retired).

Hopefully, all our priests remain committed to caring for the elderly and infirm, for one day we will likely be in the same position.

As a priest ages, like all of us, we too often need care and special attention. We have retired and senior priests living at St. John Vianney Villa in Naperville and Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home in Joliet. There are also senior priests living on their own. I might add that our St. John Vianney Villa is home to nine priests and is capably administered by the Oblates of the Sacred Heart. We are indeed blessed to have Sister Teresina and Sister Karen Marie making the villa a home for our retired priests.

A significant number of our senior priests assist on a regular basis in parishes celebrating Masses, hearing confessions and filling in on a temporary basis. The assistance also enables priests serving in our parishes to take their vacations and occasionally get away for a little rest and relaxation. Father Dan Stempora, Father Marty Gabel, and Father Tony

Taschetta are out on ministry assignments almost daily, while others fill in as needed. Father Bill O'Shea lives in Chicago and assists at Old St. Patrick's Church and returns often to teach religion at All Saints Catholic Academy in Naperville. Father Charlie Wheeler lives at Ss. Mary & Joseph in Chebanese and is ministering on a daily basis in the Kankakee region. I am blessed to assist at several parishes in Joliet, as well as offering Mass at several retirement and nursing homes in the area.

However, to maintain a quality of life in our "golden" years is where we rely on your continued generous financial help. Your senior priests are well aware of the rising costs of medical care and the ordinary living expenses.

The Father's Day Collection taken up each June for the Fund for Diocesan Infirm and Elderly Priests is to meet the needs of our diocesan elderly, infirmed and retired priests. This year, that collection will take place at parishes throughout the diocese on Father's Day weekend, June 18-19.

Old age, senior status or whatever you want to call it, is a graced time to encounter God in new and wonderful ways. As we senior priests have more time for prayer, silence and stillness, you – our faithful and loving parishioners of the Diocese of Joliet – are remembered daily in our Masses and other prayers. As we have tried to be Good Shepherds to you over many years, we now appreciate your continued care and financial generosity as we draw closer to the promised reward for all those who have loved and served our God.

All of our senior priests express their deep appreciation and sincere gratitude for your love and tremendous generosity. †