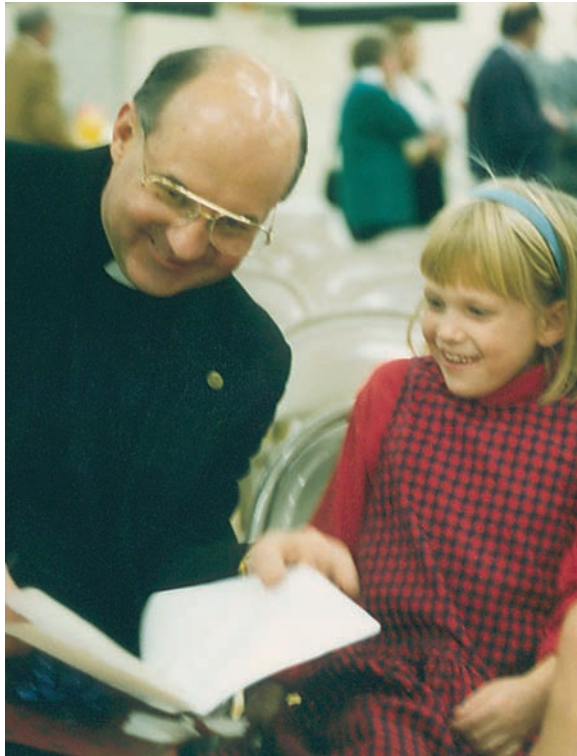


## THE GATE **SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP** (John 10:1-10)



preaching and teaching, by the way they have celebrated the Holy Eucharist and the Sacraments, and by their patient and attentive service of administration.

Every aspect of the life and ministry of a priest is a gift from God, who is leading us home. Our priests dedicate their lives to building up and maintaining the communion of our Church. Our priests bring people closer to the Lord. It is with tremendous gratitude that we offer our thanks for their service in Christ on the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

## BRIDGING THE GAP

The Diocesan Priest Retirement Collection will help to improve the current shortfall in the St. Joseph Association. However, to effectively bridge the gap between fund assets and liabilities, additional growth strategies will be needed. Individuals and families are encouraged to remember retired priests of the Diocese of Marquette in their estate planning by designating a gift or bequest to the St. Joseph Association.

It is essential that we continue to provide financial stability for our retired priests and guarantee future security for our active priests. By strengthening the St. Joseph Association, we will ensure adequate retirement and health coverage in the years ahead for those who have served the Diocese of Marquette with their priestly ministry.

## THIS COLLECTION BENEFITS DIOCESAN PRIESTS

All monies collected directly benefit priests of the Diocese of Marquette. This Diocesan Priest Retirement Collection is separate from the annual December collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious, which supports retired priests, brothers and sisters of religious orders and institutes across America. In the U.S., religious orders and institutes are independent organizations whose income, earnings, and expenses are separate from diocesan structures.

**PLEASE BE GENEROUS TO THIS COLLECTION IN YOUR PARISH ON MAY 14/15, 2011.**



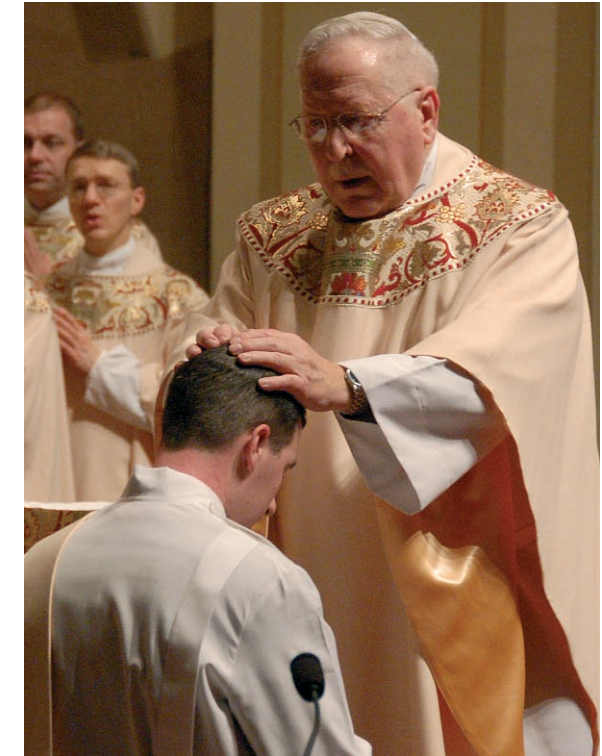
**Diocesan Priest Retirement Collection**

**May 14/15, 2011**



**DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE**

## WHOEVER ENTERS THROUGH **IS THE**



**L**ike Christ, the Good Shepherd, surrounded by his sheep whom he loves and cares for, your priest tends to your parish/mission family. Perhaps a priest baptized your infant daughter, or administered your son's first Holy Communion. Perhaps he witnessed your marriage vows as you celebrated the Sacrament of Matrimony, or presided at the funeral Mass of a loved one called home to the Lord. Imagine all of the people throughout the Upper Peninsula whose lives, both individually and collectively, our priests have touched and transformed by their

## ST. JOSEPH ASSOCIATION: A Fund to Support our Priests' Retirement

Established in 1960, the St. Joseph Association provides retirement benefits to senior priests of our diocese. The Diocese of Marquette is blessed with many senior priests (those who are no longer assigned to a parish). Many of these priests serve us in countless ways for which we are grateful. Whether they are still active in ministry or not, these senior priests make present Christ, the Good Shepherd, not only in what they do, but in who they are. They give witness to the Lord's presence not only by their words, but by their lives.



TOM BÜCHKOE PHOTO

During his years of priestly ministry, a diocesan priest is supported mainly by a parish community. But the retirement years can be difficult for these men who may dedicate as many as 50 years or more of their lives to caring for and ministering to others.

Many faithful priests are left with minimal income upon retirement. They participate in the Social Security program, but since they receive modest salaries during their many years of ministry, their monthly Social Security benefits are much smaller than those typically received by retired lay people.

Retired priests of the Diocese of Marquette receive health insurance benefits, automobile insurance and a monthly pension from the St. Joseph Association.

Senior priests use their pension for basic needs, such as food, housing and transportation. Diocesan priests live independently during their retirement, unlike priests of religious communities who live together during their senior years and are cared for by their religious institutes.

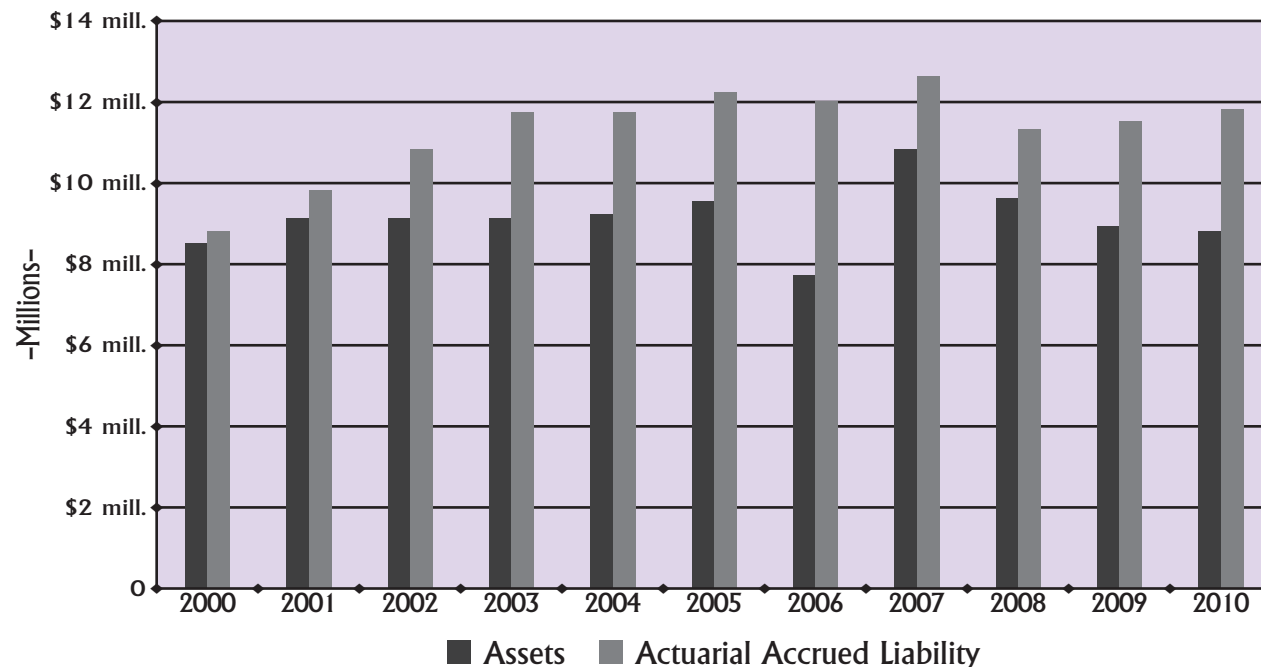
### A PRESSING NEED

As is the case with many companies and institutions with pension plans in today's world, our priests'

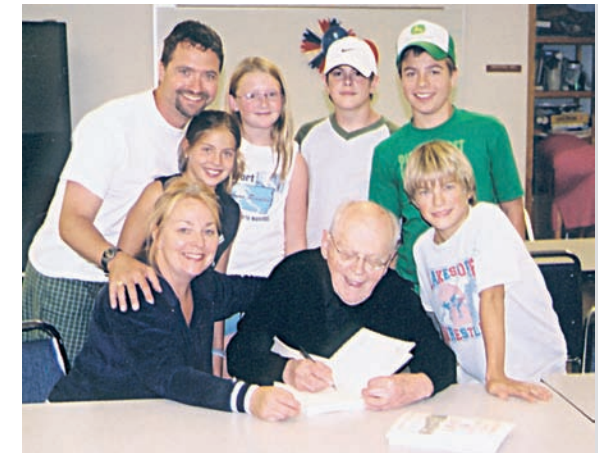
retirement program is not fully funded. Parishes are assessed an annual amount per priest serving at the parish. In 2010 this assessment averaged \$5,448 per parish. These parish assessments, plus charitable gifts and bequests received by the fund, have fallen short of what is needed to provide necessary benefits to our priests. The situation has become even more dire due to the decline in the stock market.

### A SERIOUS SHORTFALL

In 1993, the asset value of the St. Joseph Association was approximately \$3.6 million. The graph below illustrates how the fund has grown over the past 11 years. The value of the fund in 2010 was \$8.8 million. The graph also shows how the accrued actuarial liabilities have grown. In 2010 the accrued actuarial liability was \$11.8 million, leaving a shortfall of approximately \$3.0 million. Annual amounts are illustrated below in millions.



In 2010, 47 priests were receiving retirement benefits through the St. Joseph Association. The average age of our priests is high, and with a large number of priests nearing retirement, there is a pressing need to provide for these men who have so faithfully served us.



In addition, health care costs nationwide are skyrocketing with no end in sight. The diocese must plan to meet the health care needs of retired priests now and in the years to come. It must provide the necessary resources to meet the high costs of medical services, prescription drugs, gaps in Medicare coverage and long-term care.

The shortfall in our priests' retirement fund is now approximately \$3.0 million. There are many reasons for this shortfall:

- Senior priests, like everyone else in America today, are living longer and drawing on the Priests' Retirement Fund for a longer period of time than their predecessors.
- Health care costs have risen dramatically since the 1970s.
- Priests who are now retiring or preparing to retire were members of very large ordination classes.