**2016 Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR)** [**www.retiredreligious.org**](http://www.retiredreligious.org)

Sample Talk

*Begin by introducing yourself. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I am here to talk to you about the Retirement Fund for Religious, an annual collection that benefits senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.*

At the Last Supper, Jesus told the Apostles, “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you” (John 15:16). Each of us receives a special call or vocation from God, his choice for our lives. Some are called to be mothers and fathers; others are called to the single life. Catholic sisters, brothers, and priests in religious orders—known collectively as women and men religious—have answered a call to serve and love God in a particular way. As members of religious congregations, they dedicate their lives to personal and communal prayer and to serving God by ministering to those in need.

Above all, women and men religious strive to help those around them deepen their relationship with God and, in so doing, become the people God calls them to be. Many of us may remember a special sister or brother who had a profound influence on our lives. Whether a teacher in Catholic school or a spiritual director at a retreat, this person was instrumental in helping us discover God’s plan for us.

Today, many of these women and men religious are retired. Some continue in volunteer ministry, while others are frail and need assistance. Sadly, a majority of religious communities do not have sufficient income and savings to provide for older members. Many senior religious worked for years for small stipends. Their sacrifices over many decades now leave their religious communities with a tremendous gap in retirement funding. Longer life expectancies and rising health-care costs compound the challenge to provide adequate care.

The Retirement Fund for Religious was launched in 1988 by Catholic bishops in the United States. The annual collection raises funds that are distributed to religious communities across the country. These funds help eligible communities provide for the immediate needs of their elder members and develop long-range retirement strategies. Religious communities are exceedingly grateful for this assistance and are careful stewards of each dollar received.

In 2015 alone, the annual cost of care for senior religious was over $1.2 billion. Clearly, the collection cannot eradicate the need, but it can certainly help to alleviate it. The Retirement Fund for Religious is supported solely by donations, and approximately 95 percent of contributions directly aid elder religious and their communities.

So I urge you to give to those who have given a lifetime by donating to today’s second collection. Your generosity provides vital support for prescription medications, nursing care, and more. It also helps to ensure ongoing viability for religious communities, so that younger members can continue the good works begun by their elders! Most importantly, please pray for God’s blessing on all religious. Rest assured, they are praying for you.

Thank you for your time.