

Retirement Fund for Religious

Sponsored by the National Religious Retirement Office

August 2017

Dear RFR Coordinator,

Thank you for serving as the coordinator for the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR) collection in your (arch)diocese. As we approach the 2017 appeal, I respectfully request your assistance in helping raise awareness about the ongoing needs of our elderly religious.

The national collection is scheduled for December 9–10, 2017, although your (arch)diocese may have scheduled the collection for an alternate weekend. Printed parish materials are shipped approximately four to eight weeks prior to the collection date recorded for your (arch)diocese in the National Collections database. Samples of these items are enclosed.

In response to feedback from several coordinators, we have developed two short notices to facilitate easier communication with clergy and staff. (*See page 4.*) We have also created a social media tool kit with text and photos that can be used to promote the appeal on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These and all our other downloadable resources will be available after September 1 at retiredreligious.org. We understand you may not have time to make use of every resource, but utilizing even one or two can have a significant impact on collection totals. **The most important step is to urge pastors to announce the collection from the pulpit.**

(Arch)bishops will receive a one-page resource letter that is sent electronically. The letter offers links to various promotional materials, including text for a Bishop to Parishioner letter in support of the collection. (*See page 3.*)

Please contact our office if you have questions or need assistance. Joined with more than 32,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who benefit from the Retirement Fund for Religious, I send prayer-filled thanks for your time and efforts.

With gratitude,



Sister Stephanie Still, PBVM
Executive Director



Photo (from left): Sister Gloria Rodríguez, MGSps, 80; Father Albert Bunsic, OCD, 81; Sister Alfonsina Sanchez, OCD, 96; Sister Mary Ann Hanson, SND, 79.

Simple Steps for Promoting the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR)

Although you may not have the time or resources to complete every step, undertaking even one or two of the suggestions below can positively impact donations.

Publicize the collection using posters, bulletin/pulpit announcements, press releases, advertisements, and/or social media.

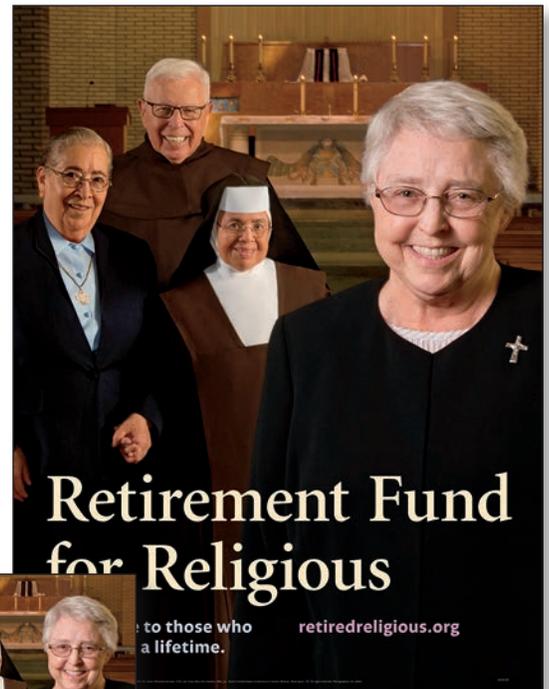
Visit retiredreligious.org/materials to download.

Distribute a letter from the (arch)bishop to parishioners in support of the RFR.

See *sample text*, page 3.

Encourage pastors to announce the collection from the pulpit. If possible, organize speakers to make the RFR appeal in parishes.

Thank all who supported the RFR. Ask parishes to use the bulletin announcement for the week following the appeal to acknowledge donations.



2017 poster and bulletin insert

Promotional Materials

In addition to the printed materials shipped to parishes, the National Religious Retirement Office produces a variety of downloadable resources to assist in promoting the RFR collection. To access any of the following, please visit retiredreligious.org/materials after September 1. Resources are available in English and Spanish, except for those noted with an asterisk (*) below.

For use in parishes

- Bulletin insert
- Bulletin/pulpit announcements
- Coordinator communications, text for email to pastors/parish administrators (*see page 4*)*
- Letter for recruiting speakers*
- Social media tool kit
- Speaker guide

For use in the (arch)diocese

- (Arch)bishop letter to parishioners (*see page 3*)
- (Arch)bishop letter to pastors*
- Coordinator communications, announcement text (*see page 4*)*
- Facts about the RFR
- Press release (*posted in November*)
- Social media tool kit
- Web and print advertisements*

Reminder: Collection proceeds are due at the National Religious Retirement Office by March 31, 2018.

Sample Letter: (Arch)bishops to Parishioners (English and Spanish)

Dear Friends in Christ,

Soon, our parishes will be conducting the appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious, an annual collection that benefits more than 32,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.

Our senior religious are a treasure. Their dedication and hard work laid the foundation for Catholic schools, hospitals, and numerous social service organizations. Many continue in volunteer ministry today. Their ongoing prayer and witness enrich our faith in countless ways. I am grateful for the service of religious, past and present. I hope you, too, recall a sister or brother who made a positive difference in your life.

Most elder religious worked for years for small stipends, leaving a substantial gap in retirement savings. Rising health-care costs and decreased income compound the challenge to meet such day-to-day needs as medications and nursing assistance. The Retirement Fund for Religious offers financial support that helps religious communities provide loving care for older members while ensuring younger ones can continue the good works of their elders.

I understand you are asked to support many worthy causes. I invite you only to give what you can. Most importantly, please pray for God's continued blessing on all our women and men religious. Rest assured they are praying for you!

Estimados amigos en Cristo:

Muy pronto, nuestras parroquias llevarán a cabo la colecta del Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos que hacemos anualmente en beneficio de unos 32,000 religiosas, hermanos y sacerdotes, miembros mayores de las órdenes religiosas católicas.

Nuestros religiosos mayores son un tesoro. El fruto de su dedicación y arduo trabajo fue la fundación de las escuelas, hospitales y numerosas organizaciones para servicios sociales católicos. En la actualidad muchos continúan realizando ministerios como voluntarios. Su oración y testimonio continuo enriquecen nuestra fe de maneras innumerables. Estoy agradecido por el servicio de los religiosos, tanto de ahora como del pasado. Seguro que ustedes también recuerdan a un hermano o hermana que influyó de manera positiva en su vida.

Muchos religiosos mayores sirvieron durante muchos años recibiendo estipendios muy bajos que dejaron una gran carencia en los fondos para su jubilación. Los costos en aumento de la atención médica y los ingresos a la baja agravan el desafío de hacer frente a tales necesidades diarias como medicamentos y asistencia de enfermería. El Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos ofrece apoyo financiero que ayuda a las comunidades religiosas a brindar atención esmerada para los miembros mayores mientras asegura que los más jóvenes puedan continuar las buenas obras de aquellos miembros que les precedieron.

Entiendo que a ustedes les piden que apoyen muchas causas valiosas. Los invito a donar lo que puedan. Muy en particular, les pedimos que rueguen a Dios para que bendiga a todos los religiosos. ¡Tengan la seguridad de que ellos están rezando por ustedes!

Sample Coordinator Communications New this year

Below are texts you can use in your role as coordinator to communicate with (arch)diocesan clergy and staff regarding the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR) collection. The text can be customized or used verbatim and will be available at retiredreligious.org/materials after September 1.

Email from RFR coordinator to pastor/administrator

Dear Pastor or Parish Administrator,

Our parishes will hold the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection on *(insert dates)*. Many elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests worked for years for little or no pay. Today, hundreds of religious communities lack adequate retirement savings and struggle to provide for older members. Collection proceeds offer financial assistance and resources to help eligible communities meet the ongoing needs of senior members.

Please join in promoting a generous response to the annual appeal. Downloadable resources, such as bulletin announcements and social media posts, are available at retiredreligious.org/materials. Please be sure to announce the collection during Mass.

Many thanks for your time and assistance.

Announcement for newsletters or communications

Our parishes will hold the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection on *(insert dates)*. Please join in promoting a generous response to the annual appeal. Downloadable resources, including bulletin announcements and social media posts, are available at retiredreligious.org/materials. Please be sure to announce the collection during Mass. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Who You Help



From left: Sister Alfonsina Sanchez, OCD, and care coordinator Sister Michelle Clines, OCD, RN.

Among other ministries, Sister Alfonsina Sanchez (*far left*), 96, served for 18 years in what was then her community's tuberculosis sanatorium. Today, her community, the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles, continue their health-care apostolate and also serve in retreat ministry and education. They are among the hundreds of U.S. religious communities that benefit from the Retirement Fund for Religious. Proceeds from the annual appeal help communities provide for elderly members while developing long-range retirement plans.



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Sponsor of the Retirement Fund for Religious

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For campaign materials, visit:
retiredreligious.org/materials