**2017 Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR)** [**retiredreligious.org**](http://www.retiredreligious.org)

Sample Letter for Requesting Speakers

Date

Dear (insert name),

As the coordinator for the Retirement Fund for Religious collection in our (arch)diocese, I am writing to ask for your assistance in raising awareness about the needs of elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. Many of us can recall the faithful service of our senior religious in Catholic schools, hospitals, parishes, and social service agencies. Often, they worked for small stipends, and their sacrifices have left their religious communities without adequate retirement savings. Hundreds of religious congregations now struggle to provide necessary medications, nursing care, and basic services for their older members.

Catholic bishops of the United States launched the Retirement Fund for Religious in 1988 to help address the deficit in retirement funding. The annual collection is coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office in Washington, D.C., and proceeds are distributed to eligible religious communities across the nation. This funding provides supplemental financial assistance for meeting immediate eldercare needs and for bolstering retirement savings.

Like many Americans, religious communities struggle with the ever-rising cost of health care. At the same time, the number of senior religious needing care continues to grow, and the income of younger, wage-earning religious cannot keep pace with the increasing expenses. Although Catholics have responded to the annual appeal with overwhelming generosity, the need remains profound. Last year alone, the total cost of care for women and men religious past age 70 was over $1.2 billion.

So I respectfully ask you to consider speaking at a parish to promote the collection. A speaker guide and a variety of other resources are available at [www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org) to help you prepare. With your assistance, we can make known the needs of our elderly religious and help parishioners remember the tremendous service these selfless women and men offered our Church and world.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,