

Retirement Fund for Religious

Sponsored by the National Religious Retirement Office

September 2021

Dear RFR Coordinator,

Please accept my deepest thanks for your ongoing efforts on behalf of the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR) collection. Your assistance—coupled with the tremendous generosity of US Catholics—helped the 2020 collection garner \$20.7 million. While this total represents a decrease from previous appeals, it is a remarkable display of support during such a difficult year.



Please give to those who have given a lifetime.



Because hundreds of religious communities rely on funding from the collection, we ask your help once again. Pages 2 and 3 of this guide offer suggestions for using RFR campaign materials to promote the collection. **Most importantly, please 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 an (Arch)bishop to Parishioners letter in support of the collection. (*See back page.*)

The national collection is December 11–12, although your (arch)diocese may hold it on an alternate weekend. Printed parish materials are shipped

approximately four weeks prior to the collection date recorded for your (arch)diocese in the National Collections database. Samples of these items are enclosed.

Without your help and that of coordinators across the country, there is simply no way our small staff could promote and administer the nationwide appeal. May God bless you abundantly for your goodness.

With gratitude,

Sister Stephanie Still, PBVM

Sister Stephanie Still, PBVM
Executive Director

Enclosures (4)

Help Elderly Religious

Please promote the Retirement Fund for Religious collection. Undertaking even one or two of the following suggestions can help increase support. Numerous print and online resources are available to assist your efforts. Visit retiredreligious.org/materials after **September 1** to download them.

Most campaign materials are available in English and Spanish.

Announce in Parishes

Ask pastors to announce the collection during Mass and in parish bulletins. Encourage them to host an RFR speaker, if possible. For parishes with audio/visual capabilities, the RFR video is also a quick and effective way to share the need.

Tips

Send parishes to retiredreligious.org/materials to download the promotional resources listed in this guide.

TV and radio versions of the video are available for broadcast on (arch)diocesan and local media. Visit retiredreligious.org/materials/#tv-radio to request the preferred version.

Resources

Bulletin advertisement

Bulletin/pulpit announcements

Facts page

Speaker guide

30- and 60-second videos in English and Spanish



RFR video

Share Online and in Print

Raise awareness of the needs of senior religious and the importance of the upcoming collection. Post a collection reminder on social media, websites, and in print or electronic communications.

Tips

Include the (Arch)bishop to Parishioners letter in parish bulletins and/or (arch)diocesan media. (*See back page.*)

Promote the collection on social media. Visit retiredreligious.org/social-media-toolkit to download text and images.

Coordinator communications offer sample text that can be used to remind parish and (arch)diocesan staff about the collection.

Resources

(Arch)bishop to Parishioners letter

Coordinator communications

Poster

Print and web advertisements

Social media tool kit



Social media post

Highlight Ways to Give

Offer multiple ways to donate, where possible. While many parishioners contribute through the traditional in-pew collection, others prefer the ease of electronic giving.

Tips

Ask parishes to designate the RFR as a gift option for their online giving platforms. Make this opportunity available for multiple weeks.

Add the RFR as a gift option for (arch)diocesan online giving platforms.



Sample offertory envelope

Donations can also be mailed to:

National Religious Retirement Office

3211 Fourth Street NE

Washington DC 20017-1194

(Make checks payable to Retirement Fund for Religious.)

Please thank our wonderful donors. Download and use our bulletin announcement for the week after the collection.

Visit retiredreligious.org/materials.

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

Pope Francis often highlights the role older adults play in conveying faith from one generation to the next. Recently, he noted that “there is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel.”¹ As we approach the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection—an appeal that benefits some 26,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests—I am reminded that senior religious never retire from their vows.

Instead, the prayer and ministry of older religious are an ongoing witness to the Gospel. In their younger years, they laid the foundation for Catholic schools, hospitals, and works of mercy. Today, many serve in volunteer ministry. Others are frail and need assistance. Yet all remain wholly committed to their vocations, accepting the limitations of aging and embracing the opportunity to spend more time praying for our Church and world.

Most senior religious worked for little pay, and now their religious communities do not have enough retirement savings. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious offers support that helps religious communities provide loving care for older members while ensuring younger ones can continue the good works of their elders.

I recognize you may be experiencing your own financial difficulties. I ask only that you give what you can. Most importantly, please join me in praying for God’s continued blessing on our nation’s elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.

El Papa Francisco a menudo destaca la función que tienen los adultos mayores en la transmisión de la fe de una generación a la siguiente. Hace poco mencionó: “no hay edad en la que puedas retirarte de la tarea de anunciar el Evangelio”.¹ Al acercarnos a la colecta anual del Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos —una colecta que beneficia a más de 26 mil hermanas, hermanos y sacerdotes mayores de órdenes religiosas católicas— me recuerda que los religiosos mayores nunca se jubilan de sus votos.

En cambio, la oración y el ministerio de los religiosos ancianos son un testimonio continuo del Evangelio. En sus años de juventud, establecieron la base de escuelas y hospitales católicos como así también obras de misericordia. En la actualidad, muchos de ellos son voluntarios en los ministerios. Otros son están frágiles y necesitan ayuda. Sin embargo, todos siguen estando plenamente comprometidos con su vocación, aceptando las limitaciones de la vejez y abrazando la oportunidad de dedicar más tiempo a la oración por nuestra Iglesia y el mundo.

Muchos religiosos ancianos trabajaron recibiendo una paga escasa, y ahora sus comunidades religiosas no tienen ahorros suficientes para la jubilación. Su donativo al Fondo para la Jubilación de Religiosos ofrece apoyo que ayuda a las comunidades religiosas a brindar atención amorosa para los miembros más ancianos mientras asegura que los más jóvenes puedan continuar las buenas obras de sus miembros ancianos.

Sé que ustedes pueden estar atravesando dificultades financieras. Solo les pido que donen lo que puedan. Sobre todo, les ruego que se unan conmigo para rogar a Dios que continúe bendiciendo a las hermanas, los hermanos y sacerdotes de órdenes religiosas de avanzada edad de nuestra nación.

¹Pope Francis, *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the First World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*, July 25, 2021 (<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/nonni/documents/20210531-messaggio-nonni-anziani.html>).

¹Papa Francisco, *Mensaje del Santo Padre Francisco con ocasión de la Primera Jornada Mundial de los Abuelos y de los Mayores*, 25 de julio de 2021 (<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/messages/nonni/documents/20210531-messaggio-nonni-anziani.html>).



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3211 Fourth Street NE
Washington DC 20017-1194
Phone (202) 541-3215
Fax (202) 541-3053

For campaign materials, visit
retiredreligious.org/materials