



Retirement Fund of Religion Collection Handbook

**COLLECTION DATE: December 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

*Office of Stewardship & Mission Services – (859) 392-1500*

# PARISH COLLECTION HANDBOOK

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Bishop Iffert Appeal Letter** (*Messenger* – December 6, 2024)

**December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - Announcement Weekend**

**December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - Collection Weekend**

**Questions and Answers**

**Additional Prayers of the Faithful**

### Collection Calendar

**December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024** Bishop Iffert's Appeal letter appears in *Messenger*

**December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024** **Announcement Weekend**

- Pulpit Announcement
- Bulletin Insert
- Prayers of the Faithful

**December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024** **Collection Weekend**

- Pulpit Announcement
- Bulletin Insert
- Prayers of the Faithful
- Collection

Visit the National Religious Retirement website for additional information:  
[retiredreligious.org](http://retiredreligious.org)

December 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On the weekend of December 14 and 15, our parishes will take up the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious. This campaign is crucial, benefiting 24,000 elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who have been faithful servants within the Church, devoting their lives to service.

As I reflect on their ministry, I am grateful for the impact these women and men religious have had on our faith journeys. Their devoted service has impacted our diocese, inspiring and guiding us as we grow in faith.

Your contributions to the Retirement Fund for Religious play a vital role in providing necessary financial support. This support enables religious communities to care for their aging members while ensuring that the younger generation can carry forward the invaluable work of their elders

Please consider contributing when asked and giving what you are able. Above all, I ask for your prayers for God's continued blessings on all our women and men religious, who keep you in their prayers as well.

Together, let us support the many religious women and men who have made enormous contributions to our Church and to the world.

Yours Devotedly in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John C. Iffert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend John C. Iffert  
Bishop of Covington

## ANNOUNCEMENT WEEKEND - December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT

Next weekend's upcoming collection supports the Retirement Fund for Religious. Donate to help the more than 24,000 senior religious who have dedicated their lives to service retire with dignity. Donations will provide for the essential care, medicine, and daily needs of senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who have served for decades—usually for little to no pay. Show your appreciation by supporting those who have given a lifetime.

### BULLETIN INSERT

**Aging religious need your help.** “Your support acknowledges that we continue the mission of Christ even in our retirement,” says Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart Sister Celeste Burgos, 80. Donations provide for the care, medicine, and daily needs of over 24,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who have dedicated their lives to service. Please give to the Retirement Fund for Religious.

### PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

For our elderly religious and for all who serve you with selfless hearts ... *Let us pray to the Lord.*

For senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests, that they may enjoy dignified care in their elder years as they continue to devote their lives to prayer and service ... *Let us pray to the Lord.*

## COLLECTION WEEKEND - December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT

Senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests ministered for years for little to no pay. Your gift to the Collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious supports the day-to-day care of roughly 31,000 elderly religious, providing necessities such as prescription medications and nursing care. *Please give generously to those who have given a lifetime.*

### BULLETIN INSERT

**Support those who have given a lifetime.** Women and men religious have dedicated their lives to service—praying, teaching, and caring for those in need—usually for little to no pay. Today, their religious communities do not have enough retirement savings. Your donation provides for the essential care, medicine, and daily needs of thousands of senior women and men religious. Please give generously.

### PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

We pray for senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests, that they may enjoy comfort and security in their elder years as they continue to devote their lives to prayer and service ... *Let us pray to the Lord.*

# Why We Ask

- In 1988, Catholic bishops of the United States launched the Retirement Fund for Religious to address the significant lack of retirement funding for Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.
- For most of their lives, elder religious worked for little to no pay. There were no 401(k) plans or pensions.
- Religious communities are financially responsible for the support and care of all members. Income, earnings, and expenses are managed separately from the parish and diocesan structures of the Catholic Church.
- Only 6 percent of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office are adequately funded for retirement; 46 percent have 25 or fewer members. Many small communities struggle to care for elder members due to a lack of financial resources and personnel.
- Today, religious past age 70 outnumber religious younger than age 70 by nearly three to one.
- There are 20,571 religious past age 70 living in the United States. In 2023, the average annual cost for their care was roughly \$59,700 per person; skilled nursing care averaged \$90,700 per person.
- Since 2009, the annual cost to support senior women and men religious has exceeded \$1 billion.
- In 2024, 71 percent of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office had a median age of 70 or higher.
- The average annual Social Security benefit for a religious is \$8,551, whereas the average lay US beneficiary receives \$22,864.

# How Donations Help

- Each year, hundreds of US religious communities receive financial assistance made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious. Communities can use this funding for immediate retirement expenses or invest it for future needs. Since the first collection, US Catholics have donated more than \$1 billion.
- Since the collection began, almost \$870 million has been distributed to support the day-to-day care of elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. An additional \$103.5 million has been allocated toward self-help projects initiated by religious communities, including collaborative health-care facilities.
- In addition to direct financial assistance, proceeds from the annual collection underwrite educational programming, services, and resources that enable religious communities to evaluate and prepare for long-term retirement needs.
- Support from the Retirement Fund for Religious helps religious communities care for senior members while allowing them to continue important ministries to the People of God.

