



Retirement Fund for Religious

Fall/Winter 2007 Newsletter

Volume 19, No. 3



In Memory ***Sister Andrée Fries, CPPS***



1941-2007

Many of our readers may already be aware of the unexpected death of our Executive Director, Sister Andrée Fries, CPPS. Sister Andrée passed away on July 14, 2007, following complications from knee surgery. Her passing has left a hole in our hearts.

It is often said that time heals all wounds. So while our sorrow over Sister Andrée's death remains profound, the last few months have enabled us, the staff of NRRO, to gain a better perspective of her very meaningful life. As we tackle our daily work, her vision—her utter and complete commitment to providing care and security for our nation's retired religious—remains a palpable force in our mission.

Sharon Ann Fries was born in August 1941. Sharri, as she was called by her parents, was the oldest of three girls and grew up in Quincy, Illinois. In 1959, she entered the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood

of O'Fallon, Missouri. She received her bachelors degree from Quincy College and later, her Masters of Business Administration from Southern Illinois University.

Sister Andrée began her ministry in education, teaching at St. Monica School in St. Louis, MO, and St. Peter's School in Quincy, IL. Her keen financial and administrative aptitude, however, quickly led her to roles that allowed her to combine this business acumen with her special blend of common sense and compassion. She served as her community's Director of Financial Planning and then, from 1974 to 1980, as General Councillor. She also served two terms as Superior General, from 1980 to 1986 and 1992 to 1998.

Sister Andrée always had her eye on the big picture, especially when it came to financial planning for religious institutes. She was one of the founding members of the National Association of Treasurers of Religious Institutes (NATRI) and served on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators. From 1993 to 1996, she was the President of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LWCR). She worked in various capacities with other national and international religious organizations and with the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO.

Contents

• Letter of Remembrance	Page 3
• Director's Message	Page 4
• NRRO Happenings	Page 5
• Calendar	Page 6



Sr. Andrée in 1987

Sister Andrée was among the earliest voices to champion the cause for creating a national Catholic organization focused specifically on the needs of retired religious in the United States. From 1987 to 1991, she was the associate director of the Tri-Conference Retirement Office (now NRRO). Sister Andrée returned to NRRO in 1998 to become the Project Director for Retirement Services. Her charge was to assist the nation's neediest religious institutes in maximizing their participation in the NRRO grant process. In 2000, Sister Andrée was named NRRO's Executive Director, a position she held until her death.

Among her many contributions to NRRO, perhaps her greatest were her focus on education and her efforts to engender systemic change in the ways religious institutes address their retirement challenges. During her tenure, Sister Andrée worked to increase the number of trained NRRO financial consultants. Each year these volunteer consultants, often treasurers of religious institutes themselves, visit numerous sites throughout the country to help religious communities assess their financial situations, meet the requirements for NRRO's Basic Grant, and develop comprehensive retirement plans. Additionally, Sister Andrée added elder care consultants to the list of services offered by NRRO. These individuals help religious institutes understand emerging trends in caring for the aged. They also support communities in creating retirement plans that, among other things, furnish guidelines for care.

Above all, Sister Andrée understood that often the best resource religious communities have is each other. She expanded the number of NRRO workshops and increased opportunities for leaders of religious communities to gather, both regionally and nationally, to exchange ideas and strategies. She also helped ensure that the findings from the 2004 research *Planning for Retirement and Mission: A Best Practices Study* were made available and accessible to religious institutes throughout the country.



Participants at a workshop


Sister Andrée's commitment to serving others stemmed from her fundamental identity as a woman of God. As a Sister of the Most Precious Blood, she was centered first and foremost on the redemptive, healing power of the Precious Blood of Christ. This spirituality led Sister Andrée to concentrate on bringing people together, building bridges, and facilitating community. Her compassion was evident in 2002 when, despite an already heavy workload at NRRO, she accepted the position of Deputy to the General Secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for Child and Youth Protection. Her love of others and the Church was evident as she helped the National Review Board develop the bishops' response to the sexual abuse crisis.

For those of us at NRRO, Sister Andrée's combination of energy, deep faith, and good humor continues to inspire our work. It spurs us to look at the needs of aging religious, not only in the here and now, but also in the years to come. Sister Andrée understood that the responsibility of caring for elderly members must not supplant a religious institute's ability to carry forward its particular ministries. Rather, for the good of

both the individual religious and the greater community, that care and planning should reflect the institute's unique mission and charism. In the coming years and months, we will continue to strive to incorporate this overarching focus into all our grants, resources, and services. We will, as Sister Andrée did, work tirelessly to insure that all retired religious receive the care and security they so richly deserve. And when the day is done, we will, as Sister Andrée did, leave the rest in God's care.

In an article Sister Andrée wrote several months before her death, she reflected on the milestone of turning 65. She pondered the journey before her, and in the end concluded, "What lies ahead is in God's hands and I know I am safe there." At NRRO, we are comforted by the certain knowledge that our beloved friend and mentor **is**, now and forever, safe in God's hands.





If you would like to make a bequest or restricted gift to the National Religious Retirement Office, the following information should be used:

To the United Conference of Catholic Bishops Incorporated for the **exclusive** purpose of assisting Roman Catholic religious orders in the United States to provide for the retirement needs of their elderly members.

In our sister newsletter "Engaging Aging" we had included many quotes from people who had written their thoughts and remembrances of Sister Andrée. The following is a portion of a letter that missed that issue, but we felt it needed to be included here since it captured her essence so well.



....I write to express my profound sadness about the news of Andrée's death. I can only imagine the magnitude of the loss felt by you and the members of your Institute as well as by those who had the good fortune of living and working with her day-by-day.

You don't need me to tell you what an extraordinary person Andrée was. For myself, I always felt better about life, our way of life, and in so many other ways whenever I would come away from talking with her. She had a way of telling the truth that didn't offend. I often thought that gift was due to the fact that she was so at home with who she was, so at ease with the person she had grown to be, so convinced of God's love, and so pleased to have had the life that was hers. For with Andrée, there was always a sense of joy; she could even vent her frustrations by saying something that would make others laugh.

I count myself privileged to have known her and treasure the conversations and the memories of our meetings from time to time. I learned a lot about dealing with people from watching her. And I learned a lot about our way of life by witnessing the joy that it gave her....

*Blessings and affection,
Brother Sean Sammon, FMS*

Superior General of Marist Brothers of the Schools
Rome, Italy



New Executive Director announced

We are so pleased to announce The NRRO Management Board has appointed Sister Janice Bader, CPPS as the new Executive Director of the National Religious Retirement Office. Sister Janice has been serving as the Interim Director of the Office since the untimely death of Sister Andrée Fries, CPPS on July 14, 2007. Since 2000, Sister Janice has served in the NRRO as Project Director of Retirement Services where she assisted religious institutes with financial planning and developed educational programs and materials to aid in long range retirement planning.

Sister Janice is a member of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri, and is a member of the same community as Sister Andrée. She holds an MBA from Southern Illinois University and a BA from Notre Dame College of St. Louis, MO. Sister Janice has in-depth background in financial planning. She served as a board member of the National Association of Treasures of Religious Institutes from 1996-1998. She also has served her congregation as Treasurer General and as Secretary General.

Director's Message

"As I ponder my last opportunity to share with you in [this newsletter], I am overwhelmed with deep gratitude. You have been the fabric of my life in many special ways. I will always treasure the incredible privilege of journeying with each person in times of joy and of sorrow. You have touched my life profoundly, truly as Christ's continuing presence, and I am very grateful."

Sister Andrée Fries, CPPS,
June 1998
Sisters of the Most Precious
Blood Newsletter

These were the words Sister Andrée wrote in an article marking the end of her 2nd. term as Superior General of our congregation. While I cannot presume to speak for her, I feel confident that those words contain the essence of the message she would have wanted to share with you.

Sister Andrée carried in her heart a deep gratitude for all those whose lives touched hers through her ministry at NRRO. She was genuinely thankful for the many donors who support the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR)—those who share from their widow's mite and those who give from their abundance. She was particularly mindful of the individuals and families who requested prayers. She remembered these



Sr. Andrée (L) and Sr. Janice (R)

intentions in her personal prayers, faithfully inscribed the requests in the book of intentions at the USCCB chapel, and regularly encouraged religious throughout the country to pray for these needs.

Sister Andrée also was deeply grateful for the privilege of working with and for religious institutes. She recognized the challenges facing today's congregational leaders, and she was

committed to supporting and assisting them in every way possible. The ongoing witness and profound dedication of religious of all ages was the inspiration that stirred her passion for this ministry. The closing words of the article cited above express these sentiments and offer us guidance for the years to come:

"Why do I choose to recount our blessings? Perhaps Vita Consecrata (#110) says it best, 'You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history to still be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things.' May it be done in us according to our gracious God's word! Fiat! Deo Gratias! Alleluia!"

I give thanks to God and to Sister Andrée for her life well-lived. I join Sister Andrée in giving thanks for each of you, and I ask for your prayerful support as we continue the work to which she dedicated such a significant part of her life.

Sister Janice Bader, CPPS
Sister Janice Bader, CPPS



NRRO Happenings



Consultants Workshops, September 21-23, Plymouth Michigan—In-service training sessions were held at St. John's Center for NRRO financial, elder-care and leadership consultants.

Focus Group Gathering, October 8-10, Baltimore, Maryland—A multi-disciplinary focus group convened to assess the progress made during the last twenty years of the RFR collection and to discuss strategies for the next ten year cycle, scheduled to begin in December 2008. A primary objective was to determine how NRRO grants and services can best be structured to promote systemic change in retirement planning among religious institutes. Look for more information on this gathering in future newsletters.

Property Planning for Religious Institutes, November 28-30, The Conference Center at the Maritime Institute, Baltimore, Maryland—A workshop sponsored and subsidized by NRRO to assist religious communities in assessing, funding, and planning for current and future facility and care needs.

If you have registered to attend this workshop and have not yet made your room reservation, please do so immediately.



**Eligibility Forms for Basic Grants mailed:
December 27, 2007**

**DON'T
FORGET!**

Please send changes in address, phone, E-mail or congregational leadership to NRRO c/o Jean Smith so that we may keep our records and mailing lists updated.

Thank You!

NRRO

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NEW

Correction

The spring edition of the NRRO newsletter incorrectly listed the website to order Trappistine Quality Candy. The correct address is: www.TrappistineCandy.com

CALENDAR

NRRO Property Planning Workshop, Baltimore, MD	November 28-30, 2007
Supplemental and Special Assistance grants awarded	December, 2007
Retirement Fund for Religious Collection	December 8-9, 2007
Eligibility Forms for Basic Grants mailed	December 27, 2007
CMSM New Leadership Workshop, Washington, DC	December 10-13, 2007
LCWR New Leader Workshop, Plymouth, MI	March 13-16, 2008
Basic Grant Eligibility Forms due back to NRRO	March 31, 2008
Special Assistance Grant Applications due	March 31, 2008
Supplemental Grant Applications due	April 15, 2008

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
National Religious Retirement Office
3211 4th Street N.E.
Washington, DC 20017-1194

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