

Retirement Fund for Religious

Sponsored by the
National Religious Retirement Office



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News

Message from the Director

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Since taking on the role of National Retirement Religious Office (NRRO) director, I have found a sense of duty and a deep connection to our mission. Stepping in after Sister Stephanie Still's seven-year term, I truly appreciate the legacy she has left behind. Sister Stephanie welcomed me into the NRRO as the education and outreach manager in 2022 and has been a guiding mentor since.

This newsletter edition introduces you to the NRRO team working alongside me, highlighting individuals who share my dedication to the well-being of the women and men religious who have selflessly given their lives to serving others.

My initial days have involved immersing myself in NRRO core values, echoing the commitment I've witnessed in the lives of our senior religious. A Trappist acquaintance expressed his thoughts on my new role by saying, "You're offering an act of love to some of Jesus' closest companions." These words truly capture the essence of our mission.

I am guided by the wisdom of mentors like Father Clark Kelley, OSFS, who guided me back to my faith. Now, in his memory and honor, I continue to serve. Let us reflect on the way women and men religious have influenced our own paths, as well as the importance of supporting them during their retirement years.

Your prayers and encouragement are important to me as I grow in this role. Let us continue to build on the foundation laid by those who have dedicated their lives to faith and service.

In Christ,

John Knutsen
Director

The National Religious Retirement Office: Mission and Purpose

Since 1988, the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) has been dedicated to helping religious institutes in the United States meet retirement funding requirements. Our primary way to accomplish this goal is the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection.

The donations gathered during the Retirement Fund for Religious collection provide financial aid and resources to religious institutes, helping them to meet the retirement needs of their elderly members.



2023 Retirement Fund for Religious campaign poster.

Top row, from left:
 Brother Charles Douglas, SSJ;
 Sister Marianna Danko, SSMI;
 Father James Day, OSST.
 Bottom row, from left:
 Sister Celeste Burgos, MSHS;
 Sister Brenda Cherry, OSP.

How the NRRO Helps

Supporting the Retirement Needs of Religious Institutes

Financial assistance is available to institutes through the NRRO's Direct Care Assistance program. Eligible institutes can access support by following an application process. The support is then combined with their retirement savings and investments to cover their members' retirement needs.

Moreover, the NRRO aids institutes through Management and Continuing Education Assistance each year. This program provides up to \$5,000 per calendar year to help them pay for their continuing education and basic management tools.



Direct Care Assistance helps senior religious in their retirement by providing critical support for their daily needs, essential care, and medicine.

From top: Father John Hansen, SMP (standing); Father Placid Guste, SMP; Sister Regina Bastarache, SMP (standing); Sister Mary Fidelis Lane, SMP.

The National Religious Retirement Office: Staff

At the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO), our mission is carried out by the team of professionals who work together to help ensure the stability of and build secure futures for religious institutes across the nation.

In this edition of the newsletter, we introduce you to the NRRO staff who work behind the scenes to make this mission possible. Here, you will meet them and learn more about their roles and responsibilities, their dedication to serving religious institutes, and the motivations driving their involvement in the NRRO.

Their commitment embodies the spirit of service that defines the NRRO mission.

Welcome the New Director

John Knutsen

Last autumn marked a turning point at the NRRO as we welcomed a new leader dedicated to advancing the mission with renewed vigor. In October 2023, Sister Stephanie Still, PBVM, stepped down from her position as executive director to return to her community in San Francisco, paving the way for John Knutsen to assume the role of director.

John brings a wealth of experience to his position, along with a respect for religious life that he has cultivated through his involvement in various NRRO educational initiatives as education and outreach manager, a position he held from February 2022 until the recent transition.

Responsible for the overall day-to-day management of the office, John's leadership is focused on ensuring that the NRRO fulfills its mission.

John, deeply moved by the dedication of women and men religious, sees the NRRO as fulfilling Jesus' promise of the hundredfold for those who devote themselves to the Gospel. He views the Retirement Fund for Religious as our collective appreciation, acknowledging the lifelong service of senior religious who have profoundly impacted countless lives. John believes the generosity consistently shown by US Catholics towards the fund year after year is a testament to the meaningful encounters so many have had with women and men religious throughout their lives, underscoring how deeply these religious are valued and appreciated.



The National Religious Retirement Office: Staff, *continued***Meet the Staff****Monica Glover, Grants Specialist**

Monica Glover has a remarkable 30-year tenure at the NRRO and embodies the spirit of service. Having worked with every director, Monica brings a wealth of experience to her role.

She administers the Direct Care Assistance program, a vital resource that supports religious institutes across the United States to care for their elderly members. Monica connects with over 500 institutes annually, ensuring this crucial grant reaches those who need it most. She also processes the annual contributions to the Retirement Fund for Religious campaign.



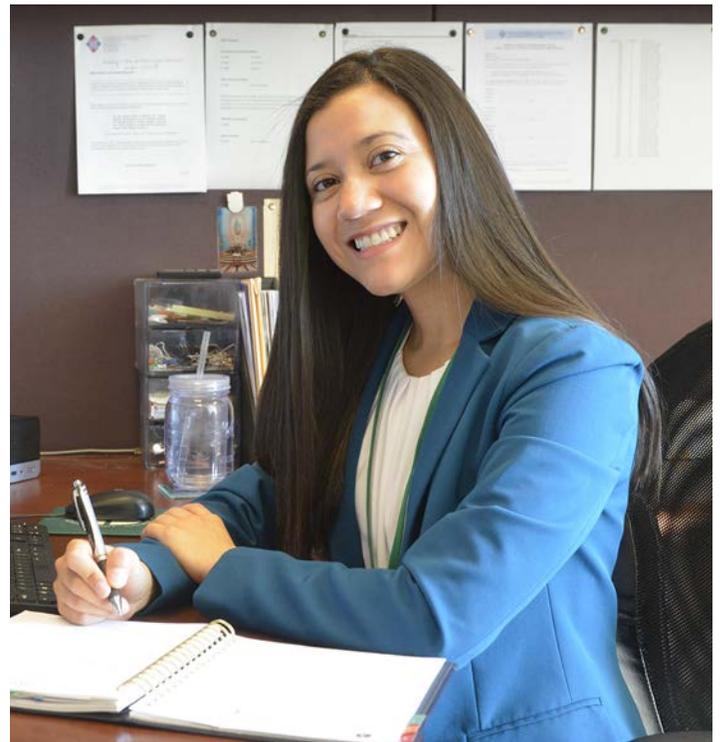
Monica's connection to the NRRO runs deep, fostered by her education with the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Carrying the values instilled by these women religious, she lives by the motto famously expressed by Muhammad Ali: "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."

Karen Cañas, Program Associate

Karen Cañas, through her role at the NRRO, brings a strong sense of purpose to the organization.

Having graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Business from Mount St. Mary's University, her time as a student assistant in the development office inspired her to seek a mission-focused career at the NRRO. She provides administrative support to staff members, handles incoming and outgoing communication to the office, assists in preparing for the Retirement Fund for Religious collection, and oversees Management and Continuing Education financial assistance.

Karen finds inspiration in the positive stories shared by donors who have benefited from education by religious sisters and brothers. She takes pride in witnessing how these contributions have helped religious institutes prepare for their retirement.



The National Religious Retirement Office Staff, *continued*

Meet the Affiliated Independent Consultants

Sister Anna Marie Tag, RSM

Sister Anna Marie Tag, RSM, has been offering vital eldercare consultations since 2011. In 2018, she was designated the NRRO office liaison to work with religious institutes for eldercare consultations.

In the program's earlier years, she visited each religious community in person. She seamlessly adapted to virtual consultations during COVID-19, continuing her mission to support religious institutes nationwide.

Her role involves a deep commitment to the well-being of religious institutes, with a hands-on approach that leaders affirmatively acknowledge when expressing gratitude for the NRRO's impactful guidance.

She notes, "I am completely committed to this work for as long as I am able to be helpful. Every time I think there couldn't be anyone else . . . the phone rings. I am honored to be working with so many women and men religious and am always delighted when I can make suggestions that make their lives a bit better."

Dayna Larson-Hurst

Dayna Larson-Hurst has been with the NRRO for twelve years, focusing on supporting the well-being of religious institutes and their members.

She is a regular presenter for the NRRO, including at the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) National Conference, where she coordinates and often presents workshops on various topics related to aging, strategic planning, and leadership development. Dayna is particularly passionate about supporting people living with dementia, and her NRRO-produced video series, *Walking Together: Making Our Way along the Dementia Path*, is a testament to her expertise.

Dayna is a dedicated supporter of all women and men religious, and she is always available to provide guidance and assistance. "To be able to offer my support to the men and women who have offered their lives to support others is the greatest gift I could ever receive," notes Dayna.

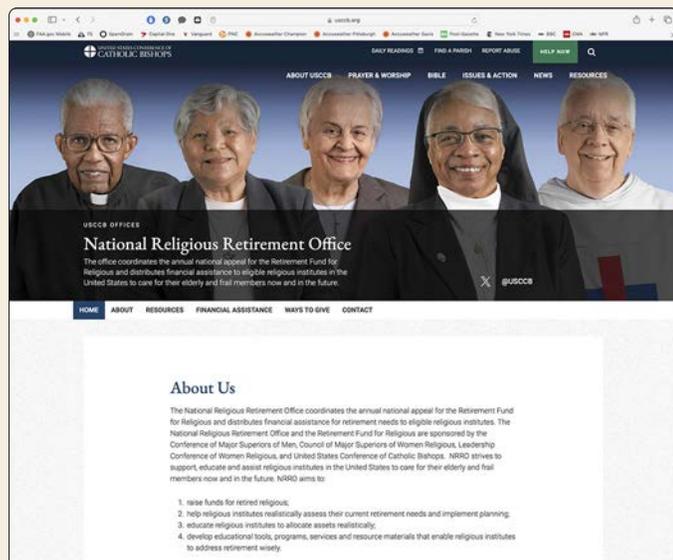


From left: Sister Anna Marie Tag, RSM, and Dayna Larson-Hurst.

Support and Guidance Available: Staff Are Here to Help You

We want to remind you that the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) staff are here to help and support you. If you have questions about the topics covered in this edition or need assistance, our team is a message away. You can find their contact details on the back page of this newsletter.

Visit our website at usccb.org/nrro to learn more about our mission and how we can support you and your institute. Together, we can ensure that our aging women and men religious receive the care and support they deserve in their later years.



2024 NRRO Calendar

May

15-19 2023 Retirement Needs Analysis mailed

June

26-30 Direct Care Assistance checks mailed

July

29-31 CMSM National Assembly, Atlanta, GA

August

1 CMSM National Assembly, Atlanta, GA

6 NRRO Webinar, topic TBD

13-16 LCWR National Assembly, Orlando, FL

September

19-22 CMSWR National Assembly, St. Louis, MO

October

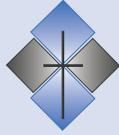
1-4 RCRI National Conference, Orlando, FL

November

12 NRRO Webinar, topic TBD

December

7-8 Retirement Fund for Religious National Collection



National Religious Retirement Office

Sponsor of the Retirement Fund for Religious

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Ms. Dayna Larson-Hurst

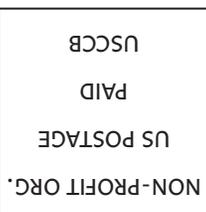
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Stay Connected

Please send changes in address, phone, email, or congregational leadership to the NRRO, c/o Karen Cañas (kcanas@usc.cb.org), so that we may keep our records and mailing lists updated.

The National Religious Retirement Office coordinates the national collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious and distributes these funds to eligible religious institutes for their retirement needs.

Our mission is to support, educate, and assist religious institutes in the United States to embrace their current retirement realities and to plan for the future.



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National Religious Retirement Office
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED