



Retirement Fund for Religious

Winter 2008 Newsletter

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NRRO Receives Largest Bequest in RFR History

Recently, the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) received the largest bequest in the history of the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR), a gift of more than \$1.2 million. NRRO is exceedingly grateful for this unprecedented gift and would like to honor our donor. Our donor, however, a private and modest man, would have wanted no publicity or fanfare. For him, doing a good thing was thanks enough.

His life story reads like a page out of Tom Brokaw's celebrated novel, *The Greatest Generation*, and reflects an abiding commitment to service, honor and faith. A first-generation Irish-American, our donor was actually born on St. Patrick's Day in Springfield, Massachusetts. In true Irish form, he had a keen sense of humor.



As a young child, he moved with his parents, brother, and sister to Alliance, Ohio, where his father worked as a custodian at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Sadly, his father died shortly after their move, leaving his mother with three young children to raise. During this difficult period, the parish was kind to his family and helped them to get back on their feet. Our donor went on to graduate from Alliance High School and later received a Bachelor of Arts from Mount Union College.

In World War II, he fought courageously in the Pacific Theater and was decorated for his distinguished service behind enemy lines. He even received the Bronze Star, a fact his friends learned only after his death.

Following the war, this hero returned to the United States and continued in public service in Cleveland and Cincinnati. His career was spent as a Voting Supervisor for the Department of Labor. In this capacity, he oversaw labor union elections, ensuring their fairness and adherence to federal guidelines. He lived in Cincinnati for more than forty years.

Throughout his life, he remained committed to his Catholic faith, and when he died donated a significant portion of his estate to support the needs of senior religious in the United States. He recognized all that religious had done to take care of others in their active years and felt they deserved to receive support in their elder years.

Bequests provide critical and immediate funding for the RFR. In 2007, a record total for bequests helped pushed the annual collection over \$31 million for only the fourth time in RFR history. Particularly during difficult economic times, bequests help maintain a constant level of funding from which NRRO can disburse grants to religious communities in need.

"NRRO is profoundly grateful for this very generous gift and the ways in which it will assist religious communities in planning for retirement and caring for their aging members," said NRRO

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Executive Director Sister Janice Bader, CPPS.
“We remain humbled by all those who choose to honor the service of our senior religious through bequests and other types of estate planning.”



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 States 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.

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Person Centered Care: **Essential Training Conference**



NRRO is pleased to be offering once again our Person-Centered Care Conference. Person-centered care respects the dignity and individuality of older adults by striving to furnish them with increased autonomy in their daily schedules, greater meaning in their activities, and involvement with their care choices. Data gathered over the past several years is beginning to show that this model of elder care not only increases senior adult and staff satisfaction, but also reduces cost.

The conference features five separate training modules, including programming, the physical environment, and team development.

A generous grant from the Retirement Research Foundation (RRF) supports the cost of the conference, materials, and most meals for two participants per religious institute. Grant funding from NRRO may also be available to assist with travel expenses. Institutes that are fifty percent or more underfunded for retirement may apply for financial assistance

Workshops will be offered February 18-19, 2009 in Baltimore, MD, and again April 15-16, 2009 in Chicago, IL. For more information or for a registration form, visit www.usccb.org/nrro and click on *Upcoming Workshop*.



Direct Care Assistance

(formerly known as *Basic Grant*)

Application forms will be mailed to religious institutes at the end of December. The deadline for returning applications is **March 15, 2009**. Funds will be distributed in June.

Message from the Executive Director

The first sister came to a stop before the locked door of the bank. Behind her in single file, the members of her community stretched down the block and around the corner until their black habits meshed with the predawn darkness. Each prayed silently and waited patiently for the bank to open. It took most of the day for the line of sisters to complete their transactions at the teller's booth, each depositing a single quarter into the community's

bank account. With her keen understanding of human nature and a deep trust in Providence, the superior of this community did what President Hoover and the nation's best economists could not: she prevented a run on the bank.

In another city, the members of a young, quickly growing community quietly processed into their motherhouse chapel for morning prayer. As they passed through the corridor, some sisters glanced toward the novitiate building that was taking form ever so slowly. Construction could proceed only at the pace of the sisters' meager income. The three story building, which was rising just a few hundred yards from the Wabash railroad line, prompted many a man to hop from his box car in search of food and work. While the sisters could not always provide a paying job, no one was ever sent from their door hungry.

Stories of this kind abound in the annals and oral histories of institutes of men and women religious. No matter what the state of the economy, religious strive to give their lives in service to others. In our current recession, religious continue to share their bread with the hungry and to witness, with unwavering faith, to the constant care and abiding presence of our loving God.



Very aware of the financial challenges facing so many families, our senior religious are redoubling their efforts to bring these needs before God in prayer. As the annual appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious approaches, these same religious accept with humble thanks the prayers, support and sacrifices of so many who share in their care. There is no way to express adequate gratitude to the persons who have so faithfully supported this fund for the past twenty years. We can only beg God to bless each one with bread for the day and an abundance of hope and trust to fortify the journey.

Joined by each member of the National Religious Retirement Office staff, I extend prayerful best wishes for abundant blessings during the Advent and Christmas seasons.



May our loving God bless you
Sister Janice Bader, CPPS

Gift Giving That Makes a Difference

As the Christmas season approaches, consider treating your loved ones to thoughtful, well-crafted gifts that also benefit religious institutes and their ministries. From Trappistine candies and fruitcakes to Benedictine mustards to inspirational books and beautiful music, you're sure to find that special gift. Check out these websites for great ideas:



www.monasterygreetings.com

www.lasermunks.com

Saint Charles Senior Living Community

On a picturesque and expansive property in rural Ohio lies Saint Charles Senior Living Community, a sponsored ministry of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Saint Charles is a non-profit retirement community for active seniors ages 55 and over. In this peaceful setting, retired religious, clergy, and lay find a home filled with faith and companionship.



St Gaspar del Bufalo founded the order in 1815 in Rome, Italy. Today, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood are an international, apostolic community of priests and brothers. In the United States, they serve in a variety of capacities; for example, as pastors, preachers, educators, evangelists, and chaplains for hospitals, jails and the military. The senior living community is located on the grounds of St. Charles Center, the central house for the congregation's Cincinnati Province.

In 1861, the community purchased several hundred acres of land in Carthagen, Ohio, a small town about sixty miles north of Dayton. Their sprawling campus features a main building, completed in 1922, and several other facilities, including a printing business. An exquisite Romanesque chapel, built in 1906

and subsequently remodeled, is attached to the rear of the main building.

Originally, the main building housed a seminary and furnished 100 rooms for priests, brothers, and seminarians. In 1969, however, the seminary closed, and the facility was converted into a residence for active and retired priests and brothers.

Eventually, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood found themselves facing a problem common among religious congregations today: a building that was severely underutilized and extremely expensive to maintain. In November 1998, they formed a task force to examine alternative uses for the property. Various options were investigated, including selling or demolishing the building. A consulting firm was hired to assist in evaluating the possibilities. The task force then presented their findings to the community's Provincial Council.

Throughout the process, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood were guided by a keen sense of stewardship. They felt strongly that their beautiful property was a gift from God, and they were mindful of the congregation's deep roots in this part of Ohio. They wanted to make the most of their resource and to share their gift with others. Ultimately, the community voted during their Provincial Assembly to keep and renovate the building.

They decided to open a senior living community for retired persons ages 55 and up. This solution had the advantage of providing a safe, comfortable home for their own senior members while also serving the community at large. The facility is open to members of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, diocesan priests, male and female religious, and lay. In operation for nearly two years, it is a Catholic community that welcomes residents regardless of national origin, race, or religious creed.

The main building was renovated into one and two-bedroom apartments. The apartments vary in size and layout but all feature comfortable living space,

individually controlled thermostats, wireless internet access, and a full kitchen with microwave and garbage disposal. Safety features include smoke detectors, a sprinkler system, handicap accessibility, and an emergency call system in each residence.



Fr. Emil Schuway in his kitchen in his apartment

In addition to the lovely apartments, Saint Charles Senior Living Community provides a wide range of amenities; such as, an exercise room with pool table, a library/reading room, a beauty salon/barber shop, and even a post office. The spacious grounds offer walking paths and two gorgeous lakes for fishing or relaxing.



Fr. Bernie Mullen at the piano

For the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, having apartments for their well-retired members means that they can offer a continuum of care on one campus. Just a short distance from the Saint Charles Senior Living Community is the congregation's infirmary building, Merlini Hall. This facility offers assisted living and skilled and dementia care. It has twenty-nine individual rooms with private baths, and nurses are on duty around the clock. Best of all, residents remain part of their religious community and can

participate in congregational life as their health allows.

Overall, the greatest benefit of living at Saint Charles is surely the sense of community and shared spirituality. Numerous opportunities are available for worship and prayer. Mass is offered daily at Saint Charles Chapel, as well as community prayer and Benediction; and residents are always welcome to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Outside, statues, grottos, and the Way of the Cross furnish inspiration for private reflection.



Fr. Ray Seifert enjoying the front porch

Within the building, there is no distinction between areas for priests and religious and areas for lay residents. Apartments for priests are integrated among apartments for lay, and each floor shares a gathering area where all can join in cards, puzzles or just good conversation. Residents also break bread together in a common dining room. "We are all one in the body of Christ," notes Sister Martha Bertke, CPPS, Manager. "Our approach to senior living reflects this truth as we strive to affirm the dignity of each resident and to honor the unique way in which he or she is called to serve God."



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!



CALENDAR



CMSM New Leaders Workshop, Washington, DC	December 8-11, 2008
Supplemental and Special Assistance Grant Awards Distributed	December 2008
Retirement Fund for Religious National Collection Date	December 13-14, 2008
*Direct Care Assistance Applications sent out	December 29, 2008
NRRO Planning & Implementation Assistance Workshop, San Antonio	January 16-18, 2009
NRRO Person Centered Care Workshop, Baltimore, MD	February 18-19, 2009
*Direct Care Assistance Applications DUE IN OFFICE	March 15, 2009
LCWR New Leaders Workshop, Plymouth, MI	March 19-22, 2009
Collection Proceeds from (Arch)Dioceses Due in Office	March 31, 2009
NRRO Planning & Implementation Assistance Workshop, Chicago, IL	April 1-3, 2009
NRRO Person Centered Care Workshop, Chicago, IL	April 15-16, 2009

** Formerly known as Basic Grant applications or Eligibility Forms*

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
National Religious Retirement Office
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Washington, DC 20017-1194
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