

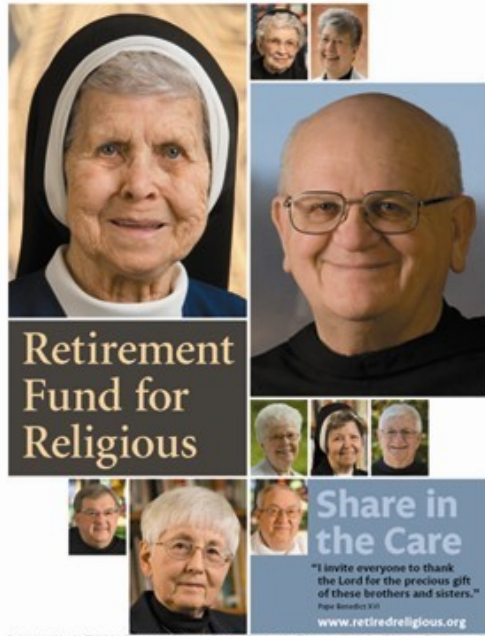


## *Retirement Fund for Religious*

# Winter 2009 Newsletter

Volume 22, No. 3

## Meet Our 2009 RFR Poster Religious



At the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO), we tend to mark the passage of time with posters rather than calendars. In fact, the hallway outside our offices is lined with campaign posters from every year since the Retirement Fund for Religious was launched in 1988. Including this year that makes twenty-two!

Each year, these poster images become the basis for all our campaign materials, from bulletin inserts to collection envelopes to pages on our Web sites. We spend our days with these faces. They peek over our shoulders as we collaborate with religious institutes to carefully steward the generous donations to the RFR. They smile up from our desktops as we work with dioceses and archdioceses to raise awareness about the needs of elder religious.

Sometimes, we are fortunate enough to meet the religious pictured on our posters; sometimes we're not. Either way, after spending months with their images, we feel like we know them. They seem like friends. Most importantly, their faces remind us of the more than 35,000 religious past age 70 living in the United States. They inspire us, as they inspire Catholics throughout the country, to want to give back to women and men who have spent a lifetime serving our God, our Church, and our world.

So as we prepare for the national collection on December 12-13, we take this opportunity to share a little about the women and men religious who appear on our 2009 poster. There are just ten faces, but their stories reflect the service, dedication, prayers, and love of the thousands of religious who benefit from the RFR.

→ DON'T FORGET!

*Please send changes in address, phone, E-mail or congregational leadership to NRRO c/o Jean Smith (jsmith@uscgb.org), so that we may keep our records and mailing lists updated.*  
*Thank You!*

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## Franciscan Friars, Third Order Regular, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania



**Father Leonard Blotic, TOR, 75**—Father Leonard taught history for thirty years in four different high schools. He then ministered in parishes in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Today, he is dedicated to visiting residents at a nearby assisted living facility and to celebrating the sacraments with them. He resides at St. Bernardine Monastery in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, where he maintains responsibility for all the grocery shopping.



**Father Fabian Sheganoski, TOR, 71**—Father Fabian spent his early career as a high school English teacher. Later, he spent thirty-nine years ministering in parishes in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Florida. He was also active with the formation of friars preparing for the brotherhood and priesthood. A lifelong theatre fan, he continues to enjoy researching and attending theatrical performances.



**Father Mark Reifel, TOR, 81**—A native of Cincinnati, Father Mark began his ministry teaching mathematics to high school and college seminarians. He also served as a civilian Air Force chaplain and later as a formation director. He ministered in numerous parishes in Pennsylvania and West Virginia and now serves as the senior priest at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Windber, Pennsylvania. He lives at the local friary.



**Father Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, 60**—Though he is far from retired, Father Christopher's appearance on the 2009 poster is an important reminder that through its support of senior religious, the RFR also helps younger religious remain in active ministry. Like many religious, Father Christopher juggles a variety of responsibilities, from serving as chaplain at area hospitals to providing pastoral support to parishes when needed. His primary role as local minister for his community means that, among other things, he supports the day-to-day needs of the elder friars living at St. Bernardine's monastery.

## Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, Meriden, Connecticut



**Sister Rita Brunner, FSE, 95**—Sister Rita was a founding member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist in 1973. Previous to that time, she served as an elementary school teacher and administrator, an organist, a missionary in El Salvador, and a provincial for her community. Presently she spends much time praying before the Blessed Sacrament and also participates in the music classes at the Franciscan Life Process Center Preschool in Lowell, Michigan, a congregational ministry that she helped initiate and maintain.

## Sisters of St. Basil the Great, Uniontown, Pennsylvania

**Sister Gertrude Martin, OSBM, 87**—An elementary school teacher and principal for many years, Sister Gertrude also served on her community’s leadership council. Later she managed the religious gift shop located on the grounds of Mount Saint Macrina, the congregation’s motherhouse. Eager to be of service, Sister Gertrude continues to provide administrative assistance for various congregational projects.



**Sister Elizabeth Jane Tepley, OSBM, 70**—For most of her religious life, Sister Elizabeth Jane served as a teacher and principal. She then moved into parish ministry and was especially active in visiting the sick and homebound. She also assisted with the diocesan marriage tribunal. Today, she manages her community’s religious card and prayer ministry.



**Sister Ann Fedyszak, OSBM, 73**—Sister Ann ministered in a wide-range of positions within her community, from coordinator of the motherhouse to assistant provincial to director of the congregation’s retreat center. She was also active in parish ministry and in the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education. She continues to serve part-time in pastoral ministry at Mount Macrina Manor, a skilled nursing facility sponsored by the Sisters of St. Basil.



## Sisters of St. Francis, Tiffin, Ohio

**Sister Patricia Ann Froning, OSF, 73**—After beginning her career as an elementary school teacher and principal, Sister Patricia Ann spent several years as a hospital administrator and served for twelve years on her community’s leadership council. She also worked as a pastoral minister and spent sixteen years directing her diocese’s Office for Lay Ministry and Outreach. She remains active with mission advancement and a variety of congregational services, including spiritual direction and retreats.



**Sister Laurene Toeppe, OSF, 81**—Sister Laurene served in numerous ministries, including education, social service, and pastoral ministry. Within her congregation, she acted as novice director, worked in the treasurer’s office, and was a member of the leadership council. Today, she volunteers extensively and enjoys making crocheted items for her community’s gift shop.



## Message from the Executive Director

The time from Thanksgiving until New Year's Day tends to be a whirlwind of activity. Not only do we prepare spiritually for Christmas with Advent prayer and reflection, but inevitably we also get caught in the holiday rush. We shop, wrap presents, decorate, bake, and attend countless holiday gatherings. We meet ourselves coming and going.

Funerals, thankfully, are usually not on the list of the season's activities. But death, never respecting schedules, does sometimes intrude.

Last year, on December 24, death visited a local convent. The sister who was called home to God was the blood sister of three members of my own religious community. On December 26, I attended the wake, fully expecting a very small crowd because of the holiday frenzy. To my amazement, I barely could find a parking space, and people were lined up outside the door. At the funeral Mass the next day, there was standing room only.

This sister obviously influenced many persons during her sixty-seven years of vowed religious life. She was active in her local parish until just weeks before her death at age 88. Her burial from that parish, where she had lived for more than forty years, provided the opportunity for the parishioners to join in celebrating her life. Their presence was a tribute to her quiet, selfless years of loving service.

The men and women profiled in this issue of our newsletter and featured on the 2009 Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR) poster also have touched countless lives with their ministries. They continue today to reach out through prayer and service. And like the thousands of senior religious that they represent, the monuments to their lives are built not in bricks and mortar but in flesh and blood—in the men, women, and children who have come to know and love God through their goodness.

It is because these women and men religious have given and continue to give so selflessly that Catholics throughout this country amaze us every year with their overwhelming support of the RFR. We extend our sincere appreciation to each of you who, through your own generosity and sacrifice, proclaim the good deeds of these wonderful sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.

From the entire NRRO staff, I extend to you heartfelt prayers for peace and joy this Christmas season and always.



Sr. Janice Bader, CPPS

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## Diocese of Worcester Awards Ceremony



Bp. McManus & Fr. Fortin



Bp. McManus & Sr. Hilda



Bp. McManus & Sr. Therese



Sr. Mary John & Bp. McManus

On October 29, 2009, the Diocese of Worcester, Massachusetts, honored four religious as their Retired Religious of the Year. Bishop Robert J. McManus presented the awards at a special ceremony following Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Worcester. The award is given to an individual religious who represents all the members of his or her religious community, and it is intended to recognize the outstanding service that the selected community has provided to the diocese. The

event is a time of great rejoicing for the religious and his or her community as well as for the entire diocese.

### Recipients:

Sister Therese Margaret Duross, Religious of the Assumption, Worcester, MA

Father Robert J. Fortin, Augustinians of the Assumption, Worcester, MA

Sister Mary John Bosco Lyons, Sisters of Providence, Holyoke, MA

Sister Hilda Chasse, Little Franciscan Sisters of Mary, Worcester, MA



*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.**



## CALENDAR

### Retirement Fund for Religious Collection

Direct Care Assistance Information distributed

Planning and Implementation Workshop, Belleville, IL

RCRI Workshop, Planning for the Future, Washington, DC

Direct Care Assistance Applications Due

RFR Collection Proceeds Due

Planning and Implementation Workshop, Dayton, OH

**December 12-13, 2009**

December 31, 2009

January 22-24, 2010

March 1-3, 2010

March 31, 2010

March 31, 2010

April 20-22, 2010



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*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.*

*The National Religious Retirement Office supports, educates and assists religious institutes in the U.S. to embrace their current retirement reality and to plan for the future.*



**NRRO Staff:** L-R, Sr. Janice Bader, CPPS; Jean Smith; Br. Bob Metzger, SM; Br. Hank Sammon, FMS, JCL; Monica Glover

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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