

**To: National Council Representatives**  
**Resolution - Priest Retirement or Pension Funds**

Following is a proposal for Voice of the Faithful to formally adopt the position that the financial aspect of priest retirements should not come under the exclusive control of the local Bishop.

**Brief background:**

On Long Island, and reported elsewhere across the country, VOTF has found substantial but silent support among priests. We have also found that one of the root causes for this silence stems from concern that the retirement benefits of most diocesan priests are subject to the discretion of the local Ordinary.

In Boston, and elsewhere, recent financial disclosures have revealed significant shortfalls in the funding needed to secure priest pension funds. Similarly, from diocese to diocese there are significant differences in how pensions are funded and vested.

We believe that the enactment of the following proposal will remedy these shortcomings and help reform our church in two ways:

- A. Help free priests from the fear associated with uncertainty about their financial futures, thus enabling them to speak more honestly and openly with their local Ordinary about the challenges facing our church.
- B. Encourage priests, as well as the Catholic faithful in general, to support a VOTF initiative that directly addresses a structural reform needed within the Church.

**THEREFORE:**

*Whereas* Under the current church finance structure, many diocesan priest retirement funds and the disposition thereof are controlled either directly or indirectly by the local Ordinary;

*And Whereas* The absolute control by the local Ordinary over the financial futures of priests may hinder the ability of priests to speak openly and honestly on behalf of the faithful for the good of the church;

*And Whereas* Fear of financial repercussions should never have to be a consideration for a priest in exercising his conscience;

**Therefore** (for discussion)

VOTF should take the position and actively advocate for priest pension plans to vest (transfer ownership rights of retirement funds to individual priest over time). In support of that advocacy, VOTF shall review diocesan pension-fund practices and develop best-practice standards appropriate for protecting priest pension funds.