

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

ARCHDIOCESE SUPPORTS PRIESTS THROUGH RETIREMENT

For many archdiocesan priests, retirement doesn't necessarily mean the end of daily activity but rather a decrease in the regular workload. After retirement, priests can decide how active a life they would like to lead, and many opt to continue serving at the parish level in response to the shortage of priests. Whatever level of activity they choose, priests are assured of support from the archdiocese in their retirement, thanks to funding from the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign.

One of those priests who remains active is Father Patrick Commons. He retired in 1993 after 42 years of service to the Church. For him, retirement meant trading the busy life of a pastor for assisting parishes by presiding at Mass, administering the sacraments, anointing the homebound and performing other duties.

Today, at age 82, Father Commons remains active, continuing his ministry as a priest by offering daily Mass for the intentions sent him by the archdiocese. He stays in touch by driving to visit people and is now working to master the intricacies of his new laptop computer.

Father Commons is among 37 retired priests in the archdiocese. Several of them—including Father Commons—live at the St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove near the south side of Indianapolis, where residents can celebrate daily Mass and receive the sacraments. Since opening in 1960, St. Paul has provided



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care for approximately 1,000 religious people. It has always operated at full capacity and has a waiting list of three years. (One of its residents commented, "If heaven has a lobby, St. Paul Hermitage is it.")

The decades leading up to Father Commons' retirement were eventful ones indeed. For 14 years he was a missionary in India, where he was the only American among 29 priests from nine countries. Father Commons and his fellow clergy ministered to parishes ranging from 8,000 to 15,000 members. Twice a year, he would spend two months visiting villages to hear confession, preside at liturgies, meet with parish leaders and visit parishioners in their homes.

Father Commons was a member of the Society of the Divine Word until 1970, when he was incardinated into the archdiocese. He then served as pastor of more than a half-dozen parishes in southern Indiana.

How long does Father Commons plan to offer daily Mass? He will as long as he can, he said. "The priesthood is my life. Priests are married to the Church. The Church is my life."

The archdiocese fulfills its ongoing commitment to its priests by providing them with financial and medical benefits, relieving them of worries about their later years. Thanks to funding assistance from the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign, future priests can look forward to security in their retirement. Father Commons is grateful to the ongoing support of the campaign in providing him assistance. "I'm getting more than enough support in my retirement. Certainly the archdiocese is taking good care of me."

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocesan capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the local and changing needs of archdiocesan ministries such as caring for retired priests. By contributing to the Legacy for Our Mission campaign, a portion of your gift will be allocated to support retirement assistance for priests.

Please visit the new online home of the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign at www.archindy.org/legacy. It can also be accessed at www.LegacyforOurMission.org.