

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

“FATHER DON” CONTINUES LIFELONG DEDICATION TO YOUTH, SPIRITUAL DIRECTION IN RETIREMENT

FATHER DONALD SCHMIDLIN—fondly referred to as “Father Don” by all whose lives he has touched—has left his mark as a popular parish priest and long-time director of Catholic Charities.

Thanks to the generosity of many throughout the archdiocese, Father Schmidlin was able to retire in 2001 after a lifetime of service to the Church. This is reflective of the Church’s lifelong commitment to its priests, in this case providing Father Schmidlin security in his later years and relieving him of any possible worries about his retirement.

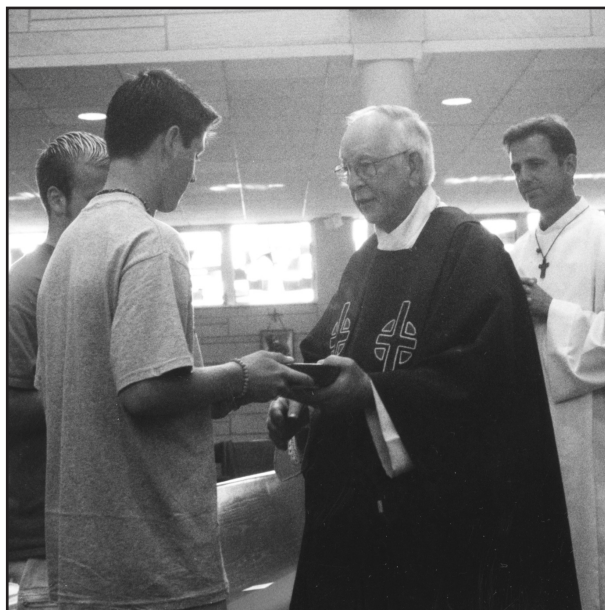
“I think I have more joy, more happiness, more *joie de vivre*,” he says. “I look forward to my days, and I deeply appreciate that.”

The archdiocese supports its priests much the same as a company provides for its retirees, he explained, with financial and medical benefits. The *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign will help the archdiocese fund such expenses so future priests who serve the Church enjoy similar retirement benefits.

“I’m extremely grateful to the archdiocese. I am very, very fortunate. I simply have not had financial worries about my retirement. We do need ongoing support from the *Legacy for Our Mission*.”

Despite his status as a retiree, Father Schmidlin remains active, spending most weekends at various parishes whose pastors are traveling or ill, celebrating Mass and providing other sacramental assistance. It’s work that he is very happy to do.

Father Schmidlin particularly enjoys ministering to students. During the school year, he celebrates Mass on Sunday evenings on the Butler University campus. Until recently, he counseled Indiana University students at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington.



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“It turned out to be wonderful—the best way to spend the first four years of retirement, getting to know the students and taking the ministry to them,” Father Schmidlin says.

In 2005 Father Schmidlin moved to Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, where he has an enduring affiliation as a retreat presenter and advisory board member.

One of the most fulfilling of his pursuits, Father Schmidlin said, is counseling young priests just starting out. “I try to

be a source of hope, of confidence for them in God, that what we are doing is a true calling, something that is beautiful,” he says.

Reflecting upon his nearly half-century of service to the Church, Father Schmidlin noted that in his early years he found meditation to be very difficult. “Then, more and more, I realized the need for it. In 1995, I made a 30-day retreat in California,” he says. “It made me realize the need for quiet prayer and spiritual direction. When I retired, I participated in three years of summer school to become certified in spiritual direction. It helped me understand the basics. I now find it not only enjoyable but deeply fulfilling.”

While Father Schmidlin fulfills a number of parish responsibilities, he finds retirement liberating, enabling him to pursue not only spiritual direction but also get away more than when he had the responsibilities of being a full-time parish priest. He even manages an occasional round of golf. He recently traveled to Minneapolis, where he represented the Priests’ Council of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis at the national council meeting.

At this point of his life, he said, “Certainly there have been periods of trial and weakness and mistakes. But I have found increasing happiness and joy in being a priest. It has actually increased over the years rather than diminishing.”

What advice would he give the young priests that he mentors? “Be good to your nieces and nephews. You’ll appreciate them more and more as you grow older.”

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocese’s ongoing capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries. By contributing to the Legacy for Our Mission campaign through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to support retirement assistance for priests.