

# Archdiocese honors religious jubilarians for service

They've taught in schools, worked among lepers, ministered to the sick, prepared Catholics for the sacraments and toiled in mission fields across the globe. And that doesn't even begin to include all their many varied ministries that have touched the lives of countless people.

In a Nov. 17 celebration at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland, the Archdiocese of Baltimore recognized the combined 4,625 years of service of the 84 religious sisters, brothers and priests serving in the Baltimore archdiocese who are marking 25, 50, 60, 65, 70 and 75 years in religious life.

Thirty-one honorees attended the Mass, which was celebrated by Bishop W. Francis Malooly, western vicar, and concelebrated by Bishop Denis J. Madden, urban vicar, retired Archbishop William D. Borders and retired eastern vicar Bishop William C. Newman.

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien and Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski, eastern vicar, could not attend because of other commitments. In a written statement, Archbishop O'Brien said the archdiocese gives thanks for the religious serving in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

"We give thanks to them for their fidelity in a life consecrated through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience," he said. "We are indebted to them for their many and varied ministries that make visible the call of the Gospel. I pray that God will bless them for all that they have contributed and continue to give through prayer, sacrifice, presence and good works."

Many of the jubilarians said they felt called by God to serve the church by dedicating their entire lives to ministry.

Sister M. Francis Regis Carton, S.S.N.D., a theology professor at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Baltimore, who is celebrating 60 years as a School Sister of Notre Dame, remembered how she gave up a lucrative job as a commercial

representative for the New York Telephone Company to become a sister.

“It was a well-paying job for the time,” said Sister Francis Regis. “But I felt I wanted to do something of more value to be helpful to people.”

In college, Sister Francis Regis had a double major in history and education – which helped her immensely in the religious life where she spent most of her years as an educator. Sister Francis Regis taught at St. James School in Baltimore and the Institute of Notre Dame in Baltimore. She served four years as her order’s provincial leader and has taught at Notre Dame for more than five decades.

“I love teaching,” she said. “Teaching keeps you in touch with what’s going on in people’s lives, and it can make you compassionate toward people in their difficulties.”

Brother Finbar Gallagher, T.O.R., who is celebrating 50 years as a Franciscan Third Order Regular brother, said he loves his order’s commitment to the poor and vulnerable. Brother Finbar spent 17 years as a missionary in Brazil where he worked as the procurator for his religious community and ministered in a leper colony.

“Some people looked down on them (people with leprosy),” remembered Brother Finbar. “They were so grateful to us.”

When he first learned he would be working with people with leprosy, Brother Finbar said he didn’t think he had the strength to do it. But the prayers of people at home supported him, he said.

“You have to depend on God,” he said. “God gives you the grace to do things you don’t think you can do.”

Brother Finbar compared his current ministry at St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Highlandtown as an extension of his earlier mission work. Fluent in Portuguese and able to speak some Spanish, Brother Finbar said he ministers in a community that is seeing an increase in immigrants who are looking to the church for support.

Brother Finbar works in his parish’s St. Vincent de Paul Society and has ministered at the Franciscan Center in Baltimore.

Religious orders provide an important service in urban ministry, said Brother Finbar, staffing many city parishes and reaching out to those in need.

Community life has been a tremendous support to Sister Loretta Cornell, M.H.S.H. The Baltimore native, who grew up in St. Matthew parish, is celebrating 25 years as a Mission Helper of the Sacred Heart.

"We live in a society where there is a lot of focus on material things, but that's not where the happiness is," said Sister Loretta, who has ministered as a youth minister, pastoral associate, director of religious education and campus minister at The Seton Keough High School in Baltimore.

"Happiness comes when you have a relationship with Jesus and when you know that no matter what, God is there for you," she said. "If you say yes to God, all things are possible."

Sister Loretta said she loves the prayer life of her community and she loves serving people. She currently serves in her order's administrative headquarters in Baltimore.

"I've learned so much from God's people," she said. "I love ministering to them."