



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE
OFFICE OF PASTORAL SERVICES
FOR RETIRED PRIESTS

Dear Friends in Christ,

When I retired in 2024 after 43 years of priesthood, I entered a new chapter in a vocation that has brought me more joy and fulfillment than I could have ever imagined. Now, a few years into retirement, I often reflect on the people, parishes and experiences that have shaped my life as a priest, and above all, I am filled with gratitude.



My priesthood took me from serving as an associate pastor at St. Joseph in Cockeysville and St. Louis in Clarksville, to ten years as Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and finally to St. Ignatius in Hickory, where I was blessed to serve as pastor for 23 years. Each assignment brought its own joys and challenges, but the greatest gift was always the people.

There is something incredibly special about being invited into the most meaningful moments of a person's life — to baptize a child, celebrate the sacraments, witness a marriage, comfort a grieving family, or simply listen to someone who needs a priest to walk beside them. Being with people and accompanying them on their journey of faith has been one of the great pleasures of my priesthood.

Retirement has given me an even greater appreciation for my brother priests and for the generosity of those who continue to care for us after our years of full-time ministry.

Today, 69 priests are retired in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and more than one-third continue to assist sacramentally in our parishes and communities. Even in retirement, the call to priesthood does not end. Our ministry may look different, but our desire to serve God and His people remains.

That is why I am especially grateful for the opportunity to write to you today to ask for your support. A contribution from you to the Retired Priests Appeal would provide important care and support for priests who have devoted their lives to serving the people of our Archdiocese.

Your gifts will help the Archdiocese provide assistance with long-term and assisted living expenses, as well as medical expenses not covered by Medicare. We invite you to consider making a gift through one of the options offered.

For many years, priests in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have been there for others. Through your generosity, you will be there for us when we need it most.

Retirement has allowed me to enjoy a different pace of life, spend time with my brother priests and appreciate the bonds of fraternity that have sustained me throughout my vocation. But one thing has not changed: I am still a priest. Priesthood is not something from which we truly retire. It is a vocation we carry with us for life.

Thank you for prayerfully considering my request, for remembering our retired priests, for honoring our many years of faithful service and, most especially, for your generous support and prayers. If you have already made a gift in support of my brother retired priests this year, thank you for remembering them in such a meaningful way.

Please know that you and your intentions remain in my prayers. May God bless you for the kindness and gratitude you continue to show to the priests who have been blessed to serve you.

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim", written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monsignor James M. Barker