



# ARCHDIOCESE of SOUTHWARK

## Clergy Support Fund Campaign



Dear Friends in Christ,

I write to you in this Advent season of hopeful expectation as we look forward to the celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas. For you, your family and your loved ones, I hope and pray this will be a time of peace and joy.

I want to thank you for your generous support of the Clergy Support Fund. Your gifts enable our Archdiocese to provide dignified care and support to our retired clergy after they have dedicated a lifetime of service to Christ and His people. On behalf of all our clergy, I would like you to know we are sincerely thankful for your generosity of heart.

During this forthcoming Christmas season we join Christians across the world to give thanks for the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ. In his Christmas message last year, Pope Francis said: *"my wish for a happy Christmas is a wish for fraternity. Fraternity among individuals of every nation and culture"*. How true and eternal this message is, especially as I write to you today. In a very significant way you are part of that fraternity – a fraternity of people who chose to support the Clergy Support Fund. Your kindness has raised over £3.7 million to provide for the needs of the retired and infirm priests of our Archdiocese. For this I cannot thank you enough.

Every day the faith of countless Catholics is nurtured and encouraged by the loving ministry and personal example of those called to serve as priests. Just as we plan and carefully consider retirement options for the older members of our own family, as a Church, it is right that we should honour and value the commitment of our clergy by ensuring they are cared for in their retirement.

The Archdiocese of Southwark has over 80 priests in retirement, and this number is expected to double over the coming years as a further 88 priests become eligible for retirement. Our commitment to our priests is to assure they will not be alone and struggling after giving their lives to Christ and the service of His Church.

We provide for more than the health and housing needs of our retired clergy, we provide spiritual, pastoral and emotional support for them too. As the number of priests in retirement continues to rise, and as people live longer, sometimes with chronic conditions, our responsibilities in this area are set to multiply. Your support, and that from others, greatly helps in meeting these needs.

I hope you find this newsletter informative and enjoy reading the stories of some of our retired clergy whom we are currently supporting. Thank you for your generosity and continued prayers for our priests.

With my best wishes to you and your families for a blessed Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Please be sure of my prayers for you and those you love.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev John Wilson  
Archbishop of Southwark







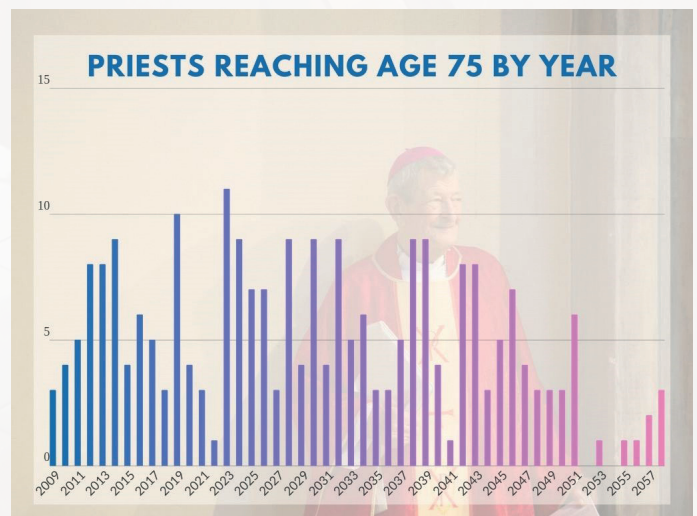
## Thank you for your generosity of heart

Our priests baptized us, counselled us in times of sorrow and worry, and celebrated with us in times of joy. We have received so much from their kindness. We thank you for your generosity of heart in choosing to support the retired clergy of Southwark in their sickness and old age through your support of the *Clergy Support Fund*.

The needs of our sick and retired priests are human and real; the same as any elderly person without next of kin close-by. Good health allowing, our wonderful diocesan priests reach retirement aged 75, a full ten years after most citizens. However, many choose to continue on in active parish ministry if they are still able. Many others continue to exercise their ministry to parishes and communities of the faithful by providing much needed cover and support. Retired clergy who can live independently often do so in flats owned by the diocese, which need to be converted to fit that purpose. Other retired priests will require more intensive nursing care, especially as they become older.

In the last few years the numbers of priests entering retirement has jumped from an average of two or three each year to nine or ten. This trend is set to continue over the next ten years, swelling the numbers of retired priests to well over 100 at any given time.

The costs associated with caring for this many retired clergy are significant. As an example of the growing costs, in 2019 the archdiocese spent £1.2 million on nursing care fees for twenty-two retired priests, compared to £280,000 in 2008.



As a Diocese it is an honour to sustain our retired clergy after their lifetime of service to the Church. There is a Priest's Welfare committee, made up of the Vicar General, two Episcopal Vicars for Retired Clergy, two liaison officers (both previously nurses), and representatives from the diocesan finance and property team. This joined up approach ensures the diocese cares for its priests and meets their needs responsively and with dignity, whilst ensuring that funds and property are used wisely and accountably. The committee also organise preparation seminars for our priests coming close to retirement, to help them plan for their future.

**We cannot do this good work without the generous financial support of people like you. Thank you!**

*“Do not reject me in my old age, nor desert me when my strength is failing” – Psalm 71:9*



# Retired Clergy benefiting from your generosity

*“The silver-haired head is a crown of glory” – Proverbs 16:31*

## Father Frank O’Sullivan

**Age: 98, Ordained: 1956, Retired 21 years**

A few years ago you kindly agreed to donate to a fund providing for the needs of Sick and Retired Priests – priests like me!

I was ordained a priest sixty-three years ago. I have served in five parishes, and have worked in Marriage and Family life Ministry for forty years. I have learned so much from working with married couples. I retired aged 77, but for the last twenty-one years I have continued working in parishes and giving talks.

In the last year I have had a few falls, and now have some medical problems. So the Archbishop decided that I deserved a bit of TLC – some tender loving care! **Your generosity has made it possible for me to live in a care home while continuing to serve the local parish.**

The Care Home are pleased to have a priest living here. I am able to provide Catholics with a weekly Eucharist, and I offer spiritual support to the residents and staff, many of whom are Christians. Death is an ever present reality here, where



there are so many sick and aged persons. So I look forward to providing the wonderful spiritual help the Church offers to those who are dying, and to their families.

Thank you once again for the support your generosity is giving to Sick and Retired Priests.

## Canon Michael Cooley

**Age: 81, Ordained: 1962, Retired 2 ½ years**

Before I retired I was the parish priest at Our Lady of La Salette & St Joseph Church near London Bridge for over thirty years. Nearing my time to take retirement, I began to explore all possible avenues: perhaps I would enjoy going to Rome a few months a year to work in the archives. I certainly wanted to keep busy whatever I did and remain in learning, as I had been a teacher before I joined the priesthood. If I was to stay within the Diocese I wanted to remain in London. I am a Londoner after all and have earned my freedom pass.

It was Archbishop Peter who asked me whether I would be Chaplain for St Peter’s Care Home. I was delighted to accept. It gave me a focus, a community, a central London location. **It has been ideal; I could never have worked it out myself.** There are eight other retired clergy here and a wonderful sense of belonging. I say Mass every day and am joined by my fellow retired priests, who concelebrate with me.

I would like to express my gratitude to those people who supported the Clergy Support Fund to ensure we are cared for once we leave parish life. Thank you!

(Left) Retired clergy celebrating Mass at St Peter’s Care Home.

*“We are always priests, with all our soul and with all our heart.”*

**Pope Francis March 11 2011**





# Bishop Howard Tripp

**Age, 92 Ordained: 1953, Retired: 13 years**

I was a parish priest many years ago from 1953 to 1971. In 1971 I became Chief Officer of the Catholic Children's Society and had the pleasure of working there for ten years. I thought I would return to parish ministry, but instead I was made an Auxiliary Bishop in 1980 for South West London.

I reached my retirement age in 1997 but continued on as a Bishop until 2004, as I was still capable, and we were in need of an Auxiliary Bishop here in Southwark during that time. I retired from being a Bishop in 2004, aged 77, but continued to support parishes and local convents in Wimbledon until last year.

When I broke my leg in 2016 I was amazed at the concern shown to me. After an operation I went for a rigorous course of physiotherapy and a short period of convalescence with the Little Sisters of the Poor, supported for and funded by the Diocese.

I thank, most sincerely, all those who have supported the Clergy Support Fund. I have been retired for 13 years and I am truly blessed that so many people are generous in their support of us, their clergy.



Image taken at the Installation of Archbishop John Wilson by Marc Macar

## Our Commitment to Our Sick and Retired Clergy...

- Regular Financial Support
- Housing
- Health Care
- Convalescence
- Nursing Care
- Companionship
- Preparation for retirement
- Fitting accommodation to meet a priest's disability and special needs

## Thank you for your prayers and generous support

We rely on the generosity of our parishes and parishioners like you to support our sick and retired clergy.

## A gift this Christmas?

If you would like to make a supplemental donation to the *Clergy Support Fund* this Christmas, you can do so by:



By telephone: **0207 960 2504**



Online via: [www.justgiving.com/rcdioceseofsouthwark](http://www.justgiving.com/rcdioceseofsouthwark)



By post. Cheques made payable to **RC Archdiocese of Southwark Fundraising CSF** – send to our office at the address below.

If you would prefer not to receive communications from the Archdiocese of Southwark, or if you have any questions regarding the Clergy Support Fund, please contact the fundraising team via telephone on **0207 960 2504** or by email [fundraising@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@rcaos.org.uk). You can read our full privacy statement on [www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/finance.html](http://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/finance.html)



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CSF, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark, 59 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7JE

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