



ARCHDIOCESE of SOUTHWARK
Clergy Support Fund Campaign

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



*Thank you for being a Friend
of the Sick and Retired Clergy*

Dear Friend in Christ,



Thank you to those who have generously supported the Clergy Support Fund of the Archdiocese of Southwark in the past.

The pandemic has affected us all in ways that are difficult to fathom. But as a people of faith, our focus remains on what is certain in a changing world. And that is the unchanging truth of God's love. A love that He unveiled to the world and made real through a tiny baby, born in Bethlehem, who grew to live, to die, to rise, and to reign.

As we begin this expectant season of Advent, we are called to the mystery of God's love, revealed in Christ, who is with us in our struggling, who is with us in our joy, who is with us in every moment. So, my dear friend, as we joyfully await the birth of Christ, I pray this shall be a time of hope and peace for you and your family.

This letter also provides me the opportunity to thank you for your continued support of our sick and retired clergy. Each year, your generosity enables our Archdiocese to provide dignified care to our clergy, after they have dedicated a lifetime of service to Christ and His people here in Southwark.

Many of our retired clergy do not have family or next of kin nearby; for these men, we are their family. Just as each of us plan and carefully consider the retirement options for the older members of our own families, as a Church, we do the same for our priests.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, our dedicated Clergy Support Team worked tirelessly this year to ensure our priests had their needs and accommodation preferences met in their retirement or time of ill health. But none of this would have been possible without your support.

A Gift this Christmas?

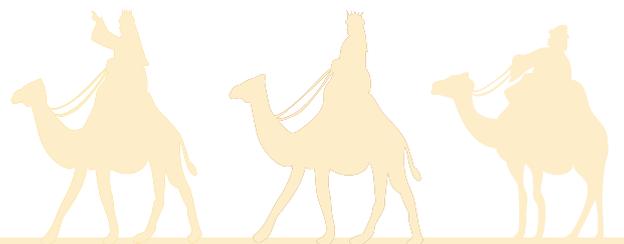
In 2021, we cared for 71 priests in their ill health and retirement, at a cost of £1.25 million. We are therefore reliant on the generosity of parishioners across the Diocese to help us meet these financial obligations. Each year we are astounded by the support we receive, and on behalf of our priests, I want to thank you for such kindness.

If you would like to make a donation this Advent, you can do so using the enclosed pledge form and pre-paid envelope.

Finally, please join me in praying for the repose of the souls of the 12 priests and deacons who left us this year for their heavenly home.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠ Most Rev John Wilson
Archbishop of Southwark





Fr Michael Leach

Age: 78 Ordained: 1971 Retired: 3 years

I was the first Priest ordained by Archbishop Michael Bowen shortly after he had become Bishop of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. My first appointment was to organise Parish Missions and Retreats. This took me from Wick and Thurso in the far North of Scotland, down to Plymouth and across the sea to Ireland.

Later, I was to be a Hospital Chaplain, a Director of Vocations, a school chaplain and a Parish Priest – but not all at the same time! So, if variety is the spice of life, mine has been at least a vindaloo!

The Diocese provided me with a beautiful little flat when I retired. I'm fully domesticated, so living alone I do my own shopping, cooking, washing up, washing and ironing, and cleaning – you'll know how the list goes on. For many years I have worked in the Southwark Marriage Tribunal as a Judge. This entails many hours of studying the cases presented to us of people seeking an annulment of their marriages. Despite being in retirement, I continue to take interviews, study the cases, and meet with other judges. This certainly helps to keep my mind active! Also, I help out with Sunday Masses when a Parish Priest goes on holiday or needs a break.

May God reward you for your generosity to the Clergy Support Fund – we do so appreciate it!

"We are always priests, with all our soul and with all our heart" – Pope Francis, March 2011



Canon Colm Acton

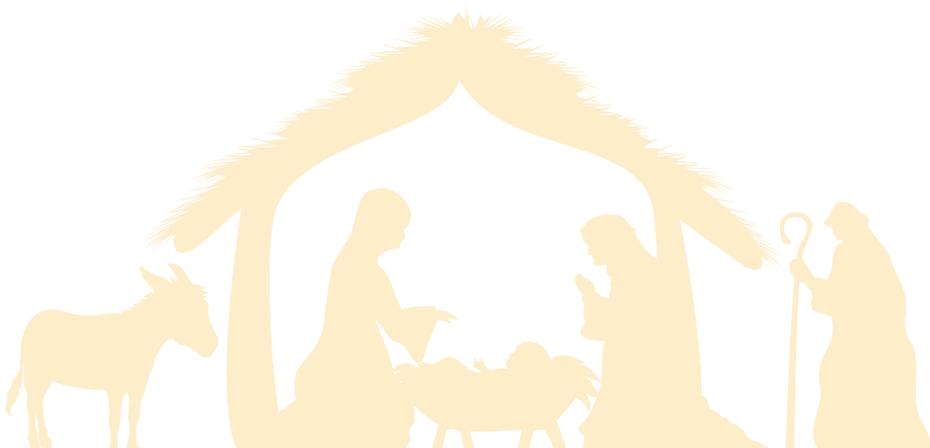
Age: 88 Ordained: 1958 Retired: 5 ½ years

After training for the Priesthood in St Patrick's College Co. Carlow, Ireland, I came to London and reported to Archbishop Cyril Cowderoy to serve in the Archdiocese of Southwark. I have served in several parishes across the Archdiocese, including Tunbridge Wells, St George's Cathedral, Paddock Wood, Pembury and Peckham Rye, and finally I put my roots down in St John Fisher, Merton, where I was Parish Priest for nearly 35 years until my retirement in 2016.

I retired to a property provided by the diocese not far from my old parish, so I still feel part of that community. Since retirement I have done a bit of travelling. I went to Rome in 2018 for the 60th anniversary of my ordination and had the great pleasure of meeting the Holy Father Pope Francis, a most memorable event. I went to California to visit my brother Sean, a priest in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, to celebrate his 95th birthday. He passed away in July of this year. I was also able to make several visits to Tuam in County Galway, where I was born and still have family connections, spending some quality time there before the COVID-19 pandemic.

For some time my health has been poor and I am receiving treatment for cancer. This curtails lots of activities and involves many visits to the hospital. But I thank God I am still alive and have an enjoyable life.

Thanks to all those who contribute to the Sick and Retired Clergy Fund. Your generosity makes the life of a retired priest feel secure.



Pray for our deceased Clergy

Please pray for the souls of our deceased Clergy. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. You can find their name by visiting:
www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/ministry/curia/those-who-have-died