

## “BROTHERS DWELLING TOGETHER AS ONE...”: SUPPORTING OUR RETIRED PRIESTS

It was bound to happen. The mere act of signing up for the “retirement planning seminar” through the Archdiocese marked a **turning point** for me! No, I am not ready to hang up the collar— far from it! But for the first time, I began looking at the financial aspect of pensions, social security, investments etc. that anyone my age should be considering. What is my retirement plan? One thing I know for certain— whether in 2033 or several years later— I could already order my **return address** stickers. I intend to live at the **Leo C. Byrne Residence** at 60 Mississippi River Blvd South. Back in my **old neighborhood**! While it sounds like a toney address, the 1995 building is modest in comparison to the stately mansions that line the Boulevard. It consists of 29 apartments, each with its own living room, bedroom, bathroom, kitchenette and the *pièce de résistance*— a small balcony, some sporting Mississippi River views. There is also a heated underground garage— a huge benefit!

I practically grew up in the **shadow** of the seminary campus, located at the western edge of Saint Paul. We neighborhood kids used to traipse down to the Grotto adjacent to the seminary library, amid what we thought were **gravestones** of dead priests! In fact, they were stone crosses alright, but the Stations of the Cross, *sans* images. No wonder I was confused— who prays the stations without the representations of each station? But I digress! Thinking I was exploring a cemetery was surely **more intriguing** to this nine-year-old! Little could I have known then that someday, this property would be my home, first in the seminary and then many decades later. It is no shock whatsoever that more years of active ministry are in my rearview mirror me than out in front of me. By the same token— *Tu es sacerdos in aeternum*— so perhaps not so fast!

Regardless, when I do finally retire, I look forward to settling into the Byrne Residence for retired priests. There is an interesting backstory to this residence. Decades ago, priests routinely remained in their parishes well past the **age of 70**; there was no official retirement age. They often had one, two or sometimes even three assistants. They often remained as pastor with a reduced workload. Such is no longer the case. Today priests may retire at age 70, though many stay beyond as active priests. **Archbishop Leo C. Byrne** was a St. Louis, MO native, who eventually was stationed here Coadjutor Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis from 1967 to 1974. He **never succeeded** to become our ordinary, as he died (age 66) before Leo Binz, whom he was tapped to replace. That **scenario** played out **twice**. Byrne was the coadjutor of Wichita, Kansas, but before he assumed the role of Ordinary, he was transferred by Pope Paul VI here.

**Bishop Richard Pates** (Bishop Emeritus of Des Moines) served as priest secretary to Archbishop Byrne beginning in 1973. Writing in the **Catholic Spirit**, he recalled a visit to Byrne’s modest cabin near Lindstrom, MN. One day, Byrne proclaimed from the edge of the dock— “It’s great to be alive!” The very next day, he died of a heart attack. Former Vice-President Hubert Humphrey attended the funeral held here at the Cathedral. Pates wrote: “In the days following [his funeral], a **spontaneous** movement to memorialize him was realized with the construction of a long-proposed home for retired priests of the archdiocese on the property of The St. Paul Seminary.” That first residence, located at the SW corner of Cretin and Summit Avenues, was **demolished** to make room for a new Science Building at UST. Today’s residence is situated a stone’s throw away from the river road walking path, sufficiently distanced from the numerous peripatetic undergrads migrating between north and south campus.

So, what **updates** are needed in a nearly 30-year-old building? An assessment of the entire building revealed that updates need to be implemented to address several issues: the need for exterior caulking, updates to the HVAC system, elevator system modernization, exterior stone cleaning, painting, window/ storm door replacements, and roof replacement. Additionally, the individual suites will be modernized. Kitchenettes will be outfitted to accommodate limited in-room cooking. This is an **independent living** complex, meaning that no priest may live there if he requires assisted living. Some priests currently at the Byrne residence have been ordained for 50, even 60+ years! **One** marked his **71st anniversary** last week! The residence also includes its own chapel and a common dining room, providing three squares per day. “How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together as one!” See Psalm 133:1

Our retired priests are remarkable men, whose **zeal** has inspired me. They make themselves available to assist in parishes and the wisdom gained from their accumulated experience is invaluable. I encourage you to consider a **financial gift** in support of the **renovation** of the Leo C. Byrne Residence. The \$6 million campaign will provide much needed updates and safety enhancements that will benefit the next generation of retired priests. Someday, I hope that number includes me. While **not in a hurry** to retire by any stretch, it is comforting to know that the Archdiocese is committed to maintaining this residence and keeping it **affordable** (rent is capped at 2/3 of full pension) for priests who have given a **lifetime of service** to the lay faithful. **Envelopes** are available on tables by the **four piers**. Thank you for your prayerful consideration of a gift to the campaign.

- Today (Sunday) marks the **75th anniversary** of the post-World War II “**Marshall Plan**,” named after U.S. Secretary of State, George C. Marshall. His plan to rebuild Europe– a **massive** undertaking– was unveiled at Harvard’s commencement exercises. For his efforts, Marshall was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 1953.
- Peruse the advertisements on the back of today’s bulletin. I encourage your patronage of the businesses and services. LPi has been using **heavier** paper (at our suggestion!), so that the beautiful cover photos do not bleed through the lighter paper. Thank you **LPi!** And thank you parishioners for noticing!
- Former Twins, now Yankees 3B **Josh Donaldson**, twice called White Sox All-Star Tim Anderson “**Jackie**,” leading to a one game suspension– it clearly should have been more! Thankfully, Donaldson apologized, including to the Robinson family. I am 100% for forgiveness, but in 2022, this behavior is puerile, reprehensible and mind baffling.
- I fully support the idea floated by **President Joe Biden** of making available federal funds to **demolish** and then **rebuild** Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, TX. I can’t imagine a current student entering that building without being traumatized. A new school incorporating the latest security technology speaks volumes– our children come first.
- The Federal Uniform Drinking Age Act of 1984 set the **minimum** legal **drinking age** to 21 years. Mindful that the 26th amendment lowered the voting age to 18, President Reagan shrewdly tied it to **federal highway funding**, allowing the government to withhold 10% from states not adopting the standard. Reagan made the right call. While respectful of the 2nd Amendment, may our nation make the right call about the requirements (including age) for purchasing arms.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel,  
Rector