

Jubilarian Dinner

I would like to thank the priests of this diocese for the inspiration and support you have given me.

Priesthood has been very, very good to me. In my first 10 years, I served as an associate pastor, I completed a doctorate in sacramental theology, and I helped with the Center for Pastoral Life and Ministry and Priestly Life and Ministry. For the past 15 years I've worked as a pastor. Priesthood has allowed me to keep up my interests in liturgy and the arts, in writing and lecturing. It's been a very fulfilling life.

I am grateful to Bishop John Sullivan for his vision of lay ministries. I am grateful to Bishop Raymond Boland for guiding us through some very dark days in the presbyterate. I am concerned that the sex abuse scandal will continue to cast a shadow over the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. I am concerned that our leadership in Rome often seems at odds with the *sensus fidelium* in matters ranging from sex to liturgy.

But the friendship I've had with you priests has always nurtured me. You radiate selfless service in times of joy and sorrow. I am confident that future generations will look back on the priests of our days as men who entered this work filled with idealism, who gave their lives to it with gusto, and who lifted to God prayers of bewilderment over the decreasing number of priests, the increasing hours of work, and the erosion of the world's respect for clergy and religion. Future generations will be grateful to you, as I am, because in the midst of all that - perhaps because of all that - you were able to help people make sense of their lives, their church and their God.