

# Donations support retired priests

By **DAVE MYERS**

Since a priest never stops being a priest, does he ever *really* retire?

**FATHER JIM BAKER**, JCL, a retired priest residing in Garden City, is a canon lawyer and serves as a judge for the tribunal of the Diocese of Dodge City.

He is the only tribunal judge serving in the diocese. This means he decides cases brought to the marriage tribunal by parties petitioning to have a previous marriage annulled.

But even these cases are few in number compared to those he faces as a judge for the Tribunal of the Archdiocese For The Military Services, USA., where he hears cases brought by parties serving in the military.

“I’ve done hundreds and hundreds of cases,” said Father Baker. “I get way more work from the military archdiocese.”

Prior to his ordination on May 26, 1990, **FATHER MICHAEL HELMS** enjoyed a career as a truck driver. A religious vocation from St. Theresa Parish in Dighton, Father Helms is also retired.

Back in 2010, he told the then-*Register* what he liked most about being a priest:

“The feelings I have when I have a baptism, or giving children their First Communion. Those feelings are unexplainable. Plus seeing the expressions on their faces when they get to receive the body and blood for the first time.”

The greatest challenge?

“Dealing with the challenges that society gives the Church in preparing couples for marriage, or the teaching of the Church, plus the lack of commitment in the people of today.”

These are joys and challenges that priests do not leave behind like a parked semi when they retire. As the needs continue, priests will be there, retirement or no.

As if to prove this point, the *Catholic* newspaper recently received several photos from a wedding in which Father Helms officiated.

Although even long-retired priests are forever on-call, since they are officially retired, managing a budget becomes an added challenge.

“It’s awfully hard,” Father Baker admitted. “I was able to buy and furnish a home going into retirement almost entirely because of an inheritance I received from my parents. The Vibrant Ministries – Uniting Our Church appeal is so important in helping with expenses.”

“The retired priests,” said Bishop John Brungardt, “have been celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, anointing the sick, confirmation, baptism for these decades and decades for you and your family. ... Thank you for your support for our retired priests.”

## How does the diocese support its retired priests?

- Provides Medicare and supplemental health insurance premiums.
- Dental expense reimbursement.
- Prescription drug reimbursement.
- Long term care and assisted care living expenses
- Retreats and continuing education expenses.
- the Diocesan Priests’ Retirement Fund (DPRF) provides a monthly pension for all of the retired, incardinated priests.