



OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

A ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

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September 24, 2017

Dear Fellow OLM Parishioners,

Many of you know that after our son Bill's tragic death on September 11, 2014, I discontinued teaching all religious education assignments. Jill and I had taught the Faith by then, separately and together, for over 40 years. I also asked Archbishop Gregory to allow me to retire as a deacon, which he did by letter dated October 6, 2014. Fr. Byrd, on October 12, 2014, wrote a very nice bulletin insert, commenting on the times we had worked together earlier at St. Andrew, Roswell, and again here at OLM from 2009 until then. Jill and I continued to attend OLM Sunday 11 a.m. Mass whenever we could.

In January 2015, the Archbishop granted me a revised status of "retired deacon with faculties," after which I resumed assisting Fr. Byrd for the 11 a.m. Sunday Mass, Holy Week, weddings, and funerals when I was available. Our family continued to grieve Bill's loss, all the more because the lawyer for the person who brought the lawsuit asked the court to dismiss the case in July 2016 *for lack of evidence of any malpractice!*

On February 24, 2017, I completed my 16th year as a deacon. Jill and I are now 78 years old. On September 29 of this year, we will celebrate our 55th wedding anniversary. We have five living children, one son-in-law, and three daughters-in-law. We have been blessed with 10 grandchildren. Two have graduated college and are now in postgraduate studies. Four more are in college. Another four attend high school. Immediate family members live in North Carolina, California, Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia. We have between us 11 siblings living in Florida, Georgia, and Ohio.

As the Book of Wisdom declares, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven..." (3:1). Elsewhere we are told, "The years of our life are threescore and ten [70], or even by reason of strength fourscore [80] ..." (Psalm 90:10). Jill and I need more of whatever time God gives us for ourselves, as well as for our children, grandchildren, and siblings. Under the circumstances, I believe, like St. Paul, that "the time of [our] departure has come. [Jill and] I have fought the good fight, [we] have finished the race, [we] have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4: 6-7). Accordingly, I have asked Fr. Byrd to allow me to retire effective on September 29, 2017. Today will be my last day on the altar. Jill and I will continue to attend OLM for 11 a.m. Sunday Mass. Otherwise, we are only a phone call away.

For many reasons, we consider Fr. Byrd the most wonderful priest we have ever known. He has been a member of our family when we were most in need. May God continue to watch over him, as well as OLM and you, which and whom He has made so special!

Sincerely Yours in Christ,
Lloyd Sutter