



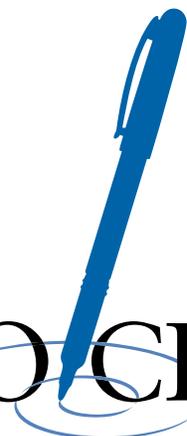
About the Author

The Rev. Dr. Harold Lockett retired three years ago after 30 years of ordained ministry. More recently, prior to retirement he served for ten years as a priest in the Diocese of Atlanta. Additionally, he once served as a hospice chaplain, a pastoral educator for organ and tissue transplantation, a CPE Supervisor in training, a Pastoral Counselor and Pastoral Psychotherapist, and he retired from the U.S. Army Reserve Chaplaincy after 21 years of military service.

About Vintage Voice

Vintage Voice is a monthly publication written by beneficiaries of The Church Pension Fund. We hope you enjoy these articles and find them helpful. Articles are published with the authors' permission. If you have a reflection about your life in retirement, consider writing for the Vintage Voice! Send your submissions to vintagevoice@cpg.org.

VINTAGE VOICE



Retirement is a time to be alone with God

By The Rev. Harold Lockett, D.Min.

Immediately after I retired in 2014 from the active priestly ministry, I went to a community clergy luncheon and I introduced myself to the clergy body as “a retired Episcopal priest.” However, one clergy friend of mine commented to me by saying, “You are too young to retire!” I understood his concern, but he did not know the circumstances around my retirement. Indeed, I had retired from active parish ministry at the age of 60.

My retirement initially was not easy. I had to ease into it. After almost 30 years of full-time, active ministry, my life suddenly felt like it was over. Therefore, I had to figure out what to do with myself for the rest of my life.

I found myself at home with no weekly sermons to prepare, with no pulpit to preach from, with no altar table to celebrate the Eucharist, with no parishioners to counsel, with no bulletins to prepare, and with no clergy meetings to attend anymore. My professional life had suddenly come to a halt, and I thought it was over. Yes, my life was empty and filled with lots of anxiety and restlessness, and I was afraid and fearful about what I would do with the rest of my life.

I asked myself, “What was I to do in retirement?” Well, I looked around and rediscovered my Book of Common Prayer and opened it to the daily meditation section and began to engage in prayer and meditations daily. As you can imagine, I found a new friend in retirement and it was “an active prayer life” — something I did on occasion in my active life in full-time ministry. This was a time for me to be alone with God; a time for me to be alone in the presence of God; a time for God and me to be together in silence for as long as I needed.

Thus, all of my anxiety subsided, and all of my restlessness went away, as I found a daily companion of reading God’s Word and meditating daily upon the sacred scriptures. This daily exercise of being in God’s presence has soothed all of my doubts about retirement, and it calmed all of my fears about living out the rest of my life, as I settled nicely into the retired life of a priest.

As a result, I am enjoying my retirement from the active priestly ministry by doing periodic supply preaching, occasional pastoral counseling, and occasionally administering the priestly sacraments, i.e., celebrating the Eucharist, presiding over weddings, funerals, and baptisms. These activities give me the meaning and the satisfaction that I thought I would never get in retirement. Today, my life is so full of meaning, and so active, that I have more than I can ask for. This is how I have managed to move peacefully, and comfortably, from the active to the retired priestly ministry in the past three years.



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New York, NY 10016
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