

The GIFT PLANNER

INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S CHURCH

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Fr. Ray Brenner: Why annuities make sense for retirement



Fr. Ray Brenner

Fr. Ray Brenner, a priest of the Diocese of Evansville, is considered a “lifer” at Saint Meinrad. He attended high school, college and theology at Saint Meinrad and has maintained his connection to the place and people over his 53 years as a priest.

Fr. Ray's connection to Saint Meinrad began long before he attended high school here. He recalls visiting Fr. Aemilian Elpers, OSB, his mother's second cousin, at Saint Meinrad when he was a child and sitting on the porch of the rectory at St. Wendel Catholic Church outside of Evansville, IN, talking with

Fr. Placidus Kempf, OSB, who was also a Saint Meinrad monk.

“He got me a bunch of literature,” explains Fr. Ray. “Of course, most of that would have been to join the monastery. My calling was not to join the monastery, but to be a diocesan priest.”

Fr. Ray knew he wanted to be a priest in second grade. As he prepared for his First Communion, he thought, “I want to do that.”

Fr. Ray took his dream from possibility to reality when he enrolled in Saint Meinrad High

School in 1957. Twelve years later, he was ordained with two classmates at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Evansville.

His career included assignments at St. John the Evangelist in Loogootee; Sts. Peter and Paul in Haubstadt; St. Mary Catholic Church, Sullivan; St. Ann, Shelburn; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Dugger; St. Joan of Arc, Jasonville; 16 years at Resurrection Catholic Church, Evansville; and 17 years at St. Joseph in Jasper.

In 2019, he decided it was time to retire at St. Joseph and turn things over to somebody else. He was 76 years old and in his 50th year of priesthood.

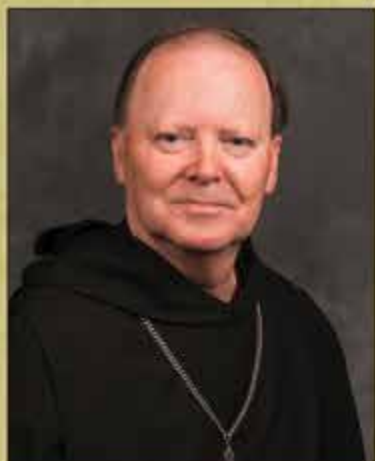
As Fr. Ray's career matured, he decided to take out his first annuity with Saint Meinrad and later, before retirement, would take out two more. (See story about annuities on page 3 of this newsletter.) He liked that he could donate a chunk of money while he is still alive and

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Saint Meinrad
Archabbey and
Seminary & School of Theology





**Rt. Rev. Kurt Stasiak, OSB
Archabbot of Saint Meinrad**

Dear Friends,

Greetings from a Saint Meinrad under construction. The Hill is busy with workers everywhere preparing our buildings and infrastructure to house our two new programs, the Institute for Sacred Music and the Center for Youth and Young Adult Evangelization. While being "under construction" has its drawbacks, it is a sign of God's grace that He has blessed our work with such growth.

While COVID is still present in our world, we have, mostly, returned to a sense of normalcy here at Saint Meinrad. Retreats are ongoing, groups are visiting, and we have welcomed a large cohort of seminarians back to Saint Meinrad to start or continue their studies. It is a sign of life and the blessings of God.

In this *Gift Planner*, one of our treasured alumni, Fr. Ray Brenner, speaks to his vocation and how he has enjoyed and benefited by supporting the work of Saint Meinrad through charitable gift annuities. I hope you enjoy his story.

May God continue to bless you abundantly,

+ Kurt Stasiak, OSB

has more to give. Saint Meinrad could use it right away and, as time went on, he would receive some of the money back.

"It was a charitable way of giving rather than accumulating it for myself," explains Fr. Ray. "It's like yesterday's Gospel. If your life is required of you tonight, to whom will all this stuff go? I designated where, if I have anything left, it is to go when I die, but this is one way of giving now to make sure that it goes where I want it to go."

Fr. Ray developed his personal sense of giving and serving others by watching his parents. He grew up on a farm outside Evansville with seven siblings.

"We had dairy cattle. We had hogs. We had chickens," says Fr. Ray. "We sandpaper brushed every egg if it had dirt on it and packed them up in cases and took them to the hatchery."

His father had an egg route, delivering the eggs that were too big or too small to people along the route.

"We always had a big garden, and we'd plant rows of sweet corn," he remembers. "Mom had a saying, 'We eat what we can, and what we can't, we can.' We basically lived

off the farm and never really had much money, but we had each other and what we needed."

His parents would donate corn to the Little Sisters of the Poor to feed their chickens. Any extra produce that was harvested from the Brenners' garden was given to the widows and widowers along the egg route.

"We had everything that we needed. They just believed in giving away whatever extras that they had," says Fr. Ray.

Just as his parents have helped people and organizations in the community that they cared about, Fr. Ray has helped Saint Meinrad over the years in many ways. He has shared his time and talent by serving on the Alumni Association Board of Directors and has kept his classmates in touch and up to date by serving as class chairman.

"I just have always loved Saint Meinrad. I've always been interested in what Saint Meinrad's doing and trying to help in whatever way I can," explains Fr. Ray. "They're always looking forward to the future of the Church, and I think that's what really fascinates me about the place." ♦

*"Support the work of Saint Meinrad,
but retain some income that provides tax benefits.
That's how a Charitable Gift Annuity might work
for you. Give me a call, I'll be happy to chat
about your unique situation."*

Michael Shumway
Director of Planned Giving and Foundation Relations



Charitable Gift Annuity: A gift that gives back

A charitable gift annuity is a simple and flexible planning idea that can assure a donor of a good income, a tax deduction and the satisfaction of helping Saint Meinrad Archabbey. In exchange for a gift of cash or appreciated securities, Saint Meinrad will pay the donor a fixed-dollar amount for life.

Here is how a charitable gift annuity works: Fr. James, for example, decides to establish a \$10,000 single-life gift annuity when his bank certificate of deposit matures. Since he is 75, the annuity rate will be 6%. Thus, he will receive \$600 a year for the rest of his life.

When Fr. James prepares his income tax return in the year he funds his annuity, he would be entitled to a charitable deduction of about \$4,954.90. And, for the next 12 years, only about \$179 of his annual annuity payment will be taxable. When Fr. James dies, the charity receives the remainder of the gift.

The size of the payment is determined by the amount given and the age of the donor when the annuity is funded. The rate of the payment is set when the annuity begins and doesn't change.

Because it is a charitable gift annuity instead of a commercial annuity, the donor receives a tax deduction for a portion of the gift,

and a portion of the payments is also tax exempt. If the donor funds the annuity with securities that have increased in value, the donor may avoid capital gains tax.

A charitable gift annuity can be tailored to meet a variety of personal needs and financial objectives:

- Annuity payments can be received annually, semiannually, or quarterly.
- The annuity can be paid to the donor or to another person as a single-life annuity, or can be paid to both the donor and another person as a joint and survivor annuity.
- The annuity can be funded with cash or securities.
- Annuity payments can start any time during the first year after the gift is made or the payments can be deferred, starting later in life.

People are often hesitant about giving money away because they might need it later. With charitable gift annuities, the income is guaranteed regardless of economic conditions or stock market swings. ♦



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Help us carry on God's work



By choosing a Saint Meinrad Charitable Gift Annuity, you can support our mission of educating priests, permanent deacons and lay ministers for the Church and receive income for life. Tax benefits also are available through a gift annuity.



Saint Meinrad

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