

August 1, 2023

A Letter to My Dear Colleagues and Friends

Last fall, after prayerful consideration and consultation, I applied to the Vatican to be returned to the lay state and to be relieved of my clerical obligations. In March, I received notice from the Vatican that my request had been denied. I was encouraged to wait patiently and prayerfully and to continue to abstain from public ministry until seven civil lawsuits against me alleging sexual misconduct had been adjudicated.

Shortly thereafter, the Diocese of Albany declared bankruptcy, as have six of the eight other Dioceses in New York State. I have been advised that it may be several years before the Albany bankruptcy case is settled and all of the Child Victims Act civil lawsuits adjudicated. Presently, I am 84 years of age and will turn 85 in October. I could be 91 or 92 before these legal matters are concluded.

In the meantime, I have fallen in love with a wonderful woman who has helped and cared for me and who believes in me. She has been a loving and supportive companion on this journey. After much prayerful reflection, we decided to marry and did so in July in a civil ceremony.

As I look to the future, I hope and pray for four things: (1) That survivors of clergy sexual abuse and their families will find the peace, healing and reconciliation to which they are entitled; (2) That I will have the opportunity to prove my innocence to the allegations against me before a court of law, (3) That with whatever time God continues to grant me on this Earth, our marriage will be one of fidelity, love and service, and (4) that the Vatican will eventually grant me laicization and recognize our marriage.

I want to express my profound gratitude to my friends and colleagues and the people of our diocese for the love, care and concern you have shown me in my nearly 60 years of priestly service, 46 as a bishop, and for the wonderful fraternal bond I have enjoyed with my brother bishops and priests, deacons and the religious women and men who have served in our diocese, the laity and the interfaith and civic leaders with whom I was privileged to serve. As I enter this new phase of my life as a retired private person, I humbly ask that the news media and others respect our privacy as a couple. My life on the public stage has come to an end. To all of you, I thank you with the words of my episcopal motto, "Rejoice, we are God's people." God bless you all.

Howard J. Hubbard