

Promised thoughts

Inbox

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Father Hoopes

May 3, 2026,
9:53 AM (1 day ago)

to me

Bill,

I said I'd have thoughts for you – here they are, short and sweet, if you want them. I put them in writing because, honestly, both of us have memory problems; this way there's no need to rely on our recollections of our words. I wanted to sit down with you next week to explain everything; your son told me he had a reason for wanting to break some news to you early. I trusted his judgment, but am sorry you didn't hear it from me.

Many people want me to entreat with you to get the church back; I've written and re-written a longish letter to you about three times now, to the point where I'm weary of it. Also, it seemed clear to me from our conversation on Wednesday a week past, that my opinions do not hold much weight with you. As you said, there's no point wasting my time in front of a word processor. Rather, therefore, than appear to grovel for the property, I'll say my final word as a man and, albeit unworthy, as a priest.

Some of your criticisms and ideas at our last conversation are reasonable: there is something to say about the ideal of structure or fraternity. I think there are reasons why these ideals are not easily obtainable today, and why, in our circumstances, these ideals become imprudent liabilities. But both opinions are reasonable and I won't fault you for having those views. I'll only say that wasn't part of the deal when I came, and so I feel a bit sore about the switcheroo after two years. But you say you didn't know the loose nature of my organization with bishop Williamson, so there is also that. We will both have to make our apology to God some day, and see what He thinks.

I think your ideas about jurisdiction, bishops, etc., are uninformed. I'm not trying to be rude, just direct. But I know you are a man of conviction, and if you have fixated upon this as a moral truth, I am not going to dislodge the idea from your mind. Indeed, it would be a sin for you to go against your conscience on this matter. I wish you the best in forming and following your conscience.

Our Faith tells us that we owe restitution in some circumstances. For example, many people gave many thousands towards the Rectory; one could not take all that money and then turn on a dime. The whole reason for the change in the Board of the FOSCB, was to be sure that the congregation felt they had a say in what would ultimately happen with their contributions, so that neither you nor I would have done any injustice to them, nor incurred any debt. Some may feel misled if they gave to the restoration of the church building, others may not, you can ask them if your conscience prompts you to do so; money taken to pay utilities is legitimate and can be kept. And if you have incurred any debt to me, for my part I condone and forgive it. I do this because I am myself a sinful man. This is not false modesty, but is certainly the truth. Our Lord said, 'let him that is without sin cast the first stone,' and has warned us that if we do not forgive, we shall not be forgiven; if we look for the mote in our brother's eye, we will be damned for the beam in our own. I sin daily, often

seriously; I know the times are confusing; I know Catholic morality is hard even to know, let alone to live up to, in the pressures of our time.

So, for all these reasons: from the heart I forgive and condone any sin or debt on your part to me; I humbly ask pardon and forgiveness from you for my misdeeds in my time with you. I truly wish you well with the property – I'm not just saying that – and I hope your dream comes true, and that a bishop and nuns and a school and everything else you desire happens, in a manner of which your conscience can wholeheartedly approve. You are right that I am too medieval and impractical; your property deserves a better priest, and if you redouble your prayers our Lady may help you find one.

I have sought to maintain your reputation with the people and to speak highly of you to them, and I assure you that I will continue to do so. I know you are a good man at heart, though we all struggle with our faults; as a priest one hears the sins of many, and over time it becomes quite clear that, for the most part, people are displeased by their own sins and faults, and this shows that their true selves really do differ from them. I will not publicize any knowledge of your private faults, nor allow it to colour my public description of your good character.

I know in the meantime that Carlene is going through a lot. There are no hard feelings on my part; I may be the world's worst priest, but I am one and it's my duty and privilege to help her, if I can do anything for her. Our Lord's Heart is always open; as His priest, and as a man with my own faults, I should imitate Him and try to act as I would wish for others to act towards me: so my door is always open to you.

God bless and keep you,

Fr. Hoopes