

Companions on the Journey

September 26, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

"I heard that Msgr. McHenry resigned. Is that true?" Here's the story. Next April I will celebrate 75 years on this earth. So, as the little kids say, I am now 74 and a half. As a priest of the Roman Catholic Church and as part of the presbyterate here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia when you approach 75 years of age you are required to do certain things. One of them is to send a letter to the Archbishop tendering your resignation from whatever assignment you are missioned to as of that time. In the Archdiocese the protocol is that you send the letter in the September of the year before you turn 75. For me, I am now right in the middle of that September. As a result, I drafted, signed and sent a letter to Archbishop Perez. Below is the pertinent portion of that letter. A note: While resignations need to be offered it is up to the individual Archbishop as to whether or not he accepts it. The Archbishop has freedom here to do what he thinks best for the good of all and the pastoral care of the People of God.

September 15, 2021

Our Lady of Sorrows

Dear Archbishop,

On April 15, 2022 I will celebrate my 75th birthday. In accordance with the Code of Canon Law and Archdiocesan Statutes, I hereby submit my resignation as pastor of Saint Anthony of Padua parish in Ambler, Pa. I was assigned as pastor here on June 17, 1991 by Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua. It has been an honor to have served here and a blessing to me both pastorally and personally to have ministered over thirty years in the same vineyard of the Lord. God is so good.

As of May 2022 I will have been a priest for forty-nine (49) years. I am asking for you to grant me an extension of one year to remain as pastor of Saint Anthony's parish until June of 2023. This will enable me to celebrate my Golden Jubilee as a priest in a venue where I have lived and served for such a long time.

In addition to the above request I am asking for one half hour of your time to meet with me. I do not at all want to add to your burden of leadership or to tell you what to do. I will share with you a sense of what I have observed in my 30 plus years here. I would welcome the opportunity to sit and talk.

In the peace of Christ,

(Rev. Msgr.)

Stephen P. McHenry

So last week I sent that letter and have not heard back yet. I believe that the likelihood is that the Archbishop will grant me my request for an extension. In the meantime, please pray for me. Saint Anthony's has also been my home for over thirty years and I do not relish in any way the leaving. But I do trust that the Lord will provide. The Lord always does. The Lord always has.

In the peace of Christ,

Msgr. McHenry