



Bishop Howard Hubbard swings incense during an Ash Wednesday communion service, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Feb. 25, 2004, in Albany, N.Y. Hubbard, who retired in 2014, died Aug. 19 at age 84. (AP/Jim McKnight, file)

by Associated Press

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Retired Albany, N.Y., Bishop Howard Hubbard, who acknowledged covering up allegations of sexual abuse in his upstate New York diocese and recently married a woman in a civil ceremony, has died after suffering from a massive stroke. He was 84.

Hubbard died at Albany Medical Center Aug. 19 after being hospitalized for the stroke a few days earlier, bishop spokesperson Mark Behan confirmed.

Hubbard was known as a champion of social justice causes during his long tenure leading the Albany, New York-based diocese from 1977 to 2014. But his reputation suffered as the church became engulfed in sexual abuse scandals.

Hubbard had adamantly denied accusations that he abused minors. But he acknowledged in a 2021 deposition that he and the diocese covered up allegations of sexual abuse against children by priests in part to avoid scandal.

Last fall, Hubbard said he wanted to be laicized since he could no longer function as a priest due to a U.S. church policy that bars accused priests from ministry. He said his request to the Vatican was rejected in March and he was encouraged to wait while the seven civil lawsuits against him proceeded.

Instead, he announced earlier this month that he had recently [married](#) an unidentified woman.

"I could be 91 or 92 before these legal matters are concluded," Hubbard said in a prepared release at the time. "In the meantime, I have fallen in love with a wonderful woman who has helped and cared for me and who believes in me."

The current bishop of the upstate New York diocese, Edward Scharfenberger, said the church did not consider Hubbard's marriage to be valid.

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Hundreds of lawsuits have been filed against the Albany Diocese under a state law that allowed people to sue over sexual abuse they say they endured as children, sometimes decades ago.

The diocese filed for [bankruptcy](#) in March amid the flood of lawsuits.

"The life of a priest is never about himself but for those whom he serves, to whom he is sent," Albany Bishop Scharfenberger said in a statement reported by [The Evangelist](#).

"As we commend our brother, Howard Hubbard, to the God of all mercy, we pray also for all those who, throughout the course of his life, as priest, bishop, and friend, were inspired and encouraged along their own journey, especially those who received the sacraments through his ministry," the statement said.

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