

POLICY 6.3 Complaints about the Pastoral Ministry of a Priest

As a Christian community where persons can grow spiritually and morally, we must promote mature and respectful relationships. Consistent with Jesus' own advice on the process for correcting a brother or sister (Matt. 18:15-18), comments and complaints within any parish should be handled in such a way as to uphold both the search for truth and the exercise of charity. Pastors are often called upon to mediate interpersonal conflicts and attempt to restore harmony to the home or other relationships.

Occasionally, the parish priest himself is one of the players in a conflict in the parish. Those who bring forth a conflict with their parish priest should know that the handling of such cases will be dealt with in the following manner:

➤ Complaints of a criminal nature

If the incident in question is or appears to be a crime, the person who brings forth the complaint will be immediately directed to the administrator of the archdiocesan misconduct policy. The terms and procedures of this policy will then be in effect.

➤ All other complaints

1. The complainant should bring the complaint to the Vicar General or the Chancellor, who will normally refer the matter to his Curia to determine the most appropriate way to deal with it. While the complaint may initially be done in a phone call, the complainant will be asked to detail the situation in a letter to the archbishop. The complainant may also present the written testimony of other parishioners, bearing on the same or similar situations. The complainant(s) must realize that a copy of such letter(s) will be given to the priest in question, and the matter discussed with him. (The form which accompanies this policy may be used in lieu of a letter.)
2. The Archbishop will follow up with a letter addressed to the complainant and copied to the priest.