

MATTERS PERTAINING TO PRIESTS/SEMINARIANS

XI. Policy/Procedures To Be Followed By the Moderator of the Curia  
And the Heads of Offices  
When Receiving Complaints from Parishioners

- A. The policy is to deal as sensitively and as objectively as possible with both the complainant(s) and the pastor, whether or not the pastor himself is directly involved, on the basis of the complaint itself.
- B. The procedures for responding to complaints will be as follows:
1. The Moderator of the Curia or the head of office should ask for concrete evidence supporting the complaint; if none can be given, the complainant should be told there is no basis for contacting the pastor.
  2. If concrete evidence seems to be present, the Moderator of the Curia or the head of office should ascertain if the complainant(s) has (have) taken up the issue directly with the pastor. If the complainant(s) hasn't (haven't) taken this step, the Moderator of the Curia or the head of office should gently insist that this is to be done, preferably through a personal visit by appointment rather than through a phone call.
  3. If the complaint persists after Step Two, the complainant(s) should be asked to put his/her (their) complaint and the evidence for it in writing, sign his/her (their) name(s) to it, and send it (as the case may be) either to the Moderator of the Curia or to the appropriate head of office.
  - 4a. From the outset, the complainant(s) should be informed that his/her (their) letter and name(s) will be shared with the pastor; if he/she (they) does (do) not permit this, then he/she (they) should be informed that nothing can be done since every accused person has a right to know his/her accuser(s).
  - 4b. If the complainant(s) has (have) probable cause to fear retaliation from the pastor, he/she (they) must still sign the written letter, but the Moderator of the Curia or head of office may assure the complainant(s) that he/she will take every reasonable measure to keep the complainant's name (complainants' names) from the pastor.
  5. If a head of office receives the written and signed complaint, he/she should take it, together with other pertinent information, e.g., whether or not 4b is operative, to the Moderator of the Curia.
  6. Without prejudice to 4b, the Moderator of the Curia should send the written complaint to the pastor, asking him a) to verify a previous direct contact between him and the complainant, and b) to comment on the complaint and its evidence, either admitting

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its truthfulness or giving concrete counter-evidence for its falseness.

- 7a. If the complaint is admitted to be true, the pastor should be told by the Moderator of the Curia a) of the need to conform with the Church's teaching and/or practice, and b) of the moral obligation to repair the damage done by his previous failure to conform; and the complainant is to be encouraged to be forgiving and still supportive of the pastor.
  - 7b. If the complaint is proven to be false, the complainant should be told by the Moderator of the Curia a) of the moral danger of false accusation, and b) of the moral obligation to repair any damage done to anyone's good name and/or to the morale of the parish; and the pastor is to be encouraged to be forgiving and still receptive towards the complainant.
  8. If the complaint cannot be established as true or false, the Moderator of the Curia should so inform both the pastor and the complainant, urging them to be reconciled and giving at the same time the Church's official teaching and/or practice relevant to the issue at hand.
- C. Any complaints sent directly to the Bishop will be given to the Moderator of the Curia who will attend to the complaints through or with the Dean. A letter will be sent to the complainant indicating this fact.