



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Bishops Commission for Canon Law

Bishop Brian Finnigan (Chairman)
Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv
Bishop Robert McGuckin
Archbishop Philip Wilson

Process to assist Bishops Experiencing Difficulties with the Holy See

From time to time a bishop may experience difficulty with the Holy See. Hopefully the difficulty will be resolved to mutual satisfaction. Occasionally, the difficulty continues and may even become widely known.

Apostolorum Successores, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, published by the Congregation for Bishops, states:

... In manifold and fruitful ways, the conference contributes to the realisation and development of the spirit of collegiality among members of the same episcopate.

... In addition to the above, there is the vast area of mutual support in the exercise of Episcopal Ministry, via the sharing of information, the exchange of ideas and the achievement of consensus. (n. 28)

The ACBC would welcome involvement in the situation of serious issues concerning a bishop experiencing difficulties. The process is not considered to be a canonical process; rather, it serves to provide fraternal support.

A stable group of 10 to 12 bishops be elected by secret vote by the ACBC. Prior to the election a bishop may excuse himself from inclusion in this group. The President would then choose two bishops, who would be acceptable to the bishop experiencing difficulty.

The two bishops would review the situation and, having listened to the bishop experiencing difficulty, would provide their advice to him.

This process is quite distinct from the role of the Metropolitan as outlined in *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops*, n. 23.