The **Rights of Priests** as **contained in Canon Law approved by St. John Paul II.**

While acknowledging the responsibility of priests to assist their bishop in determining the truth of an accusation, there are some things an accused priest needs to do as an investigation begins. If you receive an unexpected call from the chancery, ask what the reason is for you to come into the office. If it is because of some sort of allegation or they won’t tell you, ALWAYS take a trusted priest friend with you.

1. You have the right to remain silent. Let your friend ask and answer questions. Not you!
2. If accused of some canonical error, request the diocese to pay for a canon lawyer AND a civil lawyer of your choice to protect your rights in both venues.
3. Do NOT resign your pastorate or your office. Sign nothing that day.
4. Pause, listen, clarify, and ask others for advice. Reflect before agreeing to anything.
5. Ask the person who accompanies you to take notes, to sign and date them in ink. It would be good if the diocese would do the same.

* All of the rights of the Christian Faithful also belong to clerics. (C208-223)
* In addition, clerics have rights and obligations (C273-289)
* These rights and most of these obligations remain even if you are suspended.
* If you are required to move, contact your priest friends and ask for support and frequent communications.
* Your friends want to stand beside you. They believe in you.

Visit the AUSCP for assistance at: https://auscp.org/initiatives/priesthood/