

Report to the AUSCP 2026 Assembly

from the Mutual Support Work Group

The Mutual Support Work Group (MSWG) has been meeting monthly to forward to goals of our group. The goals were generated by the Assembly and membership and then refined by the Leadership Team during the last 6 months. There six areas that the goals address:

1. Deep Spiritual Support
2. Develop a means to combat isolation and spiritual fatigue
3. Develop capacity for Regional and virtual support groups
4. Identify resources for Mental Health assistance, clergy support
5. Develop Resources on aging and retirement
6. Increase presence on social media.

To this end the MSWG has provided a list of Retreat Houses around the country and opened dialogue with members to increase that number. We affirm the need for Spiritual Accompaniment and recommend this practice to all members. Loneliness in the Priesthood can be addressed with close personal friends. We strongly encourage priests to network with each other to offer mutual support on spiritual and personal matters. Small support groups either in person or via ZOOM can bring real strength to each other.

We are also aware that priests seek the help of qualified professional counselors as they discern their ministry and deal with their issues. The MSWG has compiled a list of professional helpers who are willing to assist priests in their personal and professional development. Calls to the AUSCP Office for help are referred to therapists and canonical experts.

We have published and posted a guide for “Personal Estate Planning” on the AUSCP website (<https://AUSCP.org>) to help priests plan for their retirement from administration as they look to retirement.

The MSWG reissued the position paper in support of gays in the priesthood that was endorsed by the AUSCP membership at the annual Assembly in June

of 2023. The official document is entitled “Being Gay, Ordained, Faithful to the Church and Appreciated by the Church.” It can be found on the AUSCP website (<https://auscp.org/being-gay-ordained-faithful-to-the-church-and-appreciated-by-the-church/>) and has been shared by several priests’ rights groups in the country.

The MSWG has also provided correspondence regarding the just use of canon law to protect the good name of priests who have had their canonical rights violated by local bishops as they respond to sexual abuse claims that have not been investigated and nor formally charged as a crime by civil authorities. The MSWG has provided written materials to the Leadership Team to speak to the New Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Gabriel Caccia and the president of the USCCB, Archbishop Paul Coakley.

Lastly, the MSWG has encouraged AUSCP Executive Director , Steve Newton and LT chair, Neil Pezzulo to continue their AUSCP social media presence as increasingly large numbers of people (especially Gen Z and Y folks) use social media for communication of important issues and events.

MSWG is currently looking for new members to allow the organic growth of the work group and expand our many outreach efforts. Please call or email the AUSCP Office to offer your service or make inquiries.

Peace

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