



Memo

Date: March 13, 2023
To: Priests
From: The Most Rev. Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.
Re: Required use of archdiocesan email accounts

All priests serving in the Archdiocese of Atlanta are issued an archdiocesan email account. This archatl email account is your official point of contact for all archdiocesan staff. It has come to my attention that a number of priests are not logging in to this email account regularly. You are required to use this account. Effective immediately, Chancery staff will no longer send or respond to parish or personal email accounts. If you email using a personal or parish account, the response will be sent to your archatl account.

The good news is that the Office of Information Technology (IT) is here to help. If you have not accessed your archatl account in some time, you can find instructions here. If you are having trouble with your account, members of the IT team will be attending some events this year, including Chrism Mass, Tuesday, April 4 at the Cathedral of Christ the King, to assist anyone having trouble with his email. Just bring your laptop, phone or other device and come a little early.

The easiest way to get immediate help is to fill out an IT ticket request.

Many priests have asked why the archdiocese only uses emails issued within the archatl domain. The primary reason is to protect you. Should any priest or parish face a criminal accusation or civil lawsuit, the court can compel the priest and the archdiocese to provide investigators with access to all records pertaining to the case. This includes emails. This becomes a critical issue with regard to litigation notices. Neglecting your emails can result in a failure to comply with a litigation hold or a request to produce records, which could have costly repercussions for the archdiocese.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC

ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA



During a request to produce records, prosecutors and investigators could gain access to every email you have ever received or sent. If you have personal emails pertaining to family or personnel matters; if a parishioner has ever emailed you about legal issues such as immigration problems, or if someone has ever sent you an inappropriate message, the archdiocese would not be able to protect those communications from discovery.

Using archdiocesan emails allows the Office of Archives and Records to confidentially and securely capture and track messages within a priest's archatl account and thus, assist should you ever have to go through a discovery search. If you have to do your own work to search a private or parish account, you could be responsible for what could be a sizeable bill.

A second reason is security. The archdiocese's IT team can monitor an archatl email account for safety, provide you access if your password is lost or compromised and can keep track of attempted cyber-attacks. If your account is compromised, you may not know right away. Hundreds, if not thousands of fraudulent emails could go out in your name before anyone realizes what happened.

A final factor is logistics. Priests move from parish to parish. There are more than 300 priests in the archdiocese at this time. It is not practical or feasible for the Offices of Priest Personnel or Communications to track the changes to your email. Having one channel of communication is best practice to maintain a consistent flow of information. All information from the bishops and chancery go to your archatl account. You should check this account as often as possible, but at least weekly.