



## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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### MEMORANDUM

**To:** All Priests and Pastoral Administrators

**From:** The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano + *Salvatore R. Matano*

**Date:** July 16, 2021, *Memorial of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*

**Re:** Apostolic Letter *Traditionis Custodes*

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The Holy Father has issued *motu proprio* an [Apostolic Letter](#) entitled *Traditionis Custodes*, dated July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, effective immediately, in which he promulgates norms relating to the celebration of the Holy Mass in what his predecessor Pope Benedict termed the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, that is, using the liturgical rites in force prior to the post-conciliar liturgical reforms, namely the *Missale Romanum* of 1962. In a [cover letter](#) introducing the new norms, Pope Francis cites his concern, on the one hand, “to provide for the good of those who are rooted in the previous form of celebration” while also ensuring that the pre-conciliar forms of the liturgy do not become a source of disunity or factionalism or a mark of a rejection of “the legitimacy of the liturgical reform dictated by Vatican Council II and the Magisterium of the Supreme Pontiffs.” Within the Diocese of Rochester, the Mass has been celebrated in the Extraordinary Form for several years in various parishes, with guidance and vigilance, and avoiding the abuses and distortions cited by Pope Francis, and celebrated for the spiritual welfare of the faithful. As long as this benefit continues, the celebration of Mass in the Extraordinary Form may continue, with strict adherence to the norms set forth in the *motu proprio*, while also safeguarding against the dangers that Pope Francis has rightly identified through his consultation with the bishops of the world.

In accordance with article 3, §4, of the *motu proprio*, I have appointed as my delegate in these matters the Reverend Peter B. Mottola, J.C.L. In accordance with article 5 of the *motu proprio*, “Priests who already celebrate according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 should request from the diocesan Bishop the authorization to continue to enjoy this faculty.” Any priest, **in good standing**, desiring this faculty should do so within fifteen useful days of the issuing of this Memorandum. Letters requesting the faculty can be directed to the attention of Father Mottola at the diocesan Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York, 14624. In the interim, those celebrating Mass in the Extraordinary Form may continue to do so with the understanding that they will submit their requests in writing as noted above.

Public celebrations in the Extraordinary Form must conform to the norms of the new *motu proprio* with respect to the time and place of celebration, but celebrations can continue in places where they have occurred prior to the promulgation of *Traditionis Custodes* until suitable provision is made, and not interfering with regularly scheduled parochial Masses.

In his letter to the Bishops, Pope Francis notes his concern that in either manner of celebrating, the Mass must be celebrated with solemnity, reverence and attention to the liturgical norms, and always nurturing and manifesting the unity exemplified in the Most Holy Eucharist and never be a source of division. His Holiness writes:

With the passage of thirteen years, I instructed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to circulate a questionnaire to the Bishops regarding the implementation of the *Motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*. The responses reveal a situation that preoccupies and saddens me, and persuades me of the need to intervene. Regrettably, the pastoral objective of my Predecessors, who had intended “to do everything possible to ensure that all those who truly possessed the desire for unity would find it possible to remain in this unity or to rediscover it anew”, has often been seriously disregarded. An opportunity offered by St. John Paul II and, with even greater magnanimity, by Benedict XVI, intended to recover the unity of an ecclesial body with diverse liturgical sensibilities, was exploited to widen the gaps, reinforce the divergences, and encourage disagreements that injure the Church, block her path, and expose her to the peril of division.

At the same time, I am saddened by abuses in the celebration of the liturgy on all sides. In common with Benedict XVI, I deplore the fact that “in many places the prescriptions of the new Missal are not observed in celebration, but indeed come to be interpreted as an authorization for or even a requirement of creativity, which leads to almost unbearable distortions”. But I am nonetheless saddened that the instrumental use of *Missale Romanum* of 1962 is often characterized by a rejection not only of the liturgical reform, but of the Vatican Council II itself, claiming, with unfounded and unsustainable assertions, that it betrayed the Tradition and the “true Church”. The path of the Church must be seen within the dynamic of Tradition “which originates from the Apostles and progresses in the Church with the assistance of the Holy Spirit” (DV 8). A recent stage of this dynamic was constituted by Vatican Council II where the Catholic episcopate came together to listen and to discern the path for the Church indicated by the Holy Spirit. To doubt the Council is to doubt the intentions of those very Fathers who exercised their collegial power in a solemn manner *cum Petro et sub Petro* in an ecumenical council, and, in the final analysis, to doubt the Holy Spirit himself who guides the Church.

Therefore, all matters having been considered, with due consideration for the provisions noted above herewith, the Holy Father’s *motu proprio* has decreed the following: “I take the firm decision to abrogate all the norms, instructions, permissions and customs that precede the present *Motu proprio*, and declare that the liturgical books promulgated by the saintly Pontiffs Paul VI and John Paul II, in conformity with the decrees of Vatican Council II, constitute the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite.”

Noting that the provisions of *Traditionis Custodes* are effective immediately and that this Memorandum is being issued on the very day of the *motu proprio*, further guidance may be issued upon further clarification of these matters by the Holy See.

I pray that this *motu proprio* will be a true occasion for us to meditate upon the extraordinary privilege that we priests have to celebrate Holy Mass for our people. Renewing the sentiment of our Holy Father, let us pray for each other.