



July 3, 2026

Response to the SSPX Situation

As you may have heard, this week has brought about a profound moment of sorrow in the life of the Church, as on July 1, the Priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X (SSPX) consecrated four new bishops without the permission of the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV.

Jesus' call from the very beginning of the Gospel is a personal invitation to follow him. His invitation is always both personal and communal – we choose to follow him personally, and in doing so, we become members of the Body of Christ, united as brothers and sisters in the communion of the Holy Spirit through baptism and our communal worship. A relationship with Jesus is never meant to be something we do on our own – it is meant to be lived in communion.

The most visible symbol of this communion is in the ministry of the Pope. As the successor of St. Peter, the Pope serves as a focal point of unity. From the earliest days of the Early Church, communion with Jesus included communion with the Holy Father.

The situation that arose on July 1, is therefore a significant moment in the life of the Church. It has brought about a clear rupture in the Body of Christ. This should break our hearts. It is truly a moment of sorrow in the life of the Church.

What does this mean for us right now?

- 1) Since the consecration of these new bishops was in direct defiance to the repeated pleas of the Holy Father, it has created a schism – a deliberate refusal of the authority of the Pope. This leads to a serious penalty of *excommunication latae sententiae* – an automatic excommunication where in committing the act they leave the communion of the Church, which has among its consequences that those involved in this consecration are no longer allowed to participate in the sacramental life of the Church.
- 2) Those who “formally adhere” to the SSPX are now also in what is called a schismatic position – which means they too are subject to an automatic excommunication.
- 3) The celebration of all sacraments by priests of the SSPX are now considered illicit – which means it is celebrated against the law of the Church. Therefore,

the faithful are warned to avoid participating in the celebration of the Mass or other sacraments with the SSPX.

This is a serious situation. Faithful souls will no longer have access to the graces of the sacraments as a result of this situation.

It is important to remember that the penalties of excommunication are not about punishment – they are an invitation to repentance.

Where do we go from here?

We know that there are some in our diocese who are drawn to the celebration of the sacraments with the SSPX. For most, this is because they hold a deep passion for our Lord and for the reverent celebration of the sacraments. This desire for faithful and reverent worship is one we share. For our friends and family who are adherents to the SSPX, our disposition should be one of charity, accompaniment, and invitation so that we can seek to understand where they are coming from.

At the same time, our hearts should join with Pope Leo: “filled with Christian affection, I plead with you and ask you with all my heart: please turn back!” We must, with all charity and pastoral sensitivity, invite our brothers and sisters to return to full communion with our Lord in the Church.

Lastly, please pray for this situation. Pray for the members of the SSPX. Pray for those who may be brought to a place of confusion or doubt as a result of this situation. Let us all commit ourselves to the unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17: “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” These are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we look forward in hope to the day when we are all returned to full communion with our Lord.

For those who would like to celebrate the sacraments in the Traditional Latin form, we invite you to join the parish community at St. Clement in Ottawa, where the Mass and all sacraments are celebrated in Latin according to the 1962 rite under the leadership of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this more, we encourage you to speak with your parish priest or to call the Mission and Pastoral Team at the Archdiocesan offices.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marcel Damphousse".

+Marcel Damphousse

Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall