

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,
WESTMINSTER, LONDON, SW1P 1QJ

His Excellency Archbishop Arthur Roche,
Prefect,
Congregation for Divine Worship
and the Discipline of the Sacraments,
00120
Città del Vaticano

28 July 2021

Your Excellency,

Following the publication of the Motu Proprio *Traditionis Custodes* of our Holy Father Pope Francis, I write to you following some conversations among a number of our bishops, to seek from the Congregation some indications concerning our application of the Motu Proprio within England and Wales.

These are some particular points on which we would welcome some clarification.

- a. Will your Congregation, and/or the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts be issuing any further guidance on the interpretation or the application of the Motu Proprio?
- b. We note that the current Motu Proprio abrogates all of the “previous norms, instructions, permissions and customs that do not conform to the provisions of the present Motu Proprio” (Art 8). We ask, then, whether the application of *Traditonis Custodes*, whilst not mentioning them specifically, also abrogates the use of the Extraordinary Form for the other sacraments other than the celebration of Holy Mass (1962) and the use of the Roman Breviary (1962) as these were specifically mentioned in *Summorum Pontificum* article 9?
- c. How do we apply the use of the National Calendar for England and Wales (which is based on the Universal calendar) with the use of the “Tridentine” Calendar with regard to feasts such as Corpus Christi etc which fall on different days?
- d. There is not a clear correlation between the “novus ordo” lectionary, approved for use in England and Wales, and that of the 1962 Rite. Is it permissible to go directly to the source publications of the Bible (which in England and Wales would be the original Jerusalem Bible and the RSV) from which the permitted lectionary texts are currently drawn, to find the relevant texts?
- e. What is the understanding of “groups” which the Holy Father mentions in the Motu Proprio? Is this to be interpreted as formally constituted groups of the faithful only or does the Motu Proprio apply to those who, by their own free will, gather for the celebrations of the Extraordinary Form Mass? This would be an important pastoral consideration in England and Wales.

- f. Finally, you will know that since the time of the indult granted to Cardinal Heenan in November 1971, there have always been a number of the faithful who request that their Requiem Rites be celebrated according to the liturgical texts prior to 1970. Does the current Motu Proprio allow for this to continue? In what way should this be so? For example, would the Requiem need to be celebrated in a designated place by a priest who is permitted to do so under the new faculty?

These are questions which have been raised, and we would appreciate any guidance from the Congregation regarding them.

Although the Motu Proprio has come into immediate effect, we are aware that its correct and lasting application will take time. From the combination of the Motu Proprio text and its accompanying letter, it is clear that the Holy Father wishes a unity of liturgical prayer, expressed through ‘the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite’. In pastoral attentiveness, we will have to accompany people who are firmly attached to the Missal of 1962 towards the Missal of Popes Saints Paul VI and John Paul II.

A difficulty we foresee in England and Wales is how to respond to the Latin Mass Society. Attached is a recent letter I have received from its Chairman, Dr Joseph Shaw, together with a canonical interpretation of the Motu Proprio. The LMS website and letterhead also prominently state that its raison d'être "is [as] an association of Catholic faithful dedicated to the promotion of the traditional Roman liturgy of the Catholic Church, the teachings and practices integral to it, the musical tradition which serves it, and the Latin language in which it is celebrated." Obviously this is not in accord with the mind of the Holy Father. We would welcome any advice from the Congregation on how best to deal with this situation. I am sure that there are other similar groups across the Church which use exclusively the 1962 Rites, such as the FSSP and the Institute of Christ the King (ICKSP) who have churches in this county. Guidance with regard to them, too, would be most helpful.

May I thank you in anticipation of your help in these matters and assure you of our continued support and prayers in your work and that of your Congregation

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read '+Vincent Nichols'.

✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster