



Diocese of Pittsburgh
2900 Noblestown Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205-4227
Phone: 412-456-3010 • Fax: 412-456-3185
E-mail: dzubik@diopitt.org • Website: www.diopitt.org

Office of the Bishop

August 20, 2021

Dear Brothers in Christ:

Since the promulgation of Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Traditionis Custodes* on July 16, my pastoral staff and I have been working diligently to both understand the document and to devise a plan for its implementation within the Diocese of Pittsburgh. As faithful sons of the Church, it is clear that we need to be obedient to the wishes of the Holy Father and see to it that the new *motu proprio* is implemented in a manner in keeping with his desires. At the same time, care and concern must be shown for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are spiritually nurtured by the older form of the liturgy and who may have been experiencing some spiritual and emotional difficulties in recent days.

To that end, included with this letter is a decree which implements *Traditionis Custodes* in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. I ask that each of you carefully review the decree and note how it will impact the faithful that we seek to serve. Additionally, please allow me to offer the following points that are detailed specifically in the decree.

Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish

For several years now, Most Precious Blood of Jesus Personal Parish has been entrusted with the pastoral care of those members of the faithful in the Diocese of Pittsburgh who desire to worship according to the Roman Missal of 1962. With the implementation of the Holy Father's new *motu proprio Traditionis Custodes*, Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish will continue to be our locus for these liturgies, overseen by the priests of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest.

Permission remains for the daily celebration of the Eucharist at Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish. Furthermore, the priests assigned to the parish continue to celebrate the sacraments of Baptism, Confession, Holy Matrimony, and the Anointing of the Sick according to the rituals as they existed in 1962. However, these sacraments are only to be celebrated in this manner at Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish for members of the parish.

Other Locations Using the Roman Missal of 1962

In addition to Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish, permission is being granted for the celebration of the Mass according to the Roman Missal of 1962 in two other locations within the Diocese of Pittsburgh. These locations have both had a stable community of the faithful in existence for a significant period of time who have the opportunity to continue to worship the Lord according to

the older form of the Mass. Permission is granted for the celebration of the Eucharist at these locations at the designated times as follows.

Saint Titus Church of Mary, Queen of Saints Parish, Aliquippa, PA.

Permission is being granted to the faithful to celebrate the Eucharist according to the Roman Missal of 1962 on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. and on the first Friday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Exclusions to this permission are the dates of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

Immaculate Conception Church of Saint James Parish, Washington, PA.

Permission is being granted to the faithful to celebrate the Eucharist according to the Roman Missal of 1962 on the last Sunday of each month, once again excluding the dates of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, at 3:00 p.m.

You will note that this permission is granted only for the celebration of the Eucharist; no other sacraments are to be celebrated according to the rituals as they existed in 1962 in these or any other locations in the Diocese of Pittsburgh (except Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish).

Because *Traditionis Custodes* specifically instructs that no new communities may be established for the celebration of the Mass according to the 1962 Roman Missal, requests for permission to establish additional locations cannot be granted.

Other Priests and the Use of the 1962 Roman Missal

With the promulgation of *Traditionis Custodes* on July 16, priests no longer have general permission or faculties to celebrate the Eucharist or the other sacraments according to the Roman Missal of 1962, not even in private. Instead, they must be expressly given the faculty to do so by their local diocesan bishop (or his delegate). Furthermore, the Holy Father has made it clear that permission for the celebration of the Eucharist according to the Roman Missal of 1962 is not meant to be for the personal devotion of any particular priest; rather, it is only to be given for the benefit of groups of the faithful.

Requests for such faculties for the benefit of the faithful by assisting with the public celebrations at **Saint James Parish** and **Mary, Queen of Saints Parish** as mentioned above will be given every consideration on an individual basis according to the needs of these communities. In addition, should priestly assistance with the Masses at Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish be needed in addition to the current assigned priests, requests for faculties will also be given every consideration. Once again, this faculty will not be granted to priests who request permission to celebrate privately according to the Roman Missal of 1962.

It must be noted that at private celebrations of the Mass according to the “*Novus Ordo*,” the priest is always permitted to celebrate in the Latin language.

Celebration of the Sacraments Apart from the Eucharist

The Holy Father has clearly stated that, "The liturgical books promulgated by Saint Paul VI and Saint John Paul II, in conformity with the decrees of Vatican Council II, are the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite." Therefore, the celebration of the sacraments within the Diocese of Pittsburgh is to take place according to the rituals promulgated after the liturgical reform of 1970 and currently in force. Permission cannot be granted for the celebration of weddings, baptisms, etc. according to the older rituals. The only exception is for sacramental celebrations to take place at Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish for enrolled members of the parish and presided over by the priests assigned to ministry at the parish.

Renewal of the Liturgy in General

It is important to note that in his letter which accompanied *Traditionis Custodes*, the Holy Father noted that he was not merely concerned with the older form of the liturgy but with the manner in which the "new" Mass is celebrated as well. He stated, "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.'" Furthermore, the Holy Father asked the bishops of the world to "be vigilant that every liturgy be celebrated with decorum and fidelity to the liturgical books promulgated after Vatican Council II, without the eccentricities that can easily degenerate into abuses."

With this in mind, I ask that every priest, deacon and member of the faithful who fulfills a ministerial role in the liturgy should take care to review the norms which govern our rituals and see to it that they are being carefully observed.

May we pray fervently that the four marks of the Church which we profess publicly each Sunday in the Nicene Creed are indeed goals that we work energetically to preserve: "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic."

Grateful for our belief that "Nothing is Impossible with God," I am,

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Zubik". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'D'.

Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

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