



10 February 2022

**DIRECTIVE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRIDENTINE MASS
MOTU PROPRIO, TRADITIONIS CUSTODES**

To: The Priests Ministering in the Diocese of London

Dear Brothers in Christ,

On 16 July 2021, Pope Francis issued the Apostolic Letter *motu proprio, Traditionis Custodes*, wherein he revised the norms governing the celebration of the Tridentine Mass, that is, the Mass as it was celebrated before the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council and the promulgation of the new *Roman Missal* by St. Paul VI in 1970 and revised by St. John Paul II in 2002. Prior to the issuance of this Apostolic Letter by the Holy Father, the law regulating the celebration of this form of the Mass had been set out by Pope Benedict XVI in his Apostolic Letter *motu proprio, Summorum Pontificum* published on 7 July 2007. That document granted a broad latitude to any priest to celebrate the Mass according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 without any reference to the Diocesan Bishop. Pope Francis in his letter has abrogated the legislation of Pope Benedict XVI in reference to the Tridentine Mass. Consequently, there is no longer an ordinary and extraordinary form of the Roman Rite but only the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Latin Church as found in the liturgical books published in the years following the Second Vatican Council.

The new Apostolic Letter entrusts to the Diocesan Bishop as moderator of the whole liturgical life of the local Church confided to his care the exclusive competence to authorize the use of the 1962 Missal in his diocese. Accordingly, it belongs to me entirely to determine where, when and by whom this form of the liturgy will be celebrated. Existing groups where this form of the Mass has been celebrated will be explicitly authorized by me to continue celebrating according to the pre-Vatican II liturgy provided these groups do not deny the legitimacy of the liturgical reform ordered by the Second Vatican Council and the magisterium of the Bishops of Rome. No other or new groups for the celebration of the Mass according to the 1962 Missal may be established without my direct permission.

These Masses celebrated according to the 1962 Missal are not to take place in parish churches. Provision will need to be made for their relocation to suitable extra-parochial venues where that is feasible. I will, therefore, need to request a dispensation for these Masses to continue to be celebrated in the parish churches until suitable venues are found.

Priests charged with the celebration of the Mass according to the Missal of 1962 and the pastoral care of the faithful in the designated groups who adhere to the Tridentine liturgy will be named by me to fulfill these responsibilities. Priests who already celebrate according to *Missale Romanum* of 1962, even privately, or who wish to do so in the future must obtain my authorization in writing to exercise this faculty.

In his letter, the Holy Father notes the fact that features of the pre-Vatican II Eucharistic liturgy have been introduced into the *Novus Ordo* and have led to distortions. Therefore, I direct that the legislation of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2010) is to be faithfully observed by both priests and faithful and that no rubrics, gestures or customs to be found in *Missale Romanum* of 1962, which have been abrogated and are no longer found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, are to be incorporated into the celebration of the Mass as found in the new *Roman Missal* (2011). The Eucharist is to be celebrated at a free-standing altar with the priest facing the assembly and in the language of the gathered faithful.

These new directives of the Holy Father, while specific and exacting, are not intended to be punitive, much less demeaning of the priests and faithful who are attached to or revere the pre-Vatican II form of the Eucharistic liturgy. Rather it is his clear intention to foster unity within the Church and to assure that the Eucharist as celebrated by the faithful be, in fact, a sign and a source of their oneness in the Lord and an indispensable aid in their consecration to service as missionary disciples.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB
Bishop of London

This bishop sounds like he takes the liturgy very seriously. We can expect, then, that in his diocese the propers (Entrance Chant, Responsorial Psalm, Offertory Chant, Communion antiphon) will **always be taken** from the 1974 *Graduale Romanum*—or if they are replaced, **they will only be replaced by** “another liturgical chant... approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop” (which is current liturgical law for the Ordinary Form).