



DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

2500 North Tyler Street • P.O. Box 7565 • Little Rock, Arkansas 72217 • (501) 664-0340 Fax (501) 664-6304

July 16, 2021

To the people of the Diocese of Little Rock,

In view of the publication today of the Apostolic Letter “*Traditionis Custodes*” issued by Pope Francis in which he revokes, effective immediately, permissions regarding the use of the Roman Liturgy in place prior to the reform of 1970—the *Vetus Ordo* Mass (i.e., the Traditional Latin Mass, hereafter called the Latin Mass) granted by Pope Benedict XVI in his Apostolic Letter “*Summorum Pontificium*,” it is incumbent on me as your bishop to indicate the implications of this change for our diocese.

Let me state clearly from the outset that the restrictions on the use of the Latin Mass imposed by *Traditionis Custodes* do not apply to our two personal parishes for the celebration of the Latin Mass: St. John the Baptist parish in Cabot and Our Lady of Sorrows parish in Springdale. There is no change for these parishes or the priests serving them. All that is required of them and the Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP) priests serving them is that they accept the validity and legitimacy of the liturgical reform of Vatican II, which they do. *Traditionis Custodes* does caution me not to establish any additional personal parishes for the celebration of the Latin Mass going forward.

To understand the reason for *Traditionis Custodes* and the need to revoke the provisions of *Summorum Pontificium*, it is important to realize that *Summorum Pontificium* sought to foster the healing of the schism of Archbishop Lefebvre and others who rejected not only the liturgical reforms of Vatican II but indeed often the Council itself. As it turned out, not only did *Summorum Pontificium* not achieve that purpose, the unintended result in many places was to create further division within parishes and among priests. *Traditionis Custodes* is the result of consultation among bishops in 2020 and seeks to foster unity by removing this source of division in our parishes. The main impact locally will be:

1) *Traditionis Custodes* (Art. 3, no. 2) indicates that the Latin Mass is not to be celebrated in regular parish Churches and so will no longer be celebrated in El Dorado, Mountain Home or Cherokee Village. I am to designate locations where the Latin Mass can be celebrated, and these are the personal parishes of St. John the Baptist in Cabot and Our Lady of Sorrows in Springdale.

2) *Traditionis Custodes* (Art. 5) indicates that priests who already celebrate the Latin Mass must request permission from the bishop to continue to enjoy this faculty. Here, for non-FSSP priests, that would be exclusively for the private celebration of the Latin Mass since the public celebration of the Latin Mass in Arkansas is to occur only in the two personal parishes entrusted to the FSSP.

The *Novus Ordo* Mass is to be celebrated according to the rubrics provided for that Mass. The *Novus Ordo* Mass can be celebrated by any priest in any language, including Latin and Latin service music can always be used, but elements of the Traditional Latin Mass are not to be grafted onto the *Novus Ordo* Mass, regardless of whether it is celebrated in Latin or the vernacular.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Anthony B. Taylor
Bishop of Little Rock