

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
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To: All Clergy
From: Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Re: Interim Guidance regarding *Traditionis Custodes*
Date: Monday, July 19, 2021

On July 16th, 2021, the Memorial of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, our Holy Father Pope Francis issued a *motu proprio* addressing the practice of celebrating Mass according to the Roman Missal edited by Pope Saint John XXIII in 1962. It is a liturgical practice that has steadily grown throughout certain parts of the Universal Church and in our Diocese. For my part, I believe that it is important that we retain the celebration of the Mass according to the Missal of 1962 in our Diocese, provided that our future practice is in conformity with the norms of *Traditionis Custodes*.

As you know, the norms contained in the new *motu proprio* significantly restrict the use of the Roman Missal of 1962. I will need time to consult, draft and promulgate permanent diocesan norms that will address both the pastoral needs of those who have received spiritual nourishment from attending such celebrations of the Mass, while at the same time remaining obedient to the requirements of the law and the wishes of our Holy Father.

The purpose of this memo is to provide you **interim guidance** regarding the first steps by which our Diocese will begin implementation of *Traditionis Custodes*.

More specifically, the procedure outlined at the end of this memo to request permission for the celebration of Mass according to the Roman Missal of 1962 applies to all such celebrations scheduled from **Wednesday, July 21, 2021 until the Feast of the Archangels, September 29, 2021**. It is my expectation that permanent norms will be ready for diocesan-wide implementation by the end of September 2021.

As we reflect upon how best to implement the *motu proprio*, it is important to consider key principles that are articulated in the document and must serve as guideposts for discerning an authentic manner by which its norms can be implemented. More specifically:

1. We remain committed to offer genuine pastoral service to the people entrusted to our care, allowing them a variety of legitimate liturgical expressions from which they can grow in their love of the Lord through right worship of Him.
2. We must try to implement the provisions of the new *motu proprio* in ways that will avoid exacerbating divisions that may already exist in our diocesan Church, all the while remaining obedient to what the document requires.
3. While the vast majority of those who attend the celebration of Mass according to the Missal of 1962 are committed to the Church and are faithful to all its teachings, there are

very few strident voices, both inside and outside of our Diocese, that have called into question the legitimacy of the Second Vatican Council, the legitimacy of the liturgical reform promulgated by Pope Saint Paul VI and the universal ecclesial authority of Pope Francis. Such positions must be refuted and corrected on every level of our ecclesial life.

During this interim period towards the permanent implementation of *Traditionis Custodes*, the following procedure will allow you to seek permission for the celebration of Mass according to the Missal of 1962 in the Diocese of Bridgeport:

1. All **pastors**, whose parishes **already** sponsor the celebration of Mass according to the 1962 Missal, whether on a weekly or periodic basis, are asked to write to me directly, asking permission for such celebrations to continue. The same is required for all priests who serve as **chaplains** or celebrate Mass according to the Missal of 1962 in a venue other than a parish Church.
2. Any priest who wishes to celebrate Mass according to the Missal of 1962 **privately**, that is, a low Mass without the presence of a server or the faithful, should submit a letter requesting permission to do so directly to me. I will grant him faculty to do so through September 29, 2021, at which time the process to request a more permanent faculty will be in place.
3. Please include in your request the following information:
 - a. Date and time for the celebration(s). If done on a weekly basis, please indicate the day and time for the weekly celebration.
 - b. The celebrant of the Mass
 - c. The approximate number of those who will (or ordinarily) attend
 - d. If the Mass is a weekly celebration, please indicate when it began.
 - e. An explanation of the pastoral need that prompted you to offer the Mass

This information is needed to compile an accurate picture of the presence and pastoral need for the celebration of Mass according to the Missal of 1962 throughout our Diocese.

4. If your request is granted, the necessary faculty will also be granted to the priest celebrant. This is stipulated by the *motu proprio*. However, please be aware of the following:
 - a. Any faculty to celebrate the Mass of 1962 during the interim period does not extend beyond September 29, 2021. Rather a separate process will be created to seek permanent faculty to celebrate the Mass of 1962 that must be in conformity with Article 3.4 of *Traditionis Custodes*. This process will accompany the permanent norms.
 - b. If permission is not granted for the celebration of Mass according to the Missal of 1962, the priest will lack the faculty to celebrate that Mass.

Given the importance of this issue in the life of our parishioners, I wish to meet in person with those priests who have been celebrating the Mass using the Missal of 1962.

Let us continue to pray for one another as we move forward with this important pastoral and spiritual project.