



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
October 26, 2025

“Jesus wept.” ~ John 11:35

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In my nine years as Bishop of the Diocese of Campbell, it has been my pleasure to foster the celebration of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (also known as the Traditional Latin Mass). This was in accord with the mind of our late Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI, who so memorably taught that “what earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too.” I have always had positive experiences with this diocese’s Latin Mass communities, who have ever shown themselves to be full of piety, zeal, and generosity. Traditional Latin Mass communities have flourished in this diocese. To date we have seven sites offering the Extraordinary Form of the Mass on a variety of schedules, making the Latin Mass highly accessible to the people of our diocese.

As you know, on July 6, 2021, Pope Francis issued his motu proprio *Traditiones custodes* rescinding Pope Benedict’s *Summorum pontificum* and calling for the phasing out of Traditional Latin Masses at diocesan parishes. This was an occasion of great heartache to me. If the Latin Mass has caused division as *Traditiones custodes* suggests, I certainly have not seen it in the Diocese of Campbell. When the new directive came out, I took no action for some time, waiting to see how the motu proprio would be implemented elsewhere and what canonical recourse we might have. In November of 2022, however, I was contacted by Apostolic Nuncio Cardinal Christophe Pierre who insisted that we begin the implementation of *Traditiones custodes* in the Diocese of Campbell. Given the large number of sites and people affected, I petitioned the Holy See for an extension and was accordingly granted a two-year reprieve, during which time I began grappling with the logistical problems of how to accommodate the Holy See’s directive. It was important to me that whatever action was taken be done in a manner that would cause as little disruption to the liturgical life of our Latin Mass communities as possible. I held multiple meetings with the pastors of the affected parishes to hear their input, as well as with representatives of the Greater Tipton Area Latin Mass Society and other attendees of our Latin

Masses. I was deeply moved by the devotion of everyone involved in our Latin Mass apostolates, as well as by their willingness to work within whatever constraints we were compelled to deal with in order to find the most positive outcome for our people. These discussions, while sad, reinforced my belief that the Latin Mass community is a positive influence in our diocese. I am grateful for everybody's input and collaboration.

In January of 2025, I requested a second extension from the Holy See and was granted an additional nine months, which expired in September of this year. It was my hope that our new Holy Father Pope Leo XIV might mitigate some of the provisions of *Traditiones custodes* and in September I again reached out to the Holy See to request some leeway, but I was told in no uncertain terms that we'd been given more than enough time, that no future extensions would be granted, and that the implementation of *Traditiones custodes* in the Diocese of Campbell must move forward without delay.

Therefore, under obedience to the Holy See—but mindful of my pastoral obligations towards the Catholics of this diocese who faithfully worship in the Extraordinary Form—I am announcing a reorganization of the Traditional Latin Mass communities in the Diocese of Campbell.

To date, we have four parishes offering the Extraordinary Form of the Mass weekly and two monthly. Locations with weekly Latin Masses are St. Stephen's in Tipton, St. Maximilian Kolbe in Stockville, St. Catherine in Derwell, and Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Danstown. In addition, Latin Masses are offered on the second Sunday of the month at Holy Spirit in Brockway and the fourth Sunday of the month at St. Stanislaw's in Irvington. Furthermore, there is a weekly Low Mass said every Monday in the chapel at Transfiguration Catholic School in Fabersburg. From our estimates—using data gathered with the generous cooperation of the Greater Tipton Area Latin Mass Society—these sites collectively minister to around 1,000 families.

From the beginning, I have resolved that I would do my utmost to ensure that Latin Masses remained available to the people of the diocese. Remembering the words of our Lord, “I will not leave you orphans” (John 14:18), the pastors of the affected parishes and I have worked tirelessly to solve the logistical problems inherent in finding new liturgical homes for a thousand families. It has not been easy, and no doubt some will be unhappy with our decision. As pastor of this diocese, I share your disillusionment! Even so, I am happy to say that our new arrangement will allow almost everyone currently attending a Latin Mass to continue to do so. The existing Latin Mass sites will be reorganized according to the following guidelines:

- ***St. Stephen, Tipton.*** St. Stephen's is the oldest and largest Latin Mass community in the diocese, dating back to 1989. St. Stephen's pastor Fr. Fred Zileski believes that uprooting this community from the parish would not only be spiritually harmful to his flock, but detrimental to the very survival of St. Stephen's as a parish. I concur with Fr. Zileski's assessment. Therefore, Latin Masses will continue at St. Stephen's, with the celebrations being moved to the parish center for the time being. While I realize this is inconvenient and disheartening, this change will nevertheless allow the continuity of the community in its home parish while we continue to work and pray for better circumstances.

- ***St. Maximilian Kolbe, Stockwell.*** Fr. Juliet Obijiaku of St. Maximilian has graciously agreed to make the auditorium of the parish school available for Sunday Latin Masses. As with St. Stephen's, this will allow the continuity of the community while complying with the letter of *Traditions custodes*.

• ***Transfiguration Catholic School, Fabersburg.*** The Monday Low Mass at Transfiguration is said by the school chaplain Fr. Richard Gomer. As this Mass is at an extra-parochial setting, it is already in compliance with Vatican directives and its availability will remain unchanged.

• ***St. Catherine, Derwell and Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Danstown.*** It has proven challenging to work out the logistics of these two parishes. Both are smaller, older structures that lack the facilities to move Masses out of their parish sanctuaries, which will necessitate relocating the Masses off site entirely. Since we have no other option, however, the Latin Mass communities in Derwell and Danstown will have to commute to either Tipton or Stockwell for the Sunday Latin Mass at St. Stephen or St. Maximilian Kolbe.

Realizing how inconvenient this is, however, I am currently in talks with the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest (ICKSP) to establish an oratory here at a location in the northeast corner of the diocese yet to be determined. Besides offering access to the Latin Mass for Catholics in the northeast, the presence of an ICKSP oratory would also enable the wider Latin Mass community of the diocese to access the other sacraments (baptisms, marriages, etc.) in the Extraordinary Form, which *Traditiones custodes* prohibits in parish settings. Please pray for the success of this endeavor.

• ***Holy Spirit, Brockway and St. Stanislaw's, Irvington.*** Both Holy Spirit and St. Stanislaw's are rural mission parishes in the southern region of the diocese where the Latin Mass is said once per month. Both are small parishes with only a small, single structure serving as the church and no other spaces for liturgies. These parishes are part of a cluster pastored by Fr. Miguel Herrero; the Latin Masses are said by Fr. David Sobiesk, a visiting priest from the seminary. Fr. Miguel and Fr. David have informed me that most attendees of these Latin Masses are not registered parishioners but isolated families from throughout the south of the diocese, most of whom drive a considerable distance to attend the Latin Masses at Holy Spirit and St. Stan's twice a month. Some, I am told, even drive from over the state line.

In light of this, I am designating a new site for the Latin Masses in the south side at the defunct parish of Divine Infant of Prague in Waters Township, which is currently clustered with St. Francis in Ashdale and St. Rita in Au Pointe. This will be an ideal use for this space, as Divine Infant of Prague no longer has an active parish life. Regular Masses ceased there in 2021 and as of now it is used only for occasional weddings and special Masses. Effective January 1, I will be breaking Divine Infant off from its cluster and canonically redesignating it as a chapel under the name St. John Henry Newman. As Waters Township is located equidistant from both Brockway and Irvington, it will be able to accommodate the Latin Mass communities of both Holy Spirit and St. Stan's. I also believe the historic nature of the building will be admirably suited for the Traditional Latin Mass. Fr. Sobiesk has graciously offered to continue to say the Latin Masses at the new St. John Henry Newman chapel on the same schedule he currently maintains (second and fourth Sundays of the month)—although Fr. Sobiesk tells me the Mass times will likely be moved later in the day to accommodate his increased drive time. If the new St. John Henry Newman chapel proves self-sustaining, I will look into getting a visiting priest to say an additional two Latin Masses on the first and third Sundays so the chapel can have a regular liturgical life.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm my solidarity with our Latin Mass communities. You are a valued part of this diocese. Through your love of tradition, you bear heroic witness to the historical continuity of the Catholic Faith in an age where all certainties seem under attack. Your sorrow is my sorrow, your frustration is my frustration. “Weep with those who weep,” St. Paul says (Rom. 12:15). Therefore, in expression of my solidarity with you, I will conclude this letter with a happy announcement—I myself will be presiding over the first Mass in the Extraordinary Form offered at the new St. John Henry Newman Chapel, which will be formally inaugurated on the Feast of Epiphany, January 6, 2026. This will be my first Latin Mass, but the good folks of the Greater Tipton Area Latin Mass Society have been more than generous in providing me with the time and resources to learn this venerable rite. Pray for me that I will celebrate worthily! While *Traditiones custodes* prohibits new priests from celebrating the Latin Mass without the Vatican’s permission, it places no such restrictions on bishops. I hope to see many of you there as we celebrate the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ to the nations.

My brethren, let us not cease to do good. Let us go forward together in the name of Christ our Lord, remembering that “he who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt. 24:13). I impart my episcopal blessing to all who read this.

With tender affection in the grace of Christ,



Most Reverend Chad W. Durden
Bishop of Campbell