

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

240 E. ONONDAGA STREET, SYRACUSE, NY 13202-2608

July 2, 2026

Dear Diocesan Family,

In the 1962 Roman Missal and Breviary, this day is dedicated to the “Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary” to her cousin Elizabeth. In that event, the child in Elizabeth’s womb leapt for joy for “so close was man’s salvation” (see Lk 1:39-46).

Today, however, as I write to you it is with much sadness as I share the announcement from the Holy See that the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X (SSPX) is in **formal schism** with the Roman Catholic Church due to the unauthorized episcopal ordinations of four bishops without papal mandate (see Canon 1013). Since the **Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X** has established itself within the Diocese of Syracuse at **Blessed Virgin Mary Church and Priory** and **Mater Dei Academy** in **Warners, NY**; and at **St. Athanasius Church** in **Endwell, NY**, it is necessary for me to inform the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Syracuse of the gravity of this situation and that schism is seen as a formal separation from full communion with the Catholic Church.

In its decree declaring the schismatic act, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith has set forth in accord with the *Code of Canon Law* that those ordained bishops and the bishops who consecrated them have incurred a *latae sententiae* (automatic) excommunication whose removal is reserved to the Roman Pontiff. The Dicastery notes as well that the act constitutes a formal separation from the Church’s communion also for the sacred ministers and laity involved due to disobedience and rejection of the primacy of the Pope, the Successor of St. Peter, to whom Christ entrusted his Church.

Specifically, this means that (1) the sacred ministers (i.e., priests, deacons, clerics) belonging to the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X are in schism and must therefore be considered schismatics and excommunicated (see Canon 1364); (2) among the laity, those who formally adhere to the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X are to be considered schismatics and excommunicated under the conditions established in the 1996 *Explanatory Note of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts* (cf. *ibidem*, 7); and (3) the holy People of God are warned that the sacred ministers of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X administer the sacraments **illicitly**, and the **Sacrament of Penance** administered by them and **Marriages** assisted by them are **invalid** from this time forward.

This declaration directly affects our diocesan church, and our brothers and sisters associated with the Society of Saint Pius X, and those who worship in their churches and chapels. I must make it very clear that today’s announcement without a doubt **forbids Roman Catholics**

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of good standing to participate in and to receive the Sacraments from bishops and priests associated with the Society of Saint Pius X, including Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Marriage, and Holy Orders – or to associate oneself with SSPX churches, chapels, and schools. The only exception provided for in Canon Law is danger of death (see Canons 976 and 1752).

Moreover, as announced today, everyone should be aware that formal adherence to schism is a grave offence against God and carries the penalty of excommunication decreed by the Church's law. To continue to participate in the pastoral activities of an SSPX chapel or church or school after learning of the prohibition would be seen as “formal adherence.” In addition, effective immediately, permission can no longer be granted for the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X to use diocesan churches or other parish property for any liturgical rites or gatherings.

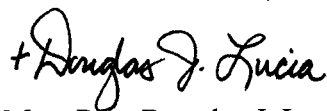
I must instruct the faithful of the Diocese of Syracuse to avoid participating in the activities of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X, while inviting and encouraging those who have been assisting at Mass or Sacraments according to the 1962 Missal and Roman Ritual to now look for such spiritual counsel and nourishment at the Diocesan Shrine of St. Mary of the Assumption in Oswego (directed by the Institute of Christ the King, Sovereign Priest), our diocesan Traditional Latin Mass parish at Transfiguration Parish in Syracuse, or by indult, at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Verona or at St. Mary's of the Assumption Parish in Binghamton.

I grieve over the wound that has been inflicted on Christ's body, the Church, and its effect on the spiritual good of the faithful. Although today's action relates to a specific event, I would caution that such wounds occur in the Church, when people's pain and concerns are ignored and the universal call to holiness is subjugated to personal agendas. I continue to pray that efforts will be made at all levels of Church governance to heal such a breach. I regret that the communion and trust that has been built in my seven years as bishop here in Syracuse is now so imperiled, but there cannot be accord when discord has been sown.

At the conclusion of today's declaration, one reads: *“The Church, as a caring mother, will welcome with sincere affection and lively solicitude all those who wish to return to full communion. The Apostolic Nuncios will arrange the procedures that Ordinaries may use in the various cases.”* To all clergy and laity who may not wish to be part of this rupture with the See of Peter, I am always open to receiving you and assisting you in remaining within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

In this hour, I continue to hold on my lips Christ's prayer for unity and ask Mary, Mother of the Church to intercede for the Church and her members in this moment. With care and concern, I ask God's blessing upon all who dwell within the territorial boundaries of the Diocese of Syracuse “Father, may we be one.”

In the Name of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas J. Lucia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse