



"Do not fear, for I am with you"
Isaiah 41:10

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A Pastoral letter to the clergy, religious and faithful of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes

**MOTU PROPRIO
TRADITIONIS CUSTODES**

21st July, 2021

Dear Reverend Fathers, Religious and Faithful of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes

On the 16th of July 2021, in the evening (Australia time) our Holy Father, Pope Francis issued a motu proprio titled "*Traditionis Custodes*". This document from the Pope concerns the celebration of the Roman Liturgy prior to the reforms of the Mass in 1970, otherwise known as the 'Tridentine Mass', 'Mass in the Extraordinary Form' or 'the Latin Mass'. The Pope has set out a number of articles in the moto proprio regarding the continued use of this form of the Mass that each diocese is to follow.

Here in the diocese we have three active Latin Mass communities in Buronga, Peak Hill and Mathoura. These communities have assigned Pastors who faithfully celebrate both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the liturgy (I being one of them) which is a public expression of our fidelity to the Pope and the Church.

After carefully reading the motu proprio and the Pope's letter to Bishops and taking it to prayer I wish to inform you that the current arrangements for our Latin Mass communities across the diocese that were established before the moto proprio will remain unchanged.

While acknowledging the Pope's ruling that these Masses are not to take place in a Parish Church (**cf § 2**), I also take to heart his desire that I as Bishop provide pastoral care to these communities (**cf § 4**).

The vastness of this diocese means our pastoral reality is that we simply do not have the advantage of separate Chapels or Oratories in which the Extraordinary Form Mass may be celebrated.

Therefore, I have decided that the only feasible option is to allow these communities to remain in Parish Churches. In addition, this decision also assures that I am acting according to the Code of Canon Law, specifically **Canon 932 §1** and **§2** which require that the sacred liturgy be celebrated in a sacred place and that the Eucharistic sacrifice be celebrated on a dedicated or blessed Altar.

I, like many Bishops, will continue to study the motu proprio in deep prayer and reflection and allow our findings to assist us in the pastoral care of the faithful.

I also take this opportunity to remind all Priests and the Faithful that the Pope in his letter to Bishops expressed his sadness regarding the various abuses in the sacred liturgy celebrated today. The Pope writes, *“That I (The Pope) am saddened by abuses in the celebration of the liturgy on all sides. In common with Benedict XVI, I deplore the fact that “in many places the prescriptions of the new Missal are not observed in celebration, but indeed come to be interpreted as an authorization for or even a requirement of creativity, which leads to almost unbearable distortions”.* This statement from the Pope must be taken seriously. We are reminded that the liturgy is not about the praise of us but, is for the praise and worship of God. All the clergy and faithful must ensure that the liturgy is offered and celebrated according to the rubrics set out by the Church. This will ensure that the liturgy is fittingly celebrated for the praise, worship and sacrifice to God, and for the spiritual edification of the people.

Friends, let us work together as the people of God to support one another in prayer especially during these uncertain times.

May Our Blessed and Holy Mother under the title, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Patroness of Wilcannia-Forbes, keep us always faithful to the Church and to our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

Yours in Christ



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