



DIOCESE of FORT WORTH THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



PASTORAL LETTER OF BISHOP MICHAEL F. OLSON TO THE FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH CONCERNING THE HOLY SEE'S DECLARATIONS ON THE SOCIETY OF SAINT PIUS X (SSPX), THE SCHISMATIC STATUS AND EXCOMMUNICATION OF SSPX SACRED MINISTERS, AND THE CANONICAL AND SPIRITUAL RISKS OF ALL FAITHFUL PARTICIPATING IN SSPX CELEBRATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

August 14, 2026

Dear Friends in Christ,

As many of you are aware, the leadership of the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) illicitly consecrated four new bishops on July 1, 2026, in a liturgical ceremony in Écône, Switzerland. They did so in open defiance of the pastoral authority and pleas of Pope Leo XIV and in violation of communion with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Because of these actions of the SSPX, the Dicastery of the Doctrine for the Faith (DDF) clarified that the sacred ministers of the SSPX “are in schism and must therefore be considered schismatics” and are subject to the penalty of excommunication established by the Church’s Code of Canon Law. I therefore urge the faithful of the Diocese of Fort Worth to remain in communion with the whole Catholic Church and its visible head on earth the Vicar of Christ, our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV and “to refrain from taking part in celebrations and activities” offered and promoted by the SSPX. The DDF also clarified that the SSPX ministers administer the sacraments illicitly, and that confessions and marriages administered by them are invalid (DDF, Explanatory Note, July 2, 2026). It is objectively sinful for a Catholic knowingly and willfully to attend any of these ceremonies or to receive sacraments administered by an SSPX priest.

Within the geographical territory of the Diocese of Fort Worth, the SSPX currently operates: **Our Lady of Mount Carmel SSPX Church**, located at 3900 Scruggs Drive, North Richland Hills, Texas 76180, and **Our Lady of Fatima SSPX Church**, located at 3rd & Peach Streets, Sanger, Texas 76266. There is also the extinct **Carmelite Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity**, 5801 Mt. Carmel Drive, Arlington, Texas, composed of women who were dismissed from their vows by the Carmelite Order for abandonment of the Catholic Faith, and the former nuns publicly associate with the SSPX.

Formal adherence to schism can be shown by deliberate outward actions as well as words. Knowingly providing public, organizational, material, or financial support to SSPX communities including the former Arlington Carmelite community may evidence such adherence and can result in excommunication (DDF Statement, May 13, 2026). Anyone concerned about his or her situation should seek guidance from a trusted priest or diocesan authority. I again exhort Catholics to stay clear of such institutions.

THE CATHOLIC CENTER

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Excommunication is a medicinal penalty intended to call a person to repentance, reconciliation, and restored communion. The Church's purpose is not rejection but the salvation of souls and "will welcome with sincere affection and lively solicitude all those who desire to return to full communion" (DDF, Explanatory Note, July 2, 2026). I welcome anyone formally aligned with the SSPX to meet with me towards reconciliation and reunion.

In conclusion, this is not simply a matter of desire for the celebration of the Mass and sacraments according to the 1962 Missal. Any Catholic in the Diocese of Fort Worth seeking that form of celebration is welcome to do so at Saint Benedict Catholic Church, located at 2920 Azle Avenue in Fort Worth. What is at the heart of this matter is that the SSPX maintains that the Catholic Church's ordinary way of life has remained in fundamental doctrinal confusion since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. It maintains that her principle liturgical reform of the Mass and Sacraments represents a fracture rather than an authentic development of the Church's liturgical life. It maintains that the pontificates of all the popes after Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) have failed in their Petrine ministry of confirming the faithful in truth and communion. If this were true, what would we conclude about the guarantee of Christ and the Holy Spirit's ordinary governance of the Church through its established structures?

The Catholic Church has survived corrupt popes, inept bishops, foolish pastoral decisions, and periods of great moral collapse throughout her history. Yet, Christ's promises do not permit that the Holy Spirit's ordinary work has departed from the visible structures of the Catholic Church and relocated to a self-formed and schismatic sect that sets itself apart from the doctrine and organic structures of the Catholic Church as founded by Christ and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

Please pray with me for reconciliation and reunion with all those who have formally entered into schism. Let us pray for peace in our diocese that we might be faithful to Christ and His plea from the Cross that all might be one in Him as He and the Father are one with the Holy Spirit. Finally, let us pray for our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, for his good health and perseverance in the Petrine ministry with which God has entrusted him. I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA
Bishop of Fort Worth

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