



September 14, 2025

Notification to the Community in Attendance of the Latin Mass in Hollister:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As many of you know, several months ago, I sent Chancellor, Deacon David Ford, S.T.L., and the Director of the Tribunal, Ms. Ceclia Brennan, J.C.L., to meet with you in Hollister after a celebration of the pre-Conciliar Mass at Sacred Heart Church. This was to provide advice for me as I discern the best path going forward for the Church of Monterey, and most especially to be in conformance with direction of the Dicastery of Divine Worship and Sacraments in accordance with the *motu proprio* of the Holy Father *Traditionis Custodes*.

The primary focus of every Bishop, as stated in the Vatican Council II documents, and of course, of Pope Francis as well as Pope Leo, is to lead the Church toward unity. And of course, the heart of our faith, that which nourishes our faith and unity, is our worship. So it is, that the foundational principle for us is our unity in the celebration of the Eucharist and all the Sacraments.

Pope Francis addressed the rare situation in which the Church finds herself at this time of having two liturgies being celebrated in the one Latin Rite. The principles that must be applied are those in the *Motu Proprio*, *Traditionis Custodes*, as well as principles articulated in his *Letter to the Bishops of the Whole World* that accompanied the *Motu Proprio*.

In addressing this necessary unity in worship, Pope Francis reminded all that the liturgical books promulgated by Pope St. Paul VI and Pope St. John Paul II, constitute **the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite**. The Holy Father stated:

“Whoever wishes to celebrate with devotion according to earlier forms of the liturgy can find in the reformed Roman Missal according to Vatican Council II, all the elements of the Roman Rite....”

Elsewhere in the Letter the Holy Father noted, in speaking of the Mass of Pope John XXIII, “...the Bishops gathered in Ecumenical Council asked that it (the Mass) be reformed; their intention was that, **“the faithful would not assist as strangers and silent spectators in the mystery of faith, but, with a full understanding of the rites and prayers, would participate in the sacred action, consciously, piously, and actively.”** Pope St. Paul VI declared the new Rite an expression of the Church’s **unity**. Certainly, we can say this decision of Pope St. Paul VI reflected both the unanimity of the Council Fathers as seen in the documents of the Council and post-conciliar documents, but also the unanimity of the liturgical theologians which advised the Bishops in Council. Pope Francis stated, **“This unity I intend to re-establish throughout the Church of the Roman Rite.”**

While praying and discerning the unique situation of this matter in our diocese and desiring to support the Pope’s goal of moving toward greater unity in the post-Conciliar Roman Rite, I have made a decision to strengthen our unity with the Universal Church. One factor considered

is that in a diocese of over 210,000 Catholics the numbers in attendance of this pre-Conciliar Mass are very small indeed. There is also the matter of the Pastor there at Sacred Heart and St. Benedict's being able to give his full attention to the entire parish rather than taking his limited time spent with a small group of individuals who are not worshiping according to Ordinary (and one) Rite of the Latin Church.

Clearly the Church is moving us to greater unity in worship. And, as Archbishop Roche recalled, "...it is the duty of the bishops, *cum Petro et sub Petro*, (with Peter and under Peter), to safeguard communion." He reminded the bishops that "*as pastors we must not lend ourselves to sterile polemics, capable of only creating division, in which the ritual itself is often exploited by ideological viewpoints. Rather, we are called to rediscover the value of the liturgical reform by preserving the truth and beauty of the Rite that has been given us. For this to happen, we are aware that a renewed and continuous liturgical formation is necessary both for priests and the lay faithful.*"

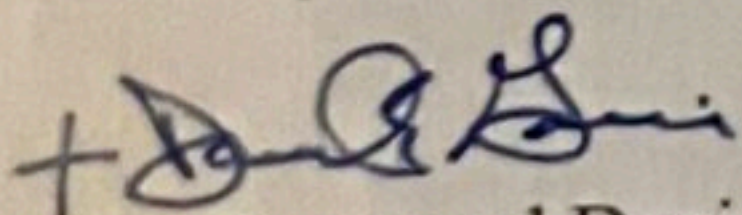
Besides praying and reflecting on these liturgical teachings of Vatican Council II, the ecclesial principles articulated so well, and mentioned above, and on the input I have received from my Chancellor and Director of the Tribunal after visiting the community. I also consulted with my Vicar General and the Presbyteral Council.

After all the above consultations and reflections, I have come to a decision for the good of the Church of Monterey not to request a dispensation from the *Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments* for the celebration of the pre-conciliar Mass at Sacred Heart Parish church. In unity with the Holy Father's *motu proprio*. I have directed Fr. Stephen Akers to cease celebration of the pre-conciliar Mass in Hollister as of October 13, 2025.

I invite you all to join in unity with the parish of Sacred Heart and St. Benedict, and in cooperation with your pastor, as they gather around the Table of the Lord celebrating the rich Eucharistic Sacrifice, each Sunday, which has been a great fruit of the Council. May this Liturgy charge your hearts with charity and trust, to build the unity Pope Leo spoke about in the Mass he celebrated early in his pontificate in St. Peter's Square:

"With the light and the strength of the Holy Spirit, let us build a Church founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word, allows itself to be made "restless" by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity."

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Daniel E. Garcia
Bishop of Monterey *a qua*

Cc: Very Rev. Fredy Calvario, Delegate General and Delegate for Priests
Rev. Timothy Nondorf, Vice-Chancellor
Deacon David R. Ford, Chancellor
Rev. Stephen Akers, Pastor

