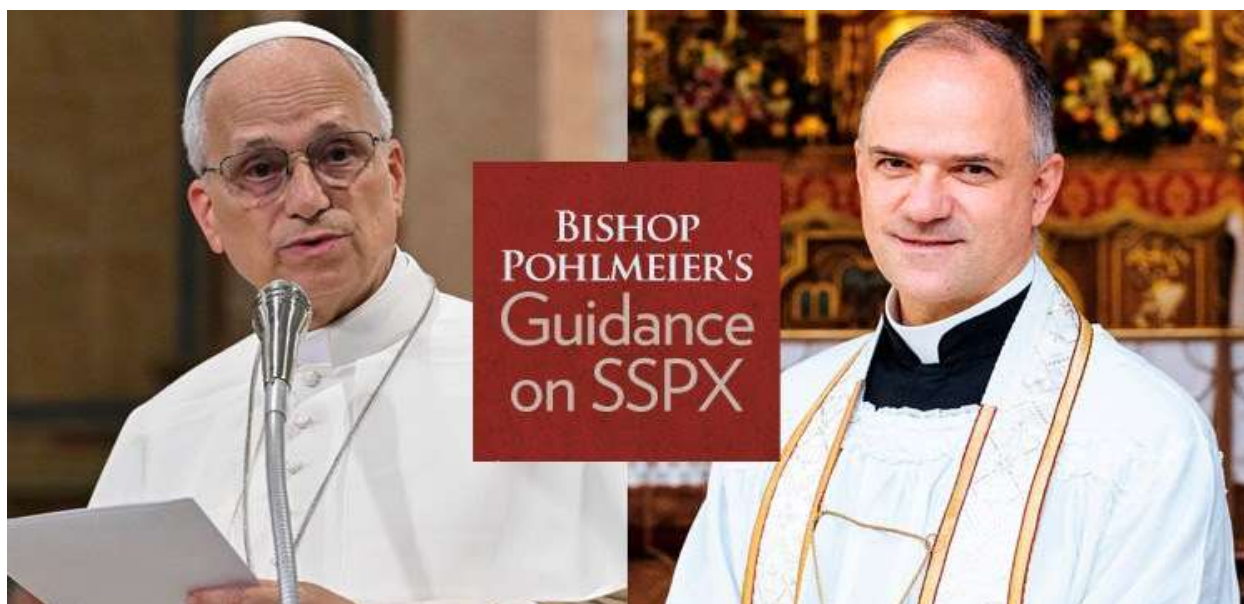




Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The unity of the Church is one of Christ's greatest gifts and one of our greatest responsibilities. It is with sadness that I write following the Holy See's announcement concerning the Priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X (SSPX).

On July 1, 2026, four bishops were consecrated without the required mandate of Pope Leo XIV. After repeated efforts by the Holy See to prevent these consecrations, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith determined that these episcopal consecrations constituted a schismatic act. As a result, those directly involved incurred excommunication. The Holy See has provided guidance regarding the clergy and lay faithful associated with the SSPX.

Because there is an SSPX chapel within the Diocese of St. Augustine, I know many of you may have questions about what this means for you, your family or friends. My hope is to offer clarity while also encouraging all of us to remain united with Christ, His Church and the Successor of St. Peter.

What this Means for the Faithful

- The Holy See's decree concerns those who knowingly and formally adhere to the schism of the SSPX. Catholics who may have attended an SSPX chapel for liturgical or spiritual reasons should not automatically conclude that they have incurred excommunication. Each person's circumstances must be considered individually.
- If you are concerned about your own situation or that of a loved one, I encourage you to speak with your parish priest. The Church desires to accompany the faithful with charity, clarity and pastoral care.
- The Holy See has declared that, beginning July 1, 2026, the sacrament of penance celebrated by SSPX priests and marriages witnessed by SSPX clergy are invalid. Catholics are also asked to refrain from participating in liturgies and other activities promoted by the SSPX.
- Excommunication is one of the Church's most serious canonical penalties, but it is intended to call individuals to repentance, reconciliation and the restoration of full communion with Christ and His Church.

The Traditional Latin Mass in the Diocese of St. Augustine

The Diocese of St. Augustine recognizes that many Catholics have a deep appreciation for the beauty and reverence of the Traditional Latin Mass. The Diocese of St. Augustine continues to provide this form of the Roman Rite in full communion with the Catholic Church.

The Traditional Latin Mass is celebrated each Sunday at St. Joseph Catholic Church (Historic Church), 11730 Old St. Augustine Road, Jacksonville, FL 32258. Sunday Masses are at 7:30 a.m. (Low Mass) and 12:30 p.m. (High Mass).

Catholics are asked to refrain from participating in liturgies and activities of the priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X at St. Michael the Archangel chapel, 1950 Bartram Road, Jacksonville, in accordance with the guidance issued by the Holy See.

A Call to Prayer and Unity

Throughout the Church's history, communion with the Successor of St. Peter has been a visible sign of our communion with Christ and with one another. Let us be witnesses to the unity for which the Lord prayed, resisting every temptation toward division or contempt.

As your bishop, I ask you to pray for Pope Leo XIV, for the members of the priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X and for all who are affected by these events, that the Holy Spirit may lead all hearts to reconciliation and full communion with the Church.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, intercede for us and lead us ever closer to her Son.

In Christ,

Most Rev. Erik T. Pohlmeier

Bishop of St. Augustine