

Diocese of San Jose

Office of the Bishop

To the People of the Diocese of San Jose

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In late 2006, I was pleased to bring into communion with the Church members of the faithful who had been celebrating Mass and the sacraments according to the traditional Latin forms at a small church they had purchased on Homestead Road in Santa Clara. At that time, I canonically erected the Oratory of Our Mother of Perpetual Help to offer pastoral care to the people of the Diocese of San Jose who are attached to the traditional Latin Mass and other sacraments. Furthermore, I entrusted the ministry of the newly established Oratory of Our Mother of Perpetual Help to priests of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest. These priests have served faithfully in this capacity since January 1, 2007.

Because recent internal matters related to the governance of the Oratory could not be resolved in a way that is satisfactory to the Institute, the Institute has now withdrawn from its ministry to the Oratory. I wrote to the Oratory's Board of Directors and, through the board, to lay faithful who are members there, requesting them to reconsider this action by which they would be separating themselves from union with the Church. The board, however, did not rescind its previous decision. Consequently, I must now suppress the Oratory, removing its canonical status as an established and recognized Roman Catholic community in the Diocese of San Jose.

Faced with these developments, the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest has been in contact with Father Antonio Silveira of Five Wounds Portuguese National Church, which will welcome the faithful of the newly erected **Oratory of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**, beginning next Sunday, December 15, at 12:30 pm.

This past weekend, it was announced at Our Mother of Perpetual Help that priests from the Society of Saint Pius X will begin ministry there. This is a matter of grave concern because of the unlawful status of the Society. I offer here, by way of background, the reason for my concerns.

The Society of Saint Pius X was formed after the Second Vatican Council by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. On June 30, 1988, against the direction of His Holiness, Blessed John Paul II, the Archbishop consecrated bishops for the Society of Saint Pius X. Consequently, Archbishop Lefebvre and the four men consecrated as bishops were excommunicated. Although Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI lifted the excommunication in 2009, he stated: "Doctrinal questions obviously remain and until they are clarified the Society has no canonical status in the Church and its ministers cannot legitimately

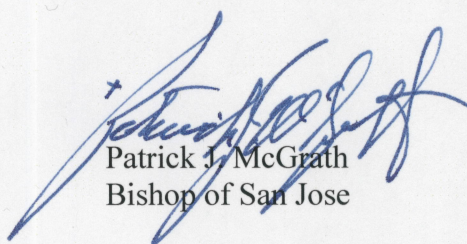
exercise any ministry.” This means that the priests of the Society of Saint Pius X are suspended and the sacraments of Penance and Matrimony administered by these priests are invalid. Contrary to some popular belief that when the excommunication of the four bishops of the Society of Saint Pius X was lifted, the Society was reconciled to the Roman Catholic Church. This is not – nor has ever been – the case.

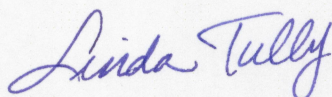
It is morally illicit (unlawful) for the Faithful to participate in Masses of the Society of Saint Pius X unless they are legitimately impeded from participating in a Mass celebrated by a Catholic priest in good standing in the Church (cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 844.2). The fact of not being able to assist at the celebration of the “Tridentine” Mass (*Forma Extraordinaria*) is not considered a sufficient motive for attending Masses offered by priests of the Society of Saint Pius X. Participation in such Masses and in the administration of the sacraments at the chapels of the Society of Saint Pius X can, over a period of time, lead to a schismatic habit of thought and heart as one slowly absorbs a mentality which separates itself from the Magisterium of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. For those faithful who desire the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass according to the *Forma Extraordinaria* (“Tridentine” Mass), they will find such valid and lawful Masses celebrated at Five Wounds Portuguese National Church each Sunday afternoon, at 12:30, beginning on December 15, 2013.

The doctrinal questions that remain unresolved between the Roman Catholic Church and the Society of Saint Pius X are not insignificant. A special Pontifical Commission, *Ecclesia Dei*, under the auspices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, had worked toward resolution, but the refusal of the Society of Saint Pius X to accept all of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council set back these efforts. The lack of full communion of the Society of Saint Pius X with the Roman Catholic Church and our Holy Father continues to wound the unity for which the Lord had prayed: “That all may be one.” Therefore, let us all pray for the Church that her unity may be healed for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of San Jose, this tenth day of December, in the year of our Lord 2013.




Patrick J. McGrath
Bishop of San Jose



Chancellor