



We proclaim a crucified Christ

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14 July 2026

To the Clergy, Consecrated Men and Women, and lay Faithful of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

As Archbishop of Melbourne, I write to you concerning the recent schismatic actions of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), and the *Decree and Explanatory Notes* (translation attached) subsequently issued by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF).

The unity of the Church is a gift entrusted to us by Christ himself. On the night before He suffered, the Lord prayed "*that they may all be one*" (Jn 17:21). Every generation of Christians is therefore called to preserve this unity in faith and charity, and in communion with the Successor of Saint Peter.

In recent days, the Holy See has addressed the canonical situation arising from the schismatic actions of the SSPX. The DDF has also established procedures to facilitate the reconciliation of priests and lay faithful of the SSPX who sincerely desire to return to full communion with the Catholic Church. These provisions remind us that, while the Church must clearly uphold her doctrine and discipline, she always seeks the return of those who desire reconciliation with generosity, patience and hope.

Here in Melbourne, I am conscious that some members of Christ's faithful worship at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and St Andrew's Church and Priory in Hampton. Many have been drawn there because of their love for the Church's liturgical tradition and reverence in worship. It is important that we recognise this reality with pastoral sensitivity, avoiding harsh judgments about individual consciences or motives.

At the same time, communion with the Catholic Church is founded upon unity in faith, sacramental life and ecclesial governance under the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops in communion with him. Fidelity to Peter and to the Magisterium is not an optional element of Catholic life but belongs to the very nature of the Church established by Christ.

For this reason, and as your Chief Shepherd, I ask the Clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese to receive the guidance of the Holy See with both clarity and charity.

Those who have attended SSPX chapels because of their appreciation for the traditional liturgy, without intending to reject the teaching authority of the Church or separate themselves from communion with the Holy Father, should not lose heart. The Holy See has expressly recognised that not every member of the faithful bears the same degree of responsibility for the actions of the SSPX, and that each person's circumstances must be considered carefully.

However, now that the present canonical situation has been clearly articulated, I encourage all who desire to remain in full communion with the Catholic Church to participate in the sacramental life where the Church's life is exercised in full ecclesial communion.

To our priests and pastoral leaders, I ask that you welcome with generosity any individuals or families who may now seek to return to the ordinary life of the Church. Please see this as an opportunity to accompany people with patience and honesty, and assist them in taking whatever steps may be necessary towards full ecclesial communion, as outlined in the attached provisions.

The Holy See has also provided a clear pathway for priests of the SSPX who desire to be reconciled with the Catholic Church. Any priest who wishes to enter full communion while remaining attached to the *usus antiquior* may now do so through a structured process involving the Profession of Faith, acceptance of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the legitimacy of the liturgical books promulgated following the Council, together with a period of reception under the care of a diocesan bishop or other competent Ordinary before possible incardination.

Likewise, those members of the lay faithful whose circumstances require a formal act of reconciliation will be received with pastoral care in accordance with the norms established by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, and under the guidance of the Archbishop. Those whose participation has simply arisen from spiritual or liturgical preference are encouraged to speak with a Parish Priest if they seek guidance in returning to regular participation in the life of the Church in the Archdiocese.

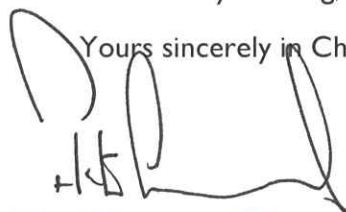
I have asked the Regional Bishops/Episcopal Vicars, the Vicar General and the Chancellor to coordinate appropriate pastoral assistance for anyone seeking guidance or reconciliation. Priests who encounter such situations are encouraged to contact the Chancery so that appropriate pastoral and canonical support can be provided.

Above all, pray for the healing of divisions within the Church. Pray for those associated with the Society of Saint Pius X, for those discerning reconciliation, for our Priests, and for Pope Leo XIV, whom the Lord has entrusted with the ministry of strengthening his brothers and sisters in the faith.

May Mary, Mother of the Church, obtain for us the grace of deeper communion with her Son and with one another, so that together we may bear faithful witness to the Gospel.

With every blessing, I remain.

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter A Comensoli', written over the typed name below.

Most Reverend Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne