

DIOCESE OF
PENSACOLA- TALLAHASSEE



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It has come to my attention that a liturgy in Latin is being offered at the Grimadli Building in Miramar Beach, Florida sponsored by the Society of St. Pius X. The sign in front of the building states "Saint Anthony Mary Claret - Roman Catholic Chapel – Traditional Latin Mass." In light of this, I believe that it would be prudent to update you on the current status of the Society of St. Pius X.

The Society of St. Pius X was founded in 1970 by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. Members of this Society are validly ordained, but have received the sacrament illicitly. Therefore they have been forbidden by the Holy Father from exercising their ministry due to doctrinal differences with the Roman Catholic Church. Because of these doctrinal differences they are not in full communion with the Church.

In a letter from Pope Benedict XVI in March of 2009, the Holy Father said: "Once Again, until the doctrinal questions are clarified, the Society has no canonical status in the Church, and its ministers -- even though they have been freed of the ecclesiastical penalty -- do not legitimately exercise any ministry in the Church." Unfortunately, although many attempts have been made to reconcile the Society with the Church, this reconciliation has yet to be achieved.

According to Canon 844 paragraph 1 of the Code of Canon Law "Catholic ministers administer the sacraments licitly to Catholic members of the Christian faithful alone, who likewise receive them licitly from Catholic ministers alone..." Because the Society of St. Pius X and its members do not enjoy any canonical status or recognition in the Church, then no conscientious Roman Catholic should receive Holy Communion at a Mass celebrated by a member of the Society. Furthermore, attendance at it does not fulfill one's obligation to attend Mass on Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.

At the present time there is a traditional Latin Mass offered every Sunday in Pensacola at 10:30 a.m. at St. Stephen Catholic Church. You will find more information on their web page here: <http://ststephenrcchurch.squarespace.com/>.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Gregory L. Parkes
Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee