

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 24, 2025

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DIOCESE OF AUSTIN SUPPRESSES TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS AT TEXAS A&M IN DIRECT ATTACK ON FAITH, YOUTH, AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

College Station, Texas – In a stunning intervention, the Diocese of Austin has forced the cancellation of a scheduled Traditional Latin Mass at Texas A&M University, silencing one of the most vibrant and growing expressions of Catholic faith among young people in America.

The Mass was to be celebrated by a chaplain traveling from the Diocese of Victoria. On the evening before the liturgy, this priest was told by his Victoria bishop that he had received a directive from the Chancellor of the Diocese of Austin expressly forbidding him from traveling to College Station. This came after the pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Center, Fr. Will Straten, reported the Latin Mass to the Diocese of Austin.

This action contradicts the Catholic Church's 2,000-year liturgical continuity and undermines the principles of *Summorum Pontificum* (2007), where Pope Benedict XVI reaffirmed the Traditional Latin Mass, saying "what earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred...and cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful." Even worse, this action directly contradicts the two written approvals given by the Vatican's President of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* to Juventutem International.

Texas A&M is home to one of the largest Catholic student centers in the United States. St. Mary's Catholic Center should be a place where the richness and diversity of Catholic liturgical life are celebrated. Instead, students are told there is no place for the same Mass which formed countless of their favorite saints, nourished the faith of generations of their ancestors, and remains deeply meaningful to ever more Catholics around the world.

"This is not just about one Mass—it's about the right of all young Catholics worldwide to access the fullness of their own beliefs," said **Nick Cardone, President of Juventutem Texas A&M.** "At a time when so many young people are leaving the Church, and at the same time countless more are being attracted to the TLM, it is tragic that students who long for reverence and continuity with the past are being discriminated against. The Latin Mass is not a rebellion—it is the Mass of our ancestors, a treasure of the universal Church, and is currently the most productive source of

vocations and conversions. To tyrannically restrict our right to it is to close the door on the very future of the Church, and on the impact it has on the world.”

For many of Juventutem members who are converts, the unbroken tradition of the Catholic Church is the very reason they became Catholic. They are drawn by millenia-long apostolic succession, consistent moral teaching, and the continuity of worship that stretches back to Christ and the Apostles. To suppress this tradition is to undermine what makes Catholicism distinct from every other religion and community.

This incident places Texas A&M at the center of a national debate over the future of Catholic worship and of Christian expression in the world. Across the U.S., restrictions on the Traditional Latin Mass are clashing with the reality that it is especially young people who are asking for it. While bishops and Church leaders often speak about “diversity”, “synodality”, “pastoral accompaniment”, and “listening to youth,” these same bishops have oppressed, silenced, and ostracized the voices of the Catholic students they are supposed to serve in College Station.

Juventutem Texas A&M will not be discouraged. The group remains fully committed to working with supportive clergy and students to restore reverent liturgy on campus and to defend the right of young Catholics to access the treasures of their own Church.

We urge Bishop Daniel Garcia to reconsider this unjust decision and to allow the Traditional Latin Mass to flourish at Texas A&M, for the good of souls and the future of the Church.

About Juventutem TAMU:

Juventutem Texas A&M is the local chapter of the international Juventutem movement, a network of young Catholics dedicated to sanctification through traditional liturgy, prayer, and community life. Juventutem International, founded in 2004, is recognized by the Holy See and active in more than 25 countries worldwide.

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