



July 15, 2022

Memorial of St. Bonaventure, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Dear Friends in Christ,

*Glória in excélsis Deo.  
Et in terra pax homínibus bonæ voluntátis.*

*Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.*

LUKE 2:14

As the birth of the Messiah was announced to the shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem, the angels proclaimed these words with great joy. In answer to this heavenly invitation, the shepherds went in haste to the place of Christ's birth and were overcome with emotion as they encountered the living God. Kneeling in reverence and adoration, they were drawn into the mystery of a relationship with this newborn child, and departed from Him with the gift of hope. Witnessing their response to her son as she shared Him with the world for the first time, *Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart* (Luke 2:19).

At every Mass, we encounter the living God in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. At every Mass, we are invited into an intimate relationship with Christ through the proclamation of the Word of God and the beauty of the mystery of transubstantiation. At every Mass, we are given the opportunity to be drawn into the incredible mystery of our Catholic faith, to adore the Lord with reverence, and to be filled with hope...to celebrate that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). Every encounter with Him is an opportunity to respond like the shepherds: to be transformed by His love and sacrifice, and to celebrate our oneness with the universal Church.

One year ago, Pope Francis issued a motu proprio entitled *Traditionis custodes*, which offered guidelines for the celebration of the Eucharist according to the *Missale Romanum of 1962*. My initial response to these guidelines was shared in a letter to the faithful on November 4, 2021. The following month, the Vatican asked that Bishops wishing to continue the celebration of the Mass according to the *Missale Romanum of 1962* in their diocese request permission to do so.

After prayer and discernment, I wrote to the Congregation for Divine Worship (now the Dicastery for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments) in mid-April to request permissions for specific parish churches in our diocese. In late May, I received a response from Rome containing the following:

**DIOCESE OF SAVANNAH † OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

2170 E. VICTORY DRIVE, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31404 (912) 201-4080 DIOSAV.ORG

- The Mass according to the *Missale Romanum of 1962* may be celebrated at the parish of Sacred Heart (\*) in Savannah on a weekly basis until May 20, 2023.
- The Mass according to the *Missale Romanum of 1962* may be celebrated at the parishes of Most Holy Trinity in Augusta, St. Joseph in Macon and St. Anthony of Padua in Ray City on a monthly basis until May 20, 2023.

*\* In implementing the permissions granted by the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, please note that the Mass according to the Missale Romanum of 1962 will no longer be celebrated at the Cathedral Basilica of St. John the Baptist as of Sunday, August 7, 2022. As of that date, the Mass will be celebrated at Sacred Heart parish (1707 Bull Street, Savannah) at 1pm on Sundays. I am confident that Sacred Heart parish provides an appropriate and intimate place for worship and the parish leadership will be attentive to the pastoral needs of those who attend the 1pm Mass there.*

I am grateful to the Dicastery for granting the above permissions so that Masses according to the *Missale Romanum of 1962* may continue to be celebrated for another year. Since my appointment as your Bishop, I have been present at Masses celebrated with this Missal, and I recognize the reverence and beauty of these liturgies. I am also aware that the eventual cessation of these Masses will be difficult for many of the faithful in our Diocese. Please know of my pastoral concern for you. Along with Fr. Allan McDonald (Bishop's Delegate for Mass in the Extraordinary Form), the Priests who celebrate these Masses will accompany the attendees in the coming months as the transition is made to Mass in conformity with the decrees of the Second Vatican Council.

The shepherds were led in awe and wonder to the manger. With the same reverent spirit, we are invited to an intimate encounter with Christ at every Eucharistic celebration, when we become "one body and one spirit" with Him. Our unified worship as the Body of Christ gives glory to God, strengthens our faith, and ultimately prepares us for the life to come. Let us pray for the maternal help of the Blessed Mother as our Diocesan family walks as one to implement the directives of the Holy See. As we, like her, reflect in our hearts, may we be filled with the gifts of peace and hope for the future, open to union with God and fellowship with one another.

Be assured of my prayers for you, your loved ones and your intentions. Thank you for whispering my name to God as well. May we meet in our prayers and *Rejoice in the Lord always*.

In Christ,



Most Reverend Stephen D. Parkes  
Bishop of Savannah

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