



**Statement on the  
Latin Mass being offered in Sussex County  
and its affiliation with the Catholic Church**

In the past months, a group has begun meeting at the Hampton Inn of Rehoboth Beach and, more recently, in the hall of Saint Mark's Episcopal, Millsboro, for the celebration of Traditional Latin Mass. The priests who have been brought into the diocese to offer these Masses are a splinter group from the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), which itself is not in full communion with the Catholic Church.

What Pope Benedict XVI said of the SSPX is all the more applicable of the priests who have come into the diocese: "the Society has no canonical status in the Church, and its ministers do not legitimately exercise any ministry in the Church."

As such, it is morally illicit, or unlawful, for Catholics to participate in a Mass celebrated by these priests. Other sacraments, such as Penance and Matrimony, celebrated or witnessed by these priests are invalid.

While it is true that participation in these Masses does not of itself constitute formal adherence to schism, such adherence can come about over a period of time as one slowly imbibes a schismatic mentality which separates itself from the teaching of the Supreme Pontiff and the entire Catholic Church. Let us hope and pray that a reconciliation of all to the Catholic Church may come about, but until such time the explanations above remain in force.

Saint Patrick Church in Wilmington is the home of the only Latin Mass in the Diocese of Wilmington celebrated by priests in communion with the Catholic Church and authorized by the diocesan Bishop.

Anyone needing clarification on the status of any Mass or priest should contact the diocesan Chancery Office at 302-573-3100 or at [chancery@cdow.org](mailto:chancery@cdow.org) to verify its affiliation with the Catholic Church.

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