

Covington Bishop Strips Two Traditional Priests of Faculties for Opposing the New Mass

Bishop John Iffert of the Diocese of Covington in Kentucky requested the resignation of Fr. Shannon Collins as Pastor of [Our Lady of Lourdes Parish](#) on January 16. Fr. Sean Kopczynski has also been removed as Parochial Vicar. Both priests are members of the [Missionaries of St. John the Baptist](#), established as a public association of the faithful, founded in 2016, and whose board of directors own the building and property of Our Lady of Lourdes, in Park Hills, Kentucky. The personal parish was established and approved by the previous bishop of the diocese and has been growing and thriving using the pre-1970 liturgical books and devotions.

The assets of the entity show as \$516,571 with gross receipts of just over \$300,000. Fr. Collins is listed as the principal on the tax returns. No other directors of the board were able to be discovered by publication deadline.

The suspension of faculties means that the aforementioned priests are not authorized to publicly exercise their priestly ministry, meaning they are not allowed to offer public Masses, hear confessions, or publicly preach or teach.

Fr. Collins issued a communication to his parishioners earlier in the week informing them of the bishop's decision. Bishop Iffert provided a [public statement](#) late in the day on January 17.

"It is with a heavy heart that I must inform you that my priestly faculties have been removed due to wounds that I have supposedly caused to the unity of the Church through a divisive sermon delivered a few months ago," Fr. Collins said. "My unwillingness to concelebrate the *Novus Ordo Missae* with the local Ordinary during Holy Week also upset the Bishop."

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The banner features a dark red background with gold and white text and graphics. On the left is a large QR code. In the center, the text 'SOPHIA INSTITUTE PRESS' is written in gold, with 'SOPHIA' in a larger, blue font. Below the text is an oval illustration of the Virgin Mary seated and holding the Christ Child. To the right is an image of an open book. Below these elements, the text 'Support CFN by using our referral link!' is written in a dark red font, followed by '15% Off!' in a large, white font with a red outline. At the bottom, a URL is provided: <https://sophiainstitute.com/product-category/books/ref/63/>. On the left side of the banner, there is a white silhouette of two figures kneeling in prayer before a large cross. At the bottom, a small line of text states: 'CFN receives a portion of sales made through the above link.'

In response to an interview request, the Covington diocesan spokesperson provided the following: “Bishop Iffert was made aware that Fr. Collins had preached in the parish that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, as celebrated in the current Roman Catholic liturgy, is ‘irrelevant,’ preserves ‘literally nothing of the old,’ and that the reform of the liturgy was motivated by hatred towards traditional Catholics and the ancient liturgies of Rome; and after, both Father Collins and Father Kopczynski refused the opportunity to renounce these errors. This disqualifies these priests from being granted permission to publicly celebrate the Sacraments using the 1962 *Missale Romanum* and from leading a personal parish like Our Lady of Lourdes.”

The sermon was available for viewing online until sometime the morning of Thursday, January 18, but it is now no longer available.

Bishop Iffert intends to provide for the pastoral and liturgical care of the Catholics of Our Lady of Lourdes parish. However, a very interesting caveat mentioned by Bishop Iffert in his

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letter is that the diocese does not own the property nor the church of Our Lady of Lourdes.

“The Board of the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist own the church building. The Missionaries of St. John the Baptist consider it the chapel of their public association. They are no longer willing to permit the Diocese or Our Lady of Lourdes Parish to use the building,” said Bishop Iffert in his [public statement](#). An inquiry to the diocese for further clarification was met with a reference back to the original statement provided.

Fr. Collins has stated that both he and Fr. Kopczynski are consulting a canon lawyer and that Fr. Collins will be holding a meeting soon for his parishioners.

“I am praying for you constantly,” Bishop Iffert said. “I recognize and thank you for the sincerity of your faith and the strength of your love for Christ and His Church. That love should always lead us to walk together with the Lord in a spirit of communion, humility and respect for one another. Let us pray for one another and for the unity of the Church.”

Fr. Collins requested prayers from his former parishioners and assured them of his prayers. “You are the best parishioners that any priest could have,” he said. “The Lord must love us because He has presented us with the gift of a cross.”