



On that notable leap day of 2024, Pope Francis received in audience Fr. Andrzej Komorowski, Superior General of the FSSP, along with the Superior of the District of France, Fr. Benoît Paul-Joseph, and Fr. Vincent Ribeton, Rector of St. Peter's Seminary in Wigratzbad. This meeting, shrouded in expectation, immediately prompted the traditionalist world to worry over potential authoritarian actions from the Vatican. Would the Fraternity see a canonical visitation? Would *Traditionis Custodes* suddenly apply to them more fully? Yet the aftermath was a [communiqué](#), notably insubstantial, with platitudes of “deep gratitude” for a [2022 decree](#) that shielded them from the Motu Proprio's full fury — a document that left numerous communities in desolation. But on a closer examination, we can find that there is more tension than is initially apparent.

The [press release](#) states that the Fraternity wanted “to share with [the Pope] the difficulties” encountered in adhering to *Traditionis Custodes*. After all, things haven't been a journey of roses for the FSSP, having been kicked out of multiple dioceses since the Motu Proprio's release.^[1] In response the Fraternity tells us, “The Pope was very understanding and invited the Fraternity of St. Peter to continue to build up ecclesial communion ever more fully through its own proper charism.” In seeking assistance for implementing a decree fundamentally at odds with their essence, the response was a veiled directive: the issue was not with bishops enforcing the Motu Proprio but within the Fraternity itself. The language used subtly hints at a supposed deficiency in “ecclesial communion,” aligning with Pope Francis's perception of the Traditional Mass as a symbol of rigidity, an emblem of a bygone era, and a banner for resistance to his pontificate. He is not entirely wrong to think this, as we must ask how there can exist a firm, exclusive attachment to the Traditional Mass without an implicit understanding that it is better than the New Rite.



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Some traditionalists will be quick to say that this is simply making something out of nothing and accuse their brethren of sowing discord where there is none. For this to have merit, one would have to ignore the fact that this meeting, prompted by the Fraternity (obviously in hopes of leniency, support, and the allowance for its expansion) culminated in nothing but a nebulous threat that they must “grow in communion.” Stepping past initial criticisms, we can see what this means in substance in a previously hidden communiqué meant for Fraternity members’ eyes only.

In the [original unpublicized communiqué](#), it is clear that the Pope, “while respecting the freedom of each individual priest,” wishes “for the concelebration of the Chrism Mass, or at least the presence and Eucharistic Communion of priests at this ceremony.” It is quite odd that the only revelation of any substance from this meeting was omitted from the official press release. This scenario isn’t new to those familiar with the FSSP, where the decision to concelebrate or attend the Chrism Mass often becomes a point of tension for priests within the Fraternity. It should be well noted that this Chrism Mass is rarely if ever a Traditional

Latin Mass, and it is questionable whether or not the Chrism Mass is even permitted to be celebrated using the older liturgy under *Traditionis Custodes*, even with the [2022 decree](#) allowing Fraternity priests to use the older rite. The imperative to the Fraternity is clear to those with any intuition: They must demonstrate that they have no objection on principle to celebrating the *Novus Ordo Missae* if they wish to gain more leniency and bring an end to their difficulties.

2 of 3



FSSP

FRATERNITAS SACERDOTALIS SANCTI PETRI	Litteræ electronicæ
2024-02-29	Ad usum Cleri FSSP
English	

To the members of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter
(not for distribution outside the FSSP)

Fribourg, February 29, 2024

Audience with Pope Francis

Following a request from the Fraternity of St. Peter to the Pope, expressed in a letter dated December 8, 2023 from Frs. Benoît Paul-Joseph and Vincent Ribeton, with the approval of Fr. Andrzej Komorowski, the Holy Father replied on December 12, 2023, inviting our confrères to come and meet with him. He received them in private audience at the Vatican on Thursday, February 29, 2024.

The meeting, in which the Pope showed a fatherly care throughout, was an opportunity for them to express to the Holy Father their deep gratitude for the decree of February 11, 2022, by which the Pope confirmed the liturgical specificity of the Fraternity of St. Peter, but also to inform him of the difficulties encountered in its application. Fr. Komorowski informed the Holy Father that the decree had been signed by the Pope on the very day of the FSSP's consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, at the end of a common novena of prayer. The Pope commented, raising his eyes and pointing his index finger to Heaven: "It is from God!".

The Pope was very understanding regarding the difficulties encountered in various dioceses, particularly in France. He rejoiced at the fruitfulness of the Fraternity of St. Peter in terms of vocations and was deeply impressed by the vitality of our Houses of Formation. He invited the Fraternity of St. Peter to continue to build up ecclesial communion ever more through its own proper charism and the efforts of each of its members, expressing his wish - while respecting the freedom of each individual priest - for the concelebration of the Chrism Mass, or at least for the presence and Eucharistic Communion of priests at this ceremony. He encouraged continued communication with the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The audience lasted around 25 minutes.

An official public press release with photos will be posted on our websites shortly.

The original in-house communication

In today's discourse, it is common to see this type of move as mere political maneuvering: maintaining a façade of good relations with the Pope while quietly refusing to have anything to do with the *Novus Ordo*, and building up large traditionalist communities in the shadows. But the era of such stratagems is over. What was once a prudential and cautious strategy to slowly make Tradition grow is now nothing more than avoidance and strategic ineptitude. *Summorum Pontificum* is buried in the annals of history, and we live in an age where the diocesan traditional Holy Week in London is now just a memory,^[2] the expansion of the Traditional Latin Mass and establishment of new parishes under the diocesan structure is at a standstill, and even the supposedly exempt Fraternity is given the boot by many bishops. These current supposedly prudential maneuvers, far from sparking a revival, seem to be an orchestration of its slow demise.



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Fraternity priests are now confronted with a dilemma: Will they emerge as valiant defenders of the faithful, whose spiritual centers are being torn asunder, or shall they continue making

statements thanking the Holy Father for not beating them *too* harshly? If the Fraternity truly professes a mission where the Traditional Mass saves souls, which holds the post-conciliar liturgy to be barren, and if they truly abhor Liberalism — the demonic doctrine of our times — then it would behoove them to start showing some fortitude and champion their convictions. The faithful of the Latin Church are entitled[3] to the means of our salvation, which necessitates having access to the Traditional Mass and our communities which foster our spiritual lives. As if inspired by Hamlet, the FSSP's latest communiqué betrays an indecision so paralyzing, it would seem the ghost of liturgical tradition haunts them, urging action that they cannot muster.

[1] [About the eviction of the diocese of Quimper and Léon - FSSP - District de France](#)

[Why is a French Catholic archdiocese expelling the FSSP? | Catholic News Agency](#)

[2] [Westminster Diocese Triduum cancelled | Latin Mass Society \(lms.org.uk\)](#)

[3] This is meant in the true sense of right, as corresponding to the duty to save our souls.