



Sunday, 13 October 2024

**Statement regarding Rev. Fr Michael Rowe and
the cessation of the celebration of Mass at the Latvian Centre, Belmont, WA**

On 20 September 2024 I issued a statement providing *Clarification regarding matters concerning the public celebration of the liturgy in the Archdiocese of Perth*. This statement is publicly available on the website of the Archdiocese of Perth: www.perthcatholic.org.au

In response, Fr Rowe published a public statement in which he wrote: “I have always maintained and emphasised often that the Masses I offer at the Latvian Centre are private Masses, not public Masses”; and “I have at no stage advertised these Masses broadly, they are private Masses on private property (not in a public Church, chapel or oratory) that I have never advertised to the public. They are by specific invitation only”.

It is the teaching of the Church that the Sacred Liturgy, that is, the celebration of the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments, is the public worship of the Church. These liturgical celebrations are not private actions but celebrations of the Church itself as the ‘*sacrament of unity*’ that is the holy people united and organized under the bishops. The celebration of the Mass is an action of Christ himself and of the Church. The statement of Fr Rowe that the Masses he celebrates at the Latvian Centre are “private masses” misrepresents the Church’s teaching.

Notwithstanding Fr Rowe’s statement that these Masses are not in a church, chapel or oratory, in both the September and October 2024 Notices distributed to the community which gathers at the Latvian Centre, the area where Mass is celebrated is referred to as “St George Oratory”. Referring to that area as an oratory is not a true statement because Fr Rowe has not sought or obtained from me the permission required by the law of the Church for that location to be used exclusively for divine worship by the community that he gathers there for the celebration of Mass.

My statement of 20 September 2024 was occasioned by the fact that Bishop Ballini celebrated Mass on 15 September 2024 and subsequently administered the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Latvian Centre. Bishop Ballini belongs to the organisation known as the SSPX Resistance which does not possess any legal status in the Church and therefore Bishop Ballini does not legitimately exercise any ministry in the Church.

Moreover, Bishop Ballini incurred automatically the ecclesiastical penalty of excommunication when he was consecrated by Bishop Williamson, the founder of SSPX Resistance, without the authorisation of the Pope. As a person who has incurred the penalty of excommunication, Bishop Ballini is prohibited from “*celebrating the Sacrifice of the Eucharist and the other sacraments*” and “*from receiving the sacraments*”, as stated in the law of the Church [Code of Canon Law, canon 1331 §1 1° - 2°].

Two other priests have come to the Archdiocese of Perth for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. One is Fr Nicholas Rynne, a priest incardinated in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The other is Fr Luke Makaritis, a priest illegitimately ordained by Bishop Williamson of the SSPX Resistance, who does not belong to any diocese in Australia and does not exercise legitimately any ministry in the Church. Neither priest has been authorised by me to celebrate the Mass according to any missal antecedent to the reform of the Sacred Liturgy of 1970.



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Fr Rowe was made fully aware that Pope Francis established on 16 July 2021 that any priest, who wished to continue celebrating the Mass using the Roman Missal promulgated by John XXIII in 1962 had to obtain from his diocesan bishop the authorisation to do so. On 16 September 2022 Fr Rowe was provided with the procedure established by the Archbishop of Perth to be observed if he wanted to receive the authorisation to continue celebrating that Mass in the Archdiocese of Perth.

As of 11 December 2023 Fr Rowe had neither sought nor obtained the required permission, and as a consequence, I informed him that he was not authorised to celebrate Mass using the Roman Missal promulgated by John XXIII in 1962 at the Church of St Anne or anywhere else in the Archdiocese of Perth.

Fr Rowe subsequently made the decision to establish another community taking with him some members of the St Anne's community and arranging for this new group to worship at the Latvian Centre. On 5 April 2024 I again instructed Fr Rowe to cease celebrating the Mass, but he has continued to do so.

Priests are required to have the faculties of the Archdiocese of Perth whereby they are authorised to exercise the priestly ministry in the name of the Church for the benefit of Christ's faithful and the good of the community.

Fr Rowe's insistence in refusing to comply with my lawful instruction to cease celebrating the Mass using the Roman Missal promulgated by John XXIII in 1962 within the Archdiocese of Perth has occasioned the revocation of Fr Rowe's Archdiocesan faculties.

Therefore, as at 12.00am on the fourteenth day of October 2024, all the faculties granted to Fr Rowe will be revoked. Accordingly, Mass is no longer to be celebrated at the Latvian Centre.

For Christ's faithful of the Archdiocese of Perth who wish to attend Mass celebrated using the Roman Missal approved by John XXIII in 1962, the Masses authorised to be celebrated at the Church of St Anne, Belmont, and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Kelmscott, will continue to be celebrated for you.

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