

'Not a True Pope': Texas Priest Excommunicated After Rejecting Pope Leo

A dramatic clash over the legitimacy of Pope Leo XIV has resulted in the excommunication of a Texas priest who allegedly declared the pontiff a "usurper" and promoted purported supernatural messages claiming he is "not a true pope."

John Mary Foster, the founder and de facto leader of the Mission of Divine Mercy near Canyon Lake, Texas, has been expelled from the clerical state after a Catholic tribunal found him guilty of schism, News 4 San Antonio reported.

The dispute centers on one of the most foundational questions in Roman Catholicism: Who has legitimate authority to lead the Church?



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According to the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Foster rejected the authority of both the late Pope Francis and his successor, Pope Leo XIV. Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller said Foster called the two pontiffs "usurpers" and refused to recognize them as legitimate successors of St. Peter. In a statement, García-Siller said:

It is with a heavy heart that I inform you that John Mary Foster, a priest incardinated into the Archdiocese of San Antonio on November 22, 2009, has been found guilty of schism, a crime against the faith for his refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff.

But Foster's rejection of Leo reportedly went beyond his own public declarations.

According to News 4, the Mission of Divine Mercy published what it believed were supernatural messages said to have been received by one of its members, which allegedly declared Leo a "usurper and not a true pope."

The canonical case began in April 2025 and continued for more than a year. News 4 reported that a three-priest tribunal examined Foster's teachings, homilies, public statements and actions, along with witness testimony.

García-Siller said Foster intentionally left the names of both Francis and Leo out of the Eucharistic Prayer during Mass, an act the archbishop viewed as publicly demonstrating Foster's rejection of communion with the pope and the Catholic Church.

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