

Vatican Excommunicates Traditionalist Catholic Leaders, Declares SSPX in Schism

The Vatican has formally declared the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX), a traditionalist Catholic organization, to be in schism after it consecrated four bishops without the approval of Pope Leo XIV.

According to the Associated Press, the Vatican's doctrine office issued a decree Thursday declaring the society in schism and announcing the excommunication of its bishops and priests after the consecrations took place during a Mass in Switzerland despite the pope's request that they be postponed in the interest of church unity.

The SSPX is known for celebrating the traditional Latin Mass and rejecting many of the reforms adopted by the Roman Catholic Church following the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.



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The Vatican said Catholics who "formally adhere" to the group could also face the church's most severe canonical penalties.

The dispute traces back decades. The society was founded by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in opposition to Vatican II reforms and was previously at the center of a similar conflict in 1988 when bishops were consecrated without papal approval. Although previous popes sought reconciliation through various concessions, the latest consecrations prompted the Vatican to declare a formal schism.

According to Catholic canon law, consecrating bishops without papal approval carries automatic excommunication. The Vatican's latest decree also reverses concessions made under Pope Francis that had recognized certain ministries performed by SSPX priests.

The development marks one of the most significant internal divisions within the Roman Catholic Church in recent years and underscores continuing tensions between the Vatican and some traditionalist Catholic groups over church authority and doctrine.

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