News 21 November 2026 | English article

Pope Leo XIV Will Not Ease Latin Mass Rules or Married Priests, Citing Church Unity

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Traditionis Custodes is the decision of Pope Francis, and we will continue to follow that."

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Pope Leo XIV said on 16 November 2026 that he will not ease restrictions on the Traditional Latin Mass or expand permission to ordain married men as priests. The Pope spoke during a 45-minute news conference aboard his flight from Lima to Rome, at the end of a 12-day journey through Uruguay, Argentina and Peru. In both cases, he said, the reason was the same: the unity of the Church.

A journalist from the French newspaper Le Figaro asked weather he would make Traditionis Custodes, Pope Francis's 2021 law limiting the old Mass, more flexible. The Pope's answer was short.

"Not right now," he said. "Traditionis Custodes is the decision of Pope Francis, and we will continue to follow that."

The law, he said, "includes possibilities of dispensation, or of allowing the Tridentine Mass," and "there is an avenue available for those who wish to apply for the dispensation."

He gave a similar answer on the question of ordaining mature married men to address priest shortages. The Holy Spirit may continue to suggest changes, he said, but such decisions require discernment by the wider Church.

"The pope doesn't change Church doctrine. We all have to listen. The bishops have to listen."

He said he did not see a need to change the current restrictions on the old Mass, noting that the vast majority of Catholics celebrate Mass according to the rite promulgated after the Second Vatican Council.

"Again, for the unity of the Church, the vast majority of Catholics around the world, we celebrate the rite of Vatican II, Paul VI, and we will continue to do that," Leo said. It was the clearest statement yet of the principle guiding his young papacy: unity comes first, and disputed questions will not be settled by sudden moves from the top.

"It may be in the future that some things will change," the Pope added. "However, for right now what I believe is an important part of my ministry to the Church is to heal, bring people together." He said he had made it clear from the start that one of his priorities as pope was "to promote unity and communion among us as members of the Church."

The restrictions he declined to lift date to 16 July 2021, when Pope Francis issued Traditionis Custodes. The law says the Mass books issued after the Second Vatican Council are the unique expression of the Roman Rite, and a priest needs his bishop's permission to celebrate the 1962 missal.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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