Vatican
Vatican News
A priest with his back to the pews full of people, where some women wear lace veils, lifts a Co

A priest elevates the Eucharist during a traditional Tridentine-rite Mass in July 2021 at St. Josaphat Church in the Queens borough of New York City. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

by The Associated Press

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Rome — March 28, 2023
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Posters calling on Pope Francis to stop his crackdown on the old Latin Mass were plastered around the Vatican on March 28, in the latest display of conservative opposition to the pontiff.

The posters featured images of Pope Benedict XVI and St. John Paul II and quoted from their texts speaking positively about the old rite, which Francis has sought to restrict.

"For the love of the pope. For peace and unity of the church. For the free practice of the traditional Latin Mass," the posters read.

They were referring to Francis' decision in 2021 to overturn one of Benedict's signature liturgical decisions and reimpose restrictions on celebrating the old Mass. Francis said he had to act because the spread of the old rite was dividing parishes. He said Benedict's decision to liberalize its use in 2007 had been exploited by people opposed to the modernizing reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the 1960s meetings that allowed for Mass in the vernacular, not just Latin.

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The poster initiative, which is due to last 15 days, was taken by a group of pro-Latin Mass activists and bloggers who said they feared Francis’ ultimate aim was to forbid the ancient rite entirely.

In a statement, the groups said they were being unjustly marginalized and rejected by the Catholic hierarchy for merely expressing their steadfast faith. They said they were taking action "out of love for the pope, so that he might be paternally opened to understanding those liturgical peripheries that no longer feel welcome in the church.

The initiative was a reflection of the growing opposition to Francis from some traditionalist quarters in the Catholic Church who remain nostalgic for the doctrinaire papacy of Benedict.