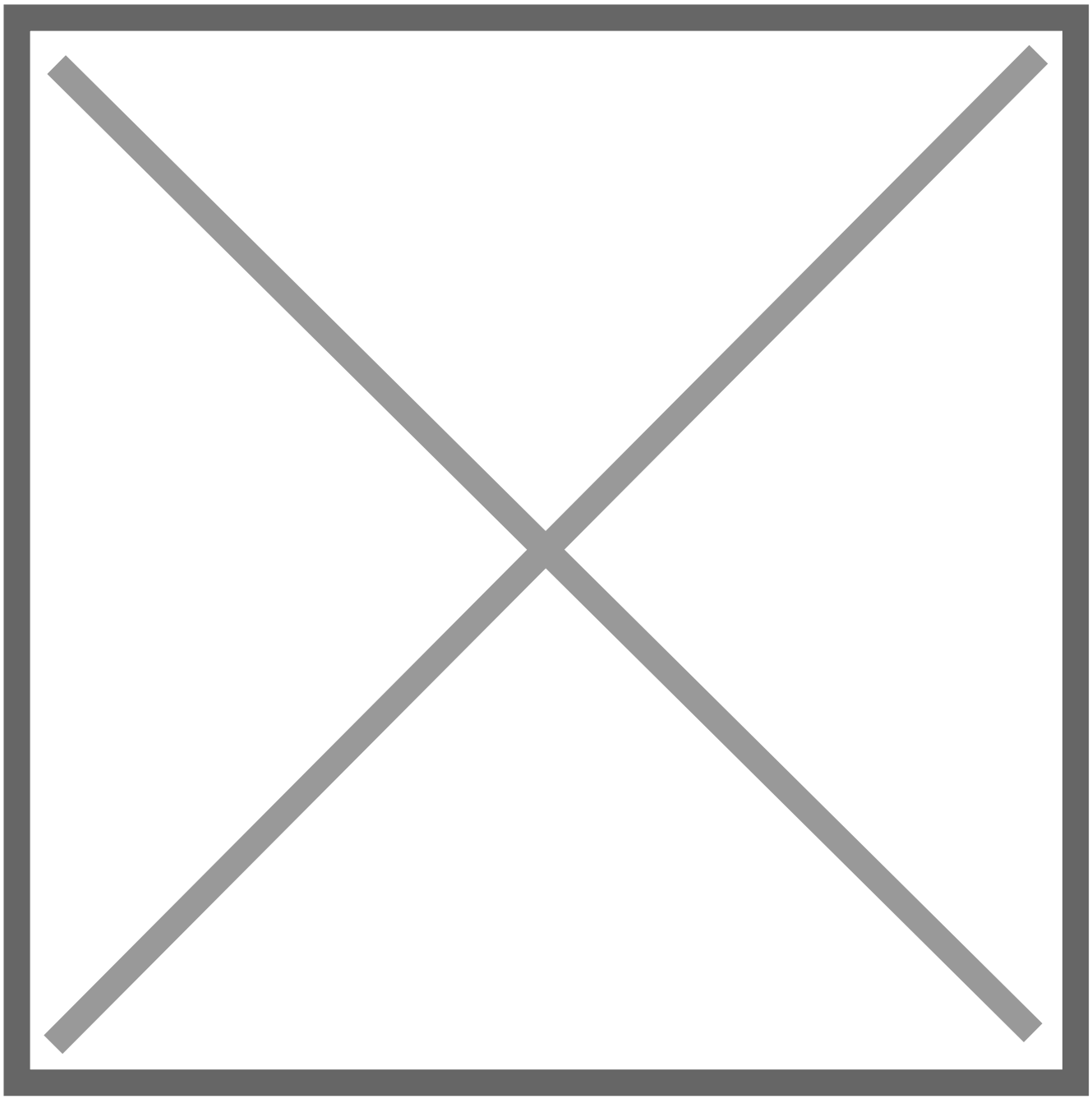
News



Newly consecrated Society of St. Pius X Bishop Michael Goldade, an American, is seen kissing the ring of Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta during an SSPX liturgical celebration July 1, 2026, in Écône, Switzerland. The two bishops, along with with Bishop Bernard Fellay of SSPX and three other newly consecrated bishops were excommunicated by the Vatican July 2, as the consecration lacked the mandate of the pope and was decreed to be schismatic. (OSV News/CPP)

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French Catholics attached to the traditional Latin Mass but loyal to Rome are expressing deep sadness after the Society of St. Pius X consecrated four bishops without papal approval, prompting the Vatican to declare the group in schism and excommunicate six SSPX bishops.

The events occurred just as French traditionalist Catholics were actively mobilizing to welcome Pope Leo XIV to France Sept. 25 to 28.

Philippe Darantière has served since 2025 as president of the association Notre-Dame de Chrétienté, which organizes the annual Pentecost Pilgrimage to Chartres for pilgrims attached to the traditional liturgy.

Darantière highlighted the unprecedented mobilization of the association in helping to organize the pope's upcoming visit to France.

"We were asked to contribute to the preparations for his visit to Paris specifically, on September 25 and 26," he told OSV News. "The Archdiocese of Paris estimates that it needs 10,000 volunteers."

"They turned to us because Notre-Dame de Chrétienté is known for its ability to organize large-scale gatherings that require significant logistical support," he said

about his organization, which every year draws close to 20,000 people to walk from Paris to Chartres with traditional Latin Masses concelebrated en route.

The first major papal event in France is to be a meeting and prayer vigil with Leo and young people, scheduled to take place on the evening of Friday, Sept. 25, at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis in the northern suburbs of Paris.

The second event is the main Mass that is to be celebrated the afternoon of Saturday, Sept. 26, at the Place de la Concorde — the largest square in Paris — with Massgoers expected all along the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, which leads to the Arc de Triomphe. Leo will celebrate Mass in the presence of all the bishops of France and a crowd that could number nearly 500,000 people.

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To manage these two events, the Archdiocese of Paris is mobilizing organizations such as the Scouts, which are able to provide a large number of volunteers to meet this demand.

"As for us, we have a large network of volunteers accustomed to getting involved, and young people ready to serve. We will therefore strive to live up to the trust placed in us!" Darantière said.

In practical terms, he said, "the logistics coordinator for the Chrétienté pilgrimage has become the deputy logistics coordinator for the youth vigil with the pope, and for the network of its volunteers."

For Darantière, this collaboration is a result of the 2026 Pentecost pilgrimage. The same weekend as the Chartres pilgrimage, Paris also witnessed a large gathering of students ages 13 to 15 from the eight dioceses of Paris and its suburbs, known as "Frat."

"The organizers of both events knew each other and had planned that on the evening of Pentecost, before the Blessed Sacrament, the pilgrims on their way to Chartres and the young people from the 'Frat,' each on their own, would pray for one another during a vigil of adoration. It was a beautiful moment of communion."

Since then, the chaplain of Notre-Dame de Chrétienté, Fr. Jean de Massia of the Fraternity of St. Peter, or FFSP, has been included in the team responsible for the spiritual preparation of the youth prayer vigil with the pope. FSSP was founded to welcome priests and seminarians attached to the "Vetus Ordo," or Tridentine rite, but who wished to remain in communion with the pope.

"Relationships are often very good among laypeople who know one another," said Darantière. "There is truly a desire to pray and work together, even if we attend Mass according to different rites."

Today, Darantière bears witness to the enthusiasm of the faithful attached to the traditional rite at the prospect of welcoming Leo to France.

"Many of them, spread throughout France, are asking their priests if they are going to arrange for buses to come to Paris to meet the pope," he explained. "So I reached out to all the superiors of the institutes concerned to tell them that we will provide them with very concrete assistance."

In the meantime, the SSPX consecrations in Écône, Switzerland, and the excommunications that followed have caused distress to those striving to maintain a delicate balance between tradition and respect for the hierarchy. "This line is sometimes difficult to follow," Darantière confided. "We therefore hope for great goodwill toward us on the part of the bishops."

For Darantière, contact between the faithful of the traditional rite and the bishops of France is "still tentative" and varies depending on the diocese and the specific circumstances there.

"We do not communicate much with the bishops," he lamented. He also expressed his hope for "improvements in relations with the bishops, particularly in the summer, when there are many requests for weddings and baptisms in the traditional rite from the faithful who are attached to the traditional rite but who are far from their usual parish."