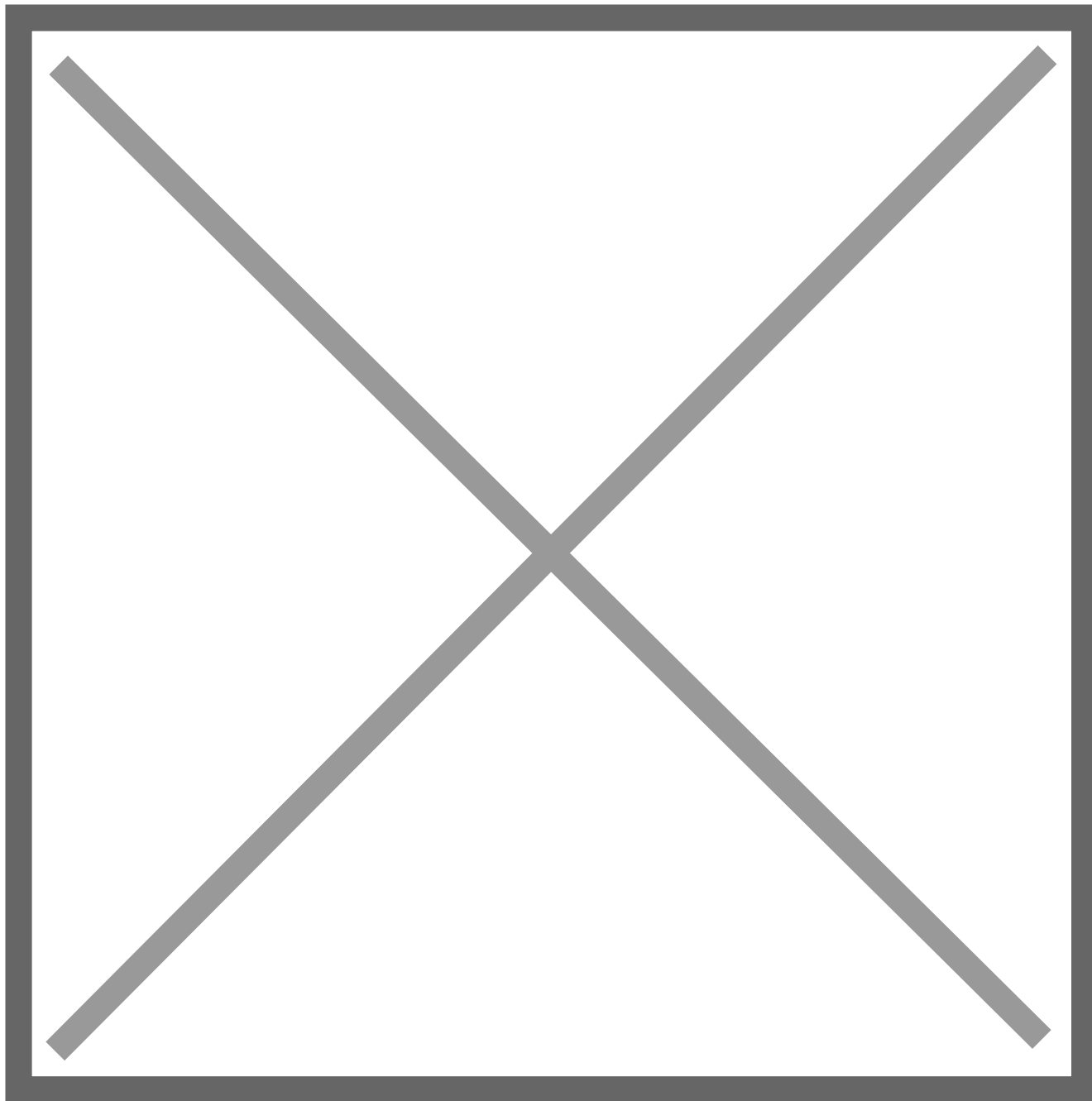


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In this file photo, Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of San Antonio speaks at a Feb. 27, 2026, news conference. In a letter dated Aug. 14, 2026, Archbishop García-Siller publicized the laicization of John Mary Foster, a former priest that has been found guilty of schism for refusing submission to the pope. The archbishop also warned Catholics not to follow Foster or support the Mission of Divine Mercy, a group Foster founded that involves sharing alleged prophetic messages. (OSV News/Courtesy of the Diocese of El Paso/Fernie Cenicerros)



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San Antonio — August 18, 2026

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A priest of the Archdiocese of San Antonio who was "found guilty of schism" has been removed from the clerical state and excommunicated, according to the archbishop of the archdiocese.

Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller announced Aug. 14 that a tribunal of canon lawyers authorized by the Vatican Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith found John Mary Foster guilty of "a crime against the faith for his refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff."

In the letter announcing the April 20 sentence, the archbishop said, "Mr. Foster has chosen to reject the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church by his words and actions. He has publicly referred to Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV as 'usurpers.'"

Foster was ordained a priest in 1987 for the Congregation of St. John, an international religious community based in France. In 2001, he founded an organization called Mission of Divine Mercy. Based in Canyon Lake, Texas, the group has offered retreats and sacramental ministry, with a lay branch called Amici Christi. In 2009, Foster was incardinated in the San Antonio diocese after ministering in

Laredo, Texas.

In 2010, García-Siller's predecessor, Archbishop José Gómez, who oversaw the San Antonio Archdiocese from 2005-2010 before taking leadership of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, granted the Mission of Divine Mercy the status of an approved Catholic apostolate. Foster was granted a special assignment to serve as its director. The apostolate, which claims six current members, was not a canonically erected religious community.

The Mission of Divine Mercy's members include Sr. Maria Amapola de Jesús, who claimed to receive messages from God and Mary beginning in 2016. Prior to the message's first publication in 2024, García-Siller said he had been supportive of the group's efforts and had "enjoyed a positive relationship" with Foster and the Mission of Divine Mercy members.

In a March 2024 letter to the faithful, García-Siller explained he had asked the group "to refrain from publishing any alleged prophetic message until they were reviewed to ensure they were not harmful to the people of God" because they "include many scandalous claims and false teachings."

In February 2024, the group began publishing messages online without the archbishop's approval. García-Siller met with Foster after the first published message and requested that the group remove it from its website, but the group did not comply and proceeded to publish others. The archbishop's March 2024 letter notified the archdiocese that he had removed Foster's faculties for public ministry. He also suppressed the Mission of Divine Mercy's apostolate status.

The group continued to post alleged messages through at least July 2026. Foster said to García-Siller in an email sent before a March 6, 2024 posting, "After prayerful discernment with our little community, we believe we are called to continue publishing the messages we believe God is giving us for the good of His Children. We deeply regret the pain that this will cause you, and how it will be perceived. We are doing it out of a desire to obey God and serve His Church."

The message posted March 6, 2024, was addressed to Catholic bishops and said, "You have not only let the smoke of Satan infiltrate into My Sanctuary; but you have allowed a whole army of demons to take your places. And you have allowed the usurper to sit on the chair of My Peter."

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In the Aug. 14, 2026, letter, García-Siller noted that Foster's excommunication was *latae sententiae*, meaning he automatically incurred it through his own schismatic acts.

"Despite being offered countless opportunities to repent and to cease his schismatic actions and teachings, Mr. Foster has chosen the path of disobedience. I have prohibited him from publicly celebrating Mass, yet he continues to do so," the archbishop said.

When celebrating Mass, Foster "intentionally omits the name of Pope Leo XIV, as he did with Pope Francis, from the Eucharistic Prayer. In doing so, he publicly manifests his separation with the Church and the successor of Saint Peter," the archbishop explained.

García-Siller addressed the faithful directly, saying, "In my fraternal care for you as your shepherd, I encourage you to guard your heart and mind against those who seek to separate you from the Catholic Church."

He said he is prohibiting "all Catholics from attending any Mass or any liturgical activity or event" held by Foster or at the suppressed group's location, and warned the faithful that participating in such "is a formal act of disobedience."

The archbishop also urged the faithful not to financially support Foster or the Mission of Divine Mercy. He implored them to join him in praying for Foster, "that he will repent and seek reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church and be able to once again receive the sacraments of the Church."