

# [***Pope Francis Ousts Conservative Texas Bishop After Frequent Attacks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M6-2W81-DXVP-535W-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 533 words

**Byline:** William Skipworth, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Bishop Joseph Strickland had been one of the most outspoken critics of Pope Francis and many of his progressive reforms.

**Body**

**Topline**

Pope Francis dismissed Bishop Joseph Strickland, who oversees the diocese of Tyler, Texas, and has been one of his most outspoken critics, theVatican announcedSaturday a rare move that underscores the divisions in the U.S. flank of the church.

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Pope Francis reads his message during meeting with some of the participants of the second International meeting for Rectors and Operators of Sanctuaries in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican, Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

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**Key Facts**

Strickland had been asked to resign as is the typical course of action when the church wants to oust and replace a bishop but he refused, leading the pope to remove him forcibly, the Vatican said ina statement.

The Vatican said his dismissal came after an investigation into all aspects of the governance and leadership in his diocese.

No official reason has been provided for his dismissal at this time.

The Vatican appointed Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin to serve as apostolic administrator and manage the diocese while a replacement bishop is sought.

Strickland is 65 years old, 10 years younger than the typical age of retirement for bishops.

**Key Background**

Strickland, a firebrand conservative, has been vocal about his opposition to Pope Francis, particularly the pope s efforts to make the churchmore welcoming to LGBTQ Christians, additionalresponsibilitybeing given to lay people (non-priests) anda recent synod(a meeting of church leaders) he called. Stricklandcalledthat synod garbage. He has written several public letters reiterating his beliefs that homosexuality is a sin, that women cannot be priests or serve in any priestly duties and that the church is moving in the wrong direction, including one inAugustin which he decried what he called an evil and false message that has invaded the Church. Strickland had frequently waded into ***politics*** in December 2020 he spoke ata rallyin Washington, D.C., organized by then-President Donald Trump s supporters seeking to overturn the election. He is also a prolific social media poster he once shareda videocalling Pope Francis a "diabolically disoriented clown.

**News Peg**

Pope Francis has sought to bring progressive reforms to the church. Most recently, hesaidthat transgender people can be baptized in the church as well as become godparents in Catholic baptisms and witnesses to Catholic weddings, though he has made statements criticizing transgender people in the past. In January, he was criticized by the more conservative members in the church forsayingthat homosexuality is not a crime. In February, he called for a greater level of involvement from lay people. And last month, he led a synod in Rome where church leaders discussed those issues. These actions have frequently put Pope Francis at odds with an increasingly vocal conservative flank of the church in the U.S.

**Further Reading**

The Vatican Says Transgender Catholics Can Be Baptized Following Years Of Critical Statements About Trans People By Pope Francis(Forbes)

Pope Francis Said Homosexuality Isn t A Crime Here s What Else He s Said About LGBTQ Issues(Forbes)

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