# Pope Leo XIV confirms continuation of blessings for same-sex couples



The Roman Catholic Church’s cautious embrace of blessings for same-sex couples is set to continue under Pope Leo XIV, signalling a nuanced approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion within the Church's pastoral care. Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández, head of the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, recently affirmed that the policy allowing such blessings, introduced under Pope Francis, will remain intact. This statement came in response to speculation from conservative circles hoping that the new pope might rescind the progressive directives issued late last year.

In December 2023, the Vatican released Fiducia Supplicans: On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings, a document primarily reflecting on the theological significance of blessing acts. Approved by Pope Francis and signed by Cardinal Fernández and his deputy Msgr. Armando Matteo, the text delineated a sensitive pastoral path. It permits blessings for couples in what it terms 'irregular' situations, explicitly including same-sex relationships, but strictly under conditions that avoid any liturgical rites or formal recognition resembling marriage. The document carefully distinguishes these blessings as spontaneous, pastoral acts aimed at invoking God’s enrichment and healing over relationships without legitimising or endorsing them doctrinally. As the document states, 'rites and prayers that could create confusion' between such blessings and the Catholic understanding of marriage—a union considered indissoluble and exclusively between a man and a woman—are explicitly inadmissible.

This pastoral opening, however limited, represents a significant shift from the Church’s traditional stance and forms part of a broader effort by Pope Francis to foster inclusivity towards LGBTQ+ individuals without altering the core doctrine on marriage. The new directive discourages exhaustive moral scrutiny of individuals seeking blessings, focusing instead on the presence of genuine faith and openness to grace. Yet, this move has been met with resistance from conservative factions within the Church. Some bishops worldwide, particularly in Africa, have voiced strong opposition, arguing that such blessings could undermine both Church teachings and cultural norms.

The Vatican has actively defended the new policy against criticism, emphasising that it does not modify fundamental Church doctrine on marriage and sexuality. Church officials clarify that blessings for same-sex couples are not endorsements of same-sex marriages, should not be conflated with civil unions, nor should they resemble wedding ceremonies. Cardinal Fernández described the guidance as a clear response to attempts by some regional bishops, notably in Germany, who sought to formalise liturgical blessings for same-sex couples—an approach the Vatican explicitly rejected to maintain doctrinal consistency. Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://outragemag.com/gay-blessings-will-remain-under-pope-leo-says-vatican-doctrine-chief/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2023-12/fiducia-supplicans-doctrine-faith-blessing-irregular-couples.html> - In December 2023, the Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith released 'Fiducia Supplicans: On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings,' a document approved by Pope Francis. This declaration allows for blessings of couples in 'irregular' situations, including same-sex relationships, provided these blessings are not liturgical rites and do not imply formal approval of such unions. The document emphasizes that the Church's doctrine on marriage remains unchanged, and such blessings are intended as pastoral gestures without legitimising the unions.
3. <https://www.ncronline.org/vatican/vatican-news/gay-blessings-will-remain-under-pope-leo-vatican-doctrine-chief-says> - Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, head of the Vatican's doctrine office, confirmed that the Church's approval of blessings for same-sex couples will continue under Pope Leo XIV. This follows the December 2023 release of 'Fiducia Supplicans,' which permits such blessings under specific conditions, including the absence of liturgical rites and without implying formal approval of 'irregular' unions. The document was approved by Pope Francis and aims to provide pastoral support without altering Church doctrine on marriage.
4. <https://www.axios.com/2023/12/18/pope-francis-same-sex-blessing> - Pope Francis has approved allowing priests to bless same-sex couples under specific conditions, as announced by the Vatican. This change is part of a broader, progressive shift in Roman Catholic Church doctrine. The new directive suggests that individuals seeking blessings should not undergo an exhaustive moral analysis and should not need prior moral perfection. This move is part of Pope Francis' ongoing efforts to make the church more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people while maintaining traditional views on the sacrament of marriage.
5. <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/04/vatican-pope-francis-blessing-same-sex-couples> - The Vatican defended Pope Francis’ decision to allow priests to bless same-sex couples amid backlash from bishops worldwide. The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith emphasized that while the new policy has caused dissent, it does not constitute doctrinal opposition, as it maintains the church’s longstanding beliefs on marriage and sexuality. The policy clarifies that blessings for same-sex couples should not be seen as endorsements of same-sex marriages, not given concurrently with civil unions, and should not resemble weddings. This initiative aligns with Francis’ broader agenda to make the Church more inclusive for LGBTQ+ individuals while balancing historical church views.
6. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/256437/cardinal-fernandez-vaticans-same-sex-blessings-guidance-is-a-clear-answer-to-german-bishops> - Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, described the Vatican’s guidance on same-sex blessings as a 'clear answer' to German bishops' plans to formalize liturgical blessings for same-sex couples. The Vatican's guidance proposes the possibility of 'spontaneous blessings' for same-sex couples and those in 'irregular relations' but 'without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church’s perennial teaching on marriage.'