

THE DECLARATION OF SCRANTON

A Profession of Faith and Declaration
formulated by the
Polish National Catholic Bishops
assembled at Lancaster, New York
April 28, 2008

We faithfully adhere to the Rule of Faith laid down by St. Vincent of Lerins in these terms: "*Id teneamus, ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum.*"¹ (We hold that which has been believed everywhere, always, and of all people: for that is truly and properly Catholic.) For this reason we persevere in professing the faith of the primitive Church, as formulated in the ecumenical symbols and specified precisely by the unanimously accepted decisions of the Ecumenical Councils held in the undivided Church of the first thousand years.

Therefore, we reject the innovations of the First Vatican Council that on July 18, 1870 promulgated the dogma of papal infallibility and the universal Episcopate of the Bishop of Rome, which contradict the Faith of the ancient Church and which destroy its ancient canonical constitution by attributing to the Pope the plenitude of ecclesiastical powers over all dioceses and over all the faithful. By denial of his primatial jurisdiction we do not wish to deny the historic primacy which several Ecumenical Councils and the Fathers of the ancient Church have attributed to the Bishop of Rome by recognizing him as the *Primus inter pares* (first among equals).

We also reject the dogma of the Immaculate Conception promulgated by Pius IX in 1854 in defiance of the Holy Scriptures and in contradiction to the Tradition of the first centuries.

We further reject the dogmatization of the Catholic teaching of the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Pius XII in 1950 as being in defiance of the Holy Scriptures.

We reject the contemporary innovations promulgated by the Anglican Communion and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. We also regard these innovations as being in defiance of the Holy Scriptures and in contradiction to the Tradition of the first centuries, namely: the ordination of women to the Holy Priesthood, the consecration of women to the Episcopate and the blessing of same-sex unions.

Considering that the Holy Eucharist (Holy Mass) has always been the true central point of Catholic worship, we consider it our duty to declare that we maintain with perfect fidelity the ancient Catholic doctrine concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, by believing that we receive the Body and the Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine. The Eucharistic celebration in the Church is neither a continual repetition nor a renewal of the expiatory sacrifice which Jesus offered once for all upon the Cross, but it is a sacrifice because it is the perpetual commemoration of the sacrifice offered upon the Cross; and it is the act by which we represent upon earth and appropriate to ourselves the one offering which Jesus Christ makes in Heaven, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews 9:11,12, for the salvation of redeemed humanity, by appearing for us in the presence of God (Hebrews 9:24). The character of the Holy Eucharist being thus understood, it is, at the same time, a sacrificial feast by means of which the faithful in receiving the Body and the Blood of our Savior enter into communion with one another (1 Corinthians 10:17).

We hope that Catholic theologians, by maintaining the faith of the undivided Church, will succeed in establishing an agreement in regard to all such questions that have caused controversy ever since the Church became divided.

We exhort the priests under our jurisdiction: to teach the essential Christian truths by the proclamation of the Word of God and by the instruction of the faithful; to seek truth and practice charity when discussing controversial doctrines; and in word and deed to set, in accordance with the teachings of our Savior Jesus Christ, an example for the faithful of the Church.

By faithfully maintaining and professing the doctrine of Jesus Christ, by refusing to accept those errors that have crept into the Church by human fault, and by repudiating the abuses in ecclesiastical matters and the tendency of some Church leaders to seek temporal wealth and power, we believe that we will effectively combat the great evils of our day, which are unbelief and indifference in matters of faith.

Most Rev Robert M. Nemhovic
Thomas J. Grant
Chadwick S. Rybicki
Rt. Rev. Jan S. S. S. S.

Rt. Rev. J. J. J. J.
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¹A Commonitory for the Antiquity of the Catholic Faith Against the Profane Novelties of All Heresies, ch. 2, par. 6.