



## DECLARATION of

**The Most Reverend Michael J. Sheridan, S.Th.D.,  
by the Grace of God and the Apostolic See,  
Bishop of Colorado Springs**

After several attempts to bring the group known as “The Servants of the Holy Family,” illicitly located in Black Forest, Colorado Springs, to hierarchical union with the Diocesan and Universal Church, it is my sad duty to communicate to the diocesan community of Colorado Springs the following:

The priest Anthony Ward, ordained by the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre on February 14, 1974, and who left the Priestly Society of St. Pius X in 1977, and without any approval or consent of any ordinary, launched the operation of a chapel in July of that year where he proclaimed himself to be acting on behalf of the Catholic Church and started to preach and administer the Sacraments. However, he did not enjoy any priestly faculties from the diocesan bishop. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1995, without the diocesan bishop’s knowledge and contrary to canon 1017 which prescribes that the diocesan bishop must give permission for the ordination of clerics by bishops other than himself, four of Father Ward’s followers were ordained deacons, and the next day they were ordained priests by a bishop brought surreptitiously to this diocese by Father Ward.

After initial discussion, the Pontifical Commission “Ecclesia Dei” granted Father Ward a *celebret* (license to offer Mass) in January of 1989; however, this was not intended as permission to set up a parish-like ministry. The *celebret* was permission for Father Ward to celebrate Mass privately. Father Ward did not comply with that condition, thus the *celebret* was revoked on July 26, 1993. At that time, The Most Reverend J. Francis Stafford, then-Archbishop of Denver, was appointed by the Pontifical Commission as a mediator, but this appointment ended in the midst of a lawsuit between Father Ward and the original Carmelite “sisters” who came from Gallup to Colorado Springs. Their community had been suppressed by the Bishop of Gallup, where they had begun on their own initiative a community without the approval of the Bishop or the Order of Discalced Carmelites.

Later, when the Holy Father Benedict XVI, on July 7, 2007, promulgated *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*, I believed that another opportunity should be given to the Servants of the Holy Family, which claimed to be attached to the Tridentine Rite, to reconcile with both the Universal and Diocesan Church. I personally visited the community as a gesture of good will; and, in the midst of this endeavor, I was moved by compassion for the people who attend this chapel, and granted Father Ward and the other priests faculties (*pro tempore*) to hear confessions. After some hopeful gestures, I suggested that the Pontifical Commission “Ecclesia Dei” appoint the Most Reverend James Conley, due to his familiarity with the Tridentine Rite, to be a Special Delegate of the Pontifical Commission. After Bishop Conley was appointed to discharge this office, he convoked a meeting with me, Msgr. Ricardo Coronado-Arrascue, J.C.D., Fr. Lawrence Brennan, S.Th.D. and Father Ward at the Chancery of Colorado Springs “to outline a canonical, pastoral, and theological itinerary for review and regularization.” Father Ward refused to attend this meeting; however, at a previous meeting in Black Forest, he took offense at every attempt to question the theological and canonical basis of his community’s activities. This conduct was displayed during the canonical interviews and in the written responses with which he has replied to every invitation to join Bishop Conley and me in a common discussion. His accusations of hostility, inaccuracies, falsehoods, and deceptions are what he uses to avoid a deeper discussion about his theological and canonical standards. Moreover, in his recent letter of June 6, 2013, Father Ward accused me of fostering and protecting modernism, ecumenism, religious liberty and indifference, liturgical abuse, and, in summary, promoting a false new religion.

Therefore, expecting no further developments toward a better relationship with the Universal and Diocesan Church, even more so after the letter of June 6, 2013, signed by all the members of the above mentioned community, in which they accuse me and my predecessor of lack of obedience to the Church and its hierarchy, and to resolve this schismatic attitude, and in order to avoid confusion, error, and scandal among the faithful of the diocese entrusted to me and, for that matter, all the Reverend Ordinaries that may have interest, and among all who can be misled by this confusing reality, and in accordance with canons 1331, 1364, and 1365 of the Code of Canon Law, and having consulted with the Pontifical Commission “Ecclesia Dei,”

**I declare that the priests Anthony Ward, Michael J. McMahon, Mark R. Violette, Kevin D. Simons, and Allan R. Kucera, are not in good standing with the Diocesan or the Universal Catholic Church.**

And that:

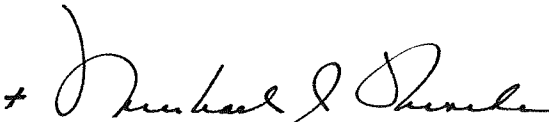
- The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is illicit and a grave moral offence in accordance with canon 900, § 2.
- The absolutions given within the Sacrament of Penance (confessions) are invalid in accordance with canon 966.
- Any celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony for those bound to the canonical form of marriage in accordance with canon 1108 (all Baptized Catholics or those received into the communion of the Church), and all the marriages previously celebrated are invalid due to their lack of jurisdiction.
- Their administration of the Sacrament of Baptism is illicit in accordance with canons 861 and 862;

- They may not celebrate any other public acts of worship according to canon 1331 §1, n° 1. They may not celebrate Sacraments or Sacramentals nor receive them.
- Therefore, it will be an act of spiritual danger for Catholics who would attend these celebrations and they could be penalized in accordance with canon 1365.
- Contrary to what they claim, they are not qualified to train candidates for holy orders since they do not meet the conditions specified in canons 232-264.

All faithful of the Diocese are encouraged to pray for the conversion and reconciliation with the Church of the Servants of the Holy Family.

While I invoke the Holy Spirit to move the hearts of this community to better and obedient relationship with the Diocesan and Universal Church, I want to prevent the faithful of the diocese entrusted to me, and for that matter, all Catholics from being confused by any other information they may obtain.

Given at the Diocesan See of Colorado Springs at the thirty-first day of July of the year of the Lord two thousand and thirteen.

  
+ *Michael J. Sheridan*  
Most Reverend Michael J. Sheridan, S.Th.D.  
Bishop of Colorado Springs

  
Rev. Msgr. Ricardo Coronado-Arrascue, JCD  
Chancellor

