

Diet of Worms

Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, a declaration to Pope Leo X about Martin Luther and the Diet of Worms, 1517

"Descended as I am from the Christian emperors of Germany, the Catholic kings of Spain, and from the archdukes of Austria and the Dukes of Burgundy, all of whom have preserved, to the last moment of their lives, their fidelity to the Church, and have always been the defenders and protectors of the Catholic faith, its decrees, ceremonies and usages, I have been, am still, and will ever be devoted to those Christian doctrines, and the constitution of the Church which they have left to me as a sacred inheritance. And as it is evident that a simple monk has advanced opinions contrary to the sentiments of all Christians, past and present, I am firmly determined to wipe away the reproach which a toleration of such errors would cast on Germany, and to employ all my powers and resources, my body, my blood, my life, and even my soul, in checking the progress of this sacrilegious doctrine. I will not, therefore, permit Luther to enter into any further explanation, and will instantly dismiss and afterward treat him as a heretic. But I can not violate my safe conduct, but will cause him to be conducted safely back to Wittenberg."

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