

# The 1940 Letters of Pius XII to the German Bishops

## • No. 34 Pius XII. to Archbishop Hauck / Bamberg

Vatican, 17 January 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the transmitted Christmas wishes. Reminiscences of the 1924 Heinrich Jubilee. Invitation to prayer and fidelity to the Church. Concern for the youth. Confidence and reassurance that he'll do everything for peace. Remarks about Pope Clement II and the saints interred in the Cathedral. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Jacobus von Hauck, Archbishop of Bamberg:  
The good luck wishes and blessings which you sent to us and our office, and for our efforts at peace for the Holy Feast and the New Year<sup>1</sup>, have filled us with deep joy. We reciprocate them to you personally, as well as for your clergy and your diocesans, so that the year 1940, into which mankind has now entered with such anxious expectations, will lead all to peace and salvation through the mercy of Divine Providence.

You have, venerable brother, evoked in us the consoling memories of the days when we were allowed to celebrate the jubilee of Kaiser Saint Heinrich II and his wife Saint Kunigunde in your cathedral with you and your believers<sup>2</sup>. The majestic Bamberg Cathedral stood before our eyes, not only as a jewel of Church architecture in German lands at that time, but in a deeper sense as a symbol of that state of higher order which the saintly imperial couple erected and strengthened along with the cathedral, the Bamberg Diocese with its Catholic life of faith which, like the cathedral itself, no blows of fate over the last nine centuries were able to topple. Who would have suspected in those joyous days of the Heinrich Jubilee that a virtually unparalleled storm would roar so soon over the Catholic Church in Germany: We thank God that the dire experiences of the 16th century have prepared you for the present trials and that now miraculous strength can possibly be doubly effective against the purely superficial attacks: enhanced religious life and unbreakable,

1 The letter is dated 10 December 1939.

2 The 1924 jubilee had taken place on the 900th anniversary of the death of Emperor Heinrich II, the founder of the Diocese of Bamberg. The pope had taken part in it as apostolic nuncio in Germany at that time; no speech is to be found in E. PACELLI, *Speeches*, however.

3 During the Reformation the diocese, established in 1007, was badly afflicted; Bishop Johann Gottfried von Aschhausen (1609-1622) is credited with the renewal of the diocese.

steadfast devotion, also in public avowal of the Holy Church and her head. Family prays for family, prays united in places of worship, conscientiously makes all the sacrifices that a spotless Christian life demands, draws the strength for it from inexhaustible sacramental sources, particularly from the holy sacraments of penance and communion; be profoundly conscious of the living will to remain loyal to the one Holy Church built on the Rock of Peter, of the dedication to obedience in all to which you are lead on the mission and with the authority of Jesus Christ, according to the express purpose afforded by the divine founder of the Church Himself, with the certain assurance of salvation and the preservation of belief.

Above all, protect the youth against the serious threats to their belief in which they are immersed today. Only by yielding authority will you give up the valuable resistance which justified you and your youth until now<sup>1</sup>.

However, the responsibility of your families is now all the greater because of it. Make brave use of the God-given rights of parents and conscientiously fulfill the educational obligations which God imposes on you, and from which no worldly power can release you. Don't doubt that the more you do it, all the more certainly God's blessing will rest upon your entire existence. For our part, we are happy to know you, your homeland, your circumstances and your religious and church life very well from many years of personal experience. Every day of this year of war we will share your experiences, we will pray for you and we will avoid no efforts which can bring all the religious wrangling in your Fatherland to a consoling conclusion for the Catholic Church as well as for the moral welfare of the whole German people. You may be likewise assured that we have only one goal when it comes to bloody public discord: to work for a just peace for everyone and for each of the involved countries that they need not shy away from, and based upon Christian principles, and which therefore carries within itself the assurances of security and longevity.

At the grave of the devout Pope Clement II, who came from your midst and is the only pope to be laid to rest among you<sup>2</sup>, united in spirit with you we grant you and your clergy, venerable brother, as a pledge of the power of the Christian people, even in this dangerous hour, to fearlessly proclaim and hold up as an example their total belief with all its obligations, as well as all your and our believers in invoking the mighty protection of the Heavenly

Queen and the holy imperial couple<sup>3</sup>, from the fullness of our heart the apostolic blessing.

From the Vatican, 17 January 1940, in the first year of our pontificate

1 This refers to the youth organizations dissolved during previous years.

2 Bishop Suidger of Bamberg was elevated to the papacy in 1046 at the Synod of Sutri by the Emperor Heinrich III with the consent of the clergy of the City of Rome; he took the name of Clement II, promptly died in 1047, and was buried at his express wish in Bamberg.

3 Kaiser Heinrich II was canonized in 1146 and his wife Kunigunde in 1200.

• **No. 35 Pius XII to Cardinal Schulte/Cologne**

Vatican, 18 January 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft letter No. 10192, with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the transmitted Christmas wishes. The close connection between the episcopacy and the pope. Peace efforts his most urgent concern. Creation of an atmosphere conducive to peace. Concerning the military chaplaincy. Measures in the fight against the Church and organized propaganda against her. Obstruction of contact with the Holy See. Blessings.

To our beloved son Carl Joseph Cardinal Schulte, Archbishop of Cologne: We reciprocate with deep thanks your blessings for the Holy Feast and the New Year<sup>1</sup>. Your cordial tone, your discernible openness to the close personal relationship which has united us with you for so many years already, and in which the extent of the respect between us has grown greater year by year, your obvious worshipful dedication to the Successor of Saint Peter which you acknowledge in a manner exemplary for a bishop and a cardinal -- all of that has benefited us greatly, as we gladly admit. In general, the internal cohesion of the entire episcopacy with the Head of the Church is so characteristic of today, especially if one compares it with some periods of time over the last centuries<sup>2</sup>, from which you and we can draw no small amount of courage as the little boat of Peter is tossed about in the current storms.

The restoration of world peace is, as you correctly surmise, our most urgent concern at this moment, not only because (completely apart from actual Church issues) we must strive<sup>3</sup>, for the love of Christ impels us to help peoples and individuals in their nameless distress; however, also because the Church has entrusted to us the salvation of souls during the war in the most severe -- God alone can comprehend how severe -- circumstances. If we are

encouraged to continue along the path we are traveling by the acknowledgment and thanks given us, we do not deceive ourself for even one moment about the extent of what we have attained and what is still to be attained. If only the atmosphere of peace could at least be preserved and spread among the people directly involved in the war everywhere; then the steps taken would not have been entirely in vain in other relationships.

1 Dated 2 December 1939.

2 Possibly a remark about the so-called episcopal tendencies prevalent only in the 18th century Rhineland metropolises (Cologne, Trier, & Mainz) to contest, or at least restrict, the primacy of the pope.

3 Compare 2 Corinthians 5, 14.

You have, beloved son, made reference to the military chaplaincy as a glimmer of light in the relationship between Church and state in your Fatherland<sup>1</sup>. Nobody is more inclined than us to value every indication of an improvement in the above-mentioned circumstances, all the more in the present case as gratifying reports about the military chaplaincy also come in from other bishops. If only the job opportunities weren't also multiplying at the same time: what we feel the most painfully about this is the antagonistic fundamental attitude revealed by the war measures. If only they would recognize that this attitude must give way to more peaceful attitudes, so one would not automatically lose hope so quickly due to further-reaching war measures. As long as that fundamental attitude prevails, however; as long as the Party carries out organized propaganda against Christianity and the Church internally and externally; it is difficult to believe in peace because it is hard to detect the basic prerequisite for peace, i.e. an atmosphere of peace. However, that should only encourage us all the more to pursue the fate of the Holy Church in Germany day by day, and to take advantage of every possibility for a prelude to peace.

We feel it greatly that the active connection between German Catholics and the Head of their Church is impeded so very much because of the current conditions; however, they should know that we have not forgotten them in the least, that we always remain attached to them with the same love, and that we pray for them daily and offer the Sacrifice so that as soon as possible the providence of Almighty God will bring a solace-filled end to the difficult and bitter privations of the present hour. In this hope we give you, beloved son, and all your co-workers from the clergy and laity, and all your diocesans, especially the Catholic youth of your parish, as a pledge of God's

richest mercies, the sought-after apostolic blessing from our whole heart. From the Vatican, 18 January 1940, in the first year of our pontificate.

1 Cardinal Schulte had written about this: After all, it signifies at least a glimmer of light that on the whole, thanks to the current solicitude of the Holy See, the presently so extremely important military chaplaincy may be carried out in such a way that a normal relationship between Church and state might be derived (A. E. S, CARTE Pio XII).

• **No. 36 Pius XII. to Cardinal Bertram/Breslau**

Vatican, 25 January 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the conveyed news. The sanctions that took place against the Church in Germany during 1939. Efforts to bring about an easing of the situation. The other side bears responsibility for the failure. Continuation of the policies of Pius XI. Thanks for the cardinal's efforts and blessings for his diocese.

To our beloved son Adolf Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau:

The pressing but also in its brevity more than revealing overview of the present Church situation in Germany, which you have given us with your letter dated the 17th of this month, is for us all the more painful, in that it truly had to contain renewed evidence for the diligent pastoral work with which you and the other members of the episcopacy always remain concerned, in the deepest faithful solidarity between the clergy and the believers, despite the ever-increasing hindrances of your pastoral duties, to carry out your apostolic missions during these difficult times.

We can comprehend only too much the pain with which the Catholic people look back on the long list of sorrows of the year 1939 and on the losses which have been inflicted through the disintegration of so many of the rich fruits of excellent approved religious organizations, through the continuing annihilation of the Catholic parochial schools, through the suppression of Catholic literature, through the anticlerical tendencies in instruction at the state-run schools and so many others<sup>1</sup>. That these spiritual ailments have never led to a decrease in or relaxation of the belief of the devoted Catholic people at the present hour, when the burdens and sacrifices of this war of still incalculable duration have already imposed so many heavy demands, is a sad event that must deeply move any friend of the German people. All the

more, we have pursued up to the present every possibility, no matter how distant or faint, ...

<sup>1</sup> This enumeration makes reference to the report sent in by Cardinal Bertram on 17 January 1940 concerning measures taken against the German Church in 1939; text in the appendix as No. 12\*.

... to reach an accommodation, and to act with that thoroughness which the love for your people and the desire to serve their true welfare has continually taught us. We are willing to remain loyal to our preparedness even if previous efforts<sup>1</sup> should also still remain without the visible outer success which you and we hope for with the same longing. We want to be able to bear witness before God and history that we have omitted nothing commensurate with the duties of our high pastoral office in order to be able to restore to the German people the blessings of a religious peace, and we also want to contribute to this in such a way that all of the voice of truth becomes consciously accessible to them, so they know on which side to look for the responsibility for the nonattainment of this goal.

At the same time, we believe that such an attitude and intent is the spiritual heritage of our great predecessor in the faith who rests in God, whom you have remembered in the pastoral letter you sent us in so worshipful and convincing phrases<sup>2</sup>.

In an age where others begin to grow tired you, beloved son, dedicate the daily growing tasks of your pastoral office with admirable energy and never weakening vigor to the rich offerings which the eternal high priest confers upon you. Thanking you dearly for such exemplary dedication, we ask the Lord that He might be even closer to you with His light and solace, and we grant to you, your clergy and all levels of the believers entrusted to you amidst the internal and external hardships of these sorrow-filled days, the desired apostolic blessing as a pledge of the assistance of heavenly mercies and as proof of our particular heart-felt love.

From the Vatican, on the Feast of the Conversion of Paul, 1940.

• **No. 37 Pius XII to Bishop Landersdorfer/Passau**

Vatican, 31 January 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft letter No. 10567, with corrections in the pope's own hand and his handwritten comment *da copiare / carta piccolo*.

News about measures against the Church. Importance of such information. Anticlerical mood in Germany. Blessings.

1 those of Pius XI, that is.

2 In the cardinal's Lenten pastoral letter, which he had also sent on 17 January 1940.

To our venerable brother Simon Konrad Landersdorfer, Bishop of Passau:

We thank you, venerable brother, for the news you sent us about the expropriation of the old Austrian abbeys, and about the situation of the Catholic Church in your diocese as well as in Bavaria and the Reich. Your report is completely in line with reports sent us by other bishops, but significantly supplements their statements. Information from the bishops is always welcome to us because it provides an overview and a certainty of judgment compared to random individual reports. The letter of the Bavarian episcopacy to the government in re: the matter of the prohibition of religious instruction in the vocational schools has reached us from Munich in the meantime.

What depresses us the most, aside from the fate of the Catholic youth, is the hostile spirit which increasingly expresses itself in certain measures taken by the national authorities. One proof of this is precisely what you write us about the antagonistic attitude of the soldiers at the front regarding the Church. We are taking every opportunity to smooth the paths of religious peace in Germany. This unfortunate mood alone puts patience and joyful hope to a severe test.

We will intensify our prayers and sacrifices in order to call down God's pity onto the Catholic Church in Germany and onto the whole German people. As a pledge of this we grant you and your diocese the requested apostolic blessing from our whole heart in never-ending love.

From the Vatican, 31 January 1940

1 Dated 4 January 1940. The bishop had, among other things, reported the expropriation of the Austrian abbeys of Göttweig, Admont, St. Lambrecht and Engelzell, as well as the prohibition of religious instruction in the vocational schools.

2 By this is meant the letter of 8 January 1940 from the chairman of the Freising Bishops Conference, Cardinal Faulhaber, to the Reich Minister for Education and Culture, protesting the decree of the Reich Minister for Science and Popular Education of 23 August 1939 (E IV c 3641, Z II a [b]).

3 The bishop had written: "In particular, they are trying to alienate the soldiers from the priests and fill them with mistrust against them" (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

• **No. 38 Pius XII. to Bishop Rackl/Eichstätt**

Vatican, 19 February 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft letter (without Number), with handwritten corrections by the pope.

Thanks for the Christmas wishes. The pope's concerns about the situation of the Church in Germany. His efforts to bring an end to the war. Particular concern about priests and candidates for the priesthood. Sacrificing spirit of the common folk. The unknown Catholics. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Michael Rackl, Bishop of Eichstätt:

We are thankfully indebted to you, venerable brother, and all your diocesans, for your greetings at the Holy Feast<sup>1</sup>. While we thus thank you, we need not assure you that our heart is also full of hope and blessings for you and for all our sons and daughters in your Fatherland. If we already feel especially connected to you because of the long years we were allowed to spend among you, so also must we, as the common father of Christianity, turn our love and concern primarily toward our children in their need, who are grappling with their belief and suffering for the cause of Christ.

We need not assure you that we follow daily the fate of the Catholic Church in Germany with tense attention. While the current circumstances impose a certain restraint on us in public, we are striving all the more to quietly do and try everything we can to bring about better times for the Holy Church in your country with the help of God's divine providence. In addition, we are exerting our efforts to limit the scope of the war and bring it to a speedy conclusion. In this we have no goal other than a peace which protects the necessities of life and the honor and rights of all participants with a solution acceptable to all of them, and that carries within it not the seeds of new entanglements, but rather the effective preservation of itself.

We hear from your letter, venerable brother, of the concern and devotion which you have to protect the candidates for the priesthood. We praise you for it, and it prepares us to also be consoled by you, [when we hear] that our words to all candidates for the priesthood, which are also applicable to all upstanding theology students<sup>2</sup>, have fallen on fertile ground.

1 Dated 13 December 1939.

2 The pope is referring here to his allocution of 8 December 1939: AAS 31 (1939) Pp. 696-701; compare GUIDE n. 151.

Indeed if divine providence, which we await with unfaltering confidence, brings about a merciful ending to the trials which presently weigh upon you,



then we have no fonder wish than that your clergy are directly purified by it, and that the complete, unselfish sanctification and salvation of souls emerges from it. Priests who pray a lot, who gladly live resignedly, who burn with apostolic zeal, who -- always for the sake of Christ -- stand in obedience, trust and love to their bishop and to the Head of the Church, who live in solidarity with their own people in the awareness of their affiliation with the Universal Church -- such a clergy we wish for our sons and daughters of the German tongue. We experience from letters and other communications almost daily how much faith, how much sacred will and spirit of sacrifice, how much devotion to Christ lives in your simple folk; we would like to say, to paraphrase a well-known expression, "in the unknown Catholics." On them rests our hope for the Catholic Church in Germany, and the best priests are now still good enough for the still closely-packed ranks of these believers.

As a pledge the love, the grace and the mercies which we pray, doubly and triply, that God might pour out in richest fullness on you and your clergy, your diocesans and particularly your youth, we confer the apostolic blessing on you all from our whole heart.

From the Vatican, 19 February 1940

• **No. 39 Pius XII. to Bishop Stohr/Mainz**

Vatican, 22 February 1940

A. E. S.;CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without Number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the Christmas-wishes. Longings for peace. The bishops as witnesses to the truth. On the youth pastors' convention in Essen. Joy over cooperation with the Austrian and Bohemian Catholics. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Albertus Stohr, Bishop of Mainz:

We thank you, venerable brother, for your lively consciousness of the unity between the Successor of Peter and the bishops, as well as for the personal cordial confidence in us which you proclaimed at the Holy Feast<sup>1</sup>. You know how dearly we reciprocate them and how very much peace, that sacred gift from God, religious as well as political peace, for your believers, for the Germans, and for all peoples involved in the war...

<sup>1</sup> Dated 10 December 1939.

... is the object of our daily prayers and sacrifices, so that they, as Saint Paul said (1 Tim. 2, 2), may "lead a quiet and peaceful life, godly and respectful in every way." May the Lord lend his strength and blessings to the superhumanly difficult task of leading the people back to peace and also to belief and the fear of God at the same time.

Three remarks in your letter have particularly caught our attention. One is the awareness, to which you give expression, that nothing is as compulsory for the German bishops as the "*testimonium perhibere veritati*"<sup>1</sup>. In the Catholic Church's fight for existence in Germany, few things cause as big a worry for us as the fact that it is becoming always more difficult to bring up the complete Catholic truth with all its consequences and practical applications to even its own believers, let alone for you to provide effective influence in public life. All the more, it will be the task of the bishops to fill the clergy and, above all, the candidates for the priesthood, with the complete solidity and wealth of Catholic doctrine, and to encourage them to preach and expound the whole content of the faith to the last iota regardless of possible hardships, at least within the realm of the Church.

The report of the Essen Convention<sup>2</sup> has given us joy. If the German Catholics, above all the young Catholics, pray, if they pray even more than before, then we won't worry so much about the outcome of the religious conflict in which they are currently embroiled. Only encourage them to publicly avow their belief with prayer and personal sacrifice in each situation where their conscience requires them to unite.

Finally, we greatly praise the cooperation of the German Catholics with the Austrian and Bohemian Catholics<sup>3</sup>. Just as joint conferences of this type where you experience the same ecclesiastical destiny educate you to common religious thinking and actions, so at the same time may your awareness of membership in the Universal Church, as well as your love and devotion to the Representative of Christ on earth -- convictions which your priests and youth probably hold in the present hour -- confer upon you life and strength.

As a pledge of all this, we grant you, venerable brother, your priests and all your believers the sought-after apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 22 February 1940

1 Compare John 5, 33: He testified to the truth.

2 The bishop had reported on a conference of the diocesan youth pastors, which had taken place in Essen from 27 November to 1 December 1939, and whose main topic had been prayer and the education of youth.

3 Youth pastors from Austrian and formerly Czech dioceses had also taken part in the Essen conference.

• **No. 40 Pius XII to Diocesan Vicar Rohracher/Gurk**

Vatican, 6 March 1940

A. E. S., CARTE PIO XII: Draft Letter No. 11404, with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the news. Praise for strong courage and determination. The longing for peace. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Andreas Rohracher, Bishop of Isba, diocesan Vicar of Gurk:

We thankfully confirm to you, venerable brother, our reception of your two letters dated 13 December 1939 and 26 February 1940. You have done well to immediately report to us after your visit to Berlin. We will keep these communications in mind<sup>1</sup>.

The report about the hard-working childrens' pastoral workers and the report of the expected results of the first Church tax collection in Austria were very pleasant news for us because they are an infallible sign of the strong will of the Austrian people, who so far are carrying on with their religious and church lives. This stand against the hostile measures of the other side is presently the best weapon available to the Catholic Church in Germany. Commending the prayers and sacrifices of your believers in this weighty question of war and peace, we grant you, venerable brother, and all of them, the apostolic blessing as a pledge of our empathetic love, from our whole heart.

From the Vatican, 6 March 1940

• **No. 41 Pius XII. to Bishop Preysing/Berlin**

Vatican, 7 March 1940

A. E. S., CARTE PIO XII: Draft Letter No. 11447, with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the information sent. Restrictions on the freedom of the Church's teaching profession. Appropriateness of a joint declaration of the German episcopacy. Fr. Friedrich Muckermann, S.J. Blessings.

<sup>1</sup> In the letter dated 26 February 1940, Bishop Rohracher had reported from Munich on the discussions he had led in Berlin because of the closure of the Jesuit College of St. Andrä in the Lavanttal.

To our venerable brother Konrad Count Preysing, Bishop of Berlin:  
We thankfully confirm to you our reception of your two letters dated 10 January and 17 February, along with your warm and cordial Lenten pastoral letter and the other enclosures<sup>1</sup>.

The letter to you from the Bishop of Würzburg<sup>2</sup> and the memorandum from your vicar-general<sup>3</sup> are certainly quite indicative of the lack of freedom of the Catholic Church in Germany. As we have heard, an objective and elegant broadcast over Vatican Radio on the subject of "marital and illegitimate motherhood" on 5 and 12 January was so effectively jammed that it could not be received in Germany. With the fundamental importance of the national reaction to the Würzburg Lenten pastoral letter which, as you also feel, inhibits the most elementary freedoms of the Church's teaching profession, one could ask whether a joint pastoral letter from the German bishops might not be useful in such a case. It should be harder to rail against a joint pastoral teaching of all the German bishops<sup>4</sup> than it was to impugn the pastoral letter of a single bishop. As far as we know, only the Archbishop of Freiburg<sup>5</sup> has actually been successful, with his very courageous New Year's Eve sermon, in clearly presenting the Catholic point of view in contrast to the well-known omissions on the Party's side. In the matter of Fr. Friedrich Muckermann, the General of his Order has successfully handled this<sup>6</sup>.

1 The Lenten pastoral letter, which dealt with the cross and carrying the cross, is dated Sexagesima Sunday, 28 January 1940.

2 Bishop Preysing had forwarded to the pope a handwritten message from Würzburg Bishop Ehrenfried about the prohibition and confiscation of his pastoral letter.

3 Vicar-General Prange (d. 1965) had been summoned to the Gestapo's Berlin field office, where he was told the following: In view of the wartime situation, the state police were no longer willing, as they were previously during peacetime, to tolerate the propagation of subversive Church positions. In the future, opinions in sermons, pastoral letters and encyclicals that were considered likely to endanger the unity of the home front or the will to defense of the German people -- even if such an intent could not be proven -- would be regarded as acts of sabotage and punished more harshly than previously (transcript of his memoirs in A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

4 Regarding this passage Preysing says, when he writes the pope on 5 April 1940: "At Easter I was in Munich, that is on Easter Monday [25 March], in order give Cardinal Faulhaber an excerpt from Your Holiness' letter of 7 March. During the course of the discussion, His Excellency the Cardinal remarked that he was of the opinion that Rome wished to avoid any intensification of the conflict with the Reich government because of Your Holiness' peace efforts" (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

5 Conrad Gröber.

6 The Superior-General of the Jesuit Order since 1915 had been Fr. Wl. Ledochowski (d. 1942). Preysing had written on 17 February 1940: Here, it is reported that the fact that

Fr. Friedrich Muckermann, S.J. had delivered a lecture over Paris radio aroused displeasure in good Catholics (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII). Concerning Fr. Muckermann, S.J. (1883-1946) compare LthK VII, Column 669.

As a sign of our always-constant love and esteem, and as a pledge of the inexhaustible strength and the overabundant solace of the Crucified and Risen [One], we grant you and your diocesans the sought-after apostolic blessing from our whole heart.

From the Vatican, 7 March 1940

• **No. 42 Pius XII. to Cardinal Bertram/Breslau**

Vatican, 17 March 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the good-luck wishes. Praise for the eagerness of the believers and their fidelity to the Holy See. Audience with Reich Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. Reasons for granting the audience. Report on its course. Little hope of the situation improving. Additional steps by the nuncio taken under consideration. Approval of the bishops presupposed. Blessings.

To our beloved son Adolf Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau: Receive our cordial thanks for the joy and the solace which the devoted wishes and prayers of you and your diocesans have given us on the occasion of the completion of the first year of our pontificate<sup>1</sup>.

The enthusiasm of the believers, and their unwavering love for the Representative of Christ, as is evident from the reports of the coronation celebrations in Germany, are for us another proof that the spiritual connection between us and the German Catholics is still alive and well despite all inhibitions and difficulties. As long as the awareness of this supernaturally well-founded, and from ever-renewing and ever-increasing miraculous sources of strength, unity between the faithful, the bishops and the Successor of Peter remains alive amidst all temptations and threats, we needn't worry about the continued existence and the future of the Catholic Church in your homeland.

We consider it necessary that you and your other ordinaries handle in strict confidentiality certain communications which could be necessary for the development of the Church situation in Germany. We have received the Reich Foreign Minister Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop<sup>1</sup> in a private audience on the 11th of this month in response to a request from the German Embassy presented to the Holy See in the name of the Reich government.

1 Dated 24 February 1940.

In view of official relationship existing between the Holy See and the German Reich, a denial of the request could have been interpreted as an unfriendly act -- a possibility which is quite real during the current state of war between Germany and the Western Powers, and which could certainly bring about more severity and bitterness for German Catholics in this special situation. In order to avoid the danger of any political misinterpretation, we granted their request for a private audience despite many misgivings, and we considered in the first place that a personal conversation with one of the closest collaborators of the Führer and Reich Chancellor might afford the possibility of restoring better living conditions for the Catholic Church in Germany, as well as being relevant to establishing useful contacts in the matter of war and peace.

Anyway, the discussion with the Reich's foreign minister, which lasted longer than an hour, had some positive value aside from its importance in informing us of confidential news on a personal level. We must leave the development of any objective outcomes to divine providence with patience and strong courage. On the human level, the occasion did not give rise to any long-range hope at this time, neither on the question of peace nor concerning the Church's situation in Germany. As to what the latter involves, we have not failed to state the most important points<sup>2</sup> for an incipient relaxation in writing and orally. However, the course of the discussion has caused us to doubt whether the Herr Reich Foreign Minister or the Herr Reich Chancellor, who are accustomed to see problems in terms of political points of view and in the light of political criteria, are able to convince themselves that their ideas about "political Catholicism" are incorrect, and that peace between Church and state is only perturbed by the fact that national and official Party authorities clash with Christianity and the Catholic Church and threaten their fundamental way of life.

It may be emphasized, that the Herr Reich Chancellor had had sent to us his belief in the possibility of striking a balance between the present-day German state and the Catholic Church, as well as the fundamental desire for negotiations...

1 Concerning the preparation for and course of this audience compare, in addition to ADAP D VIII No. 668 Pp. 704-706, DDI IX, 3 No. 536 Pp. 466-469, FRUS 1940, I Pp. 107-108, ADSS 1 No. 238 Pp. 363 f., No. 254-263 Pp. 383-397, No. 266 Pp. 401-403.

2 The Secretary of State gave the pope a memo in which the chief measures against the Catholic Church in Germany were summarized in six sections, as the basis for the conversation; text in the appendix as No. 14\*.

... -- even in Berlin. However, he emphasized his opinion that quick results could not be counted on, and that at this time all the energy of the government must be directed toward successfully concluding the war. In order to leave nothing untried, we will inform our nuncio in Berlin of this situation and possibly send him appropriate instructions<sup>1</sup>.

In the conviction that all right-thinking people in Germany understand our position on their significant apostolic motives, we will unceasingly work and pray even more for you in the certainty that the Lord God "is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10: 13). In anticipation filled with solace we grant you, beloved son, and your entire loyal flock the apostolic blessing from our whole heart as a pledge of Christian patience and endurance in the strength of the Risen One. From the Vatican, 17 March 1940

• **No. 43 Pius XII. to Cardinal Faulhaber/Munich**

Vatican, 22 March 1940

A. E. S., CARTE, Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

On the celebration of Papal Sunday in Munich. The Cardinal's sermon. The condition of his health. Notification of the audience of the Reich's foreign minister von Ribbentrop with the pope. Motives that guided the pope during the audience. Blessings.

To our beloved son Michael Cardinal von Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich-Freising:

It is with particularly deep satisfaction that we have received a report, with its enclosed information, from our nuncio in Berlin, of how the loyal Catholics in the cathedral city of Munich have celebrated this year's Papal Sunday with dedicated participation<sup>2</sup>.

1 This instruction of 19 March 1940 is in ADSS 1 No. 269 Pp. 406-408.

2 On 15 March 1940, the nuncio had transmitted an excerpt from the sermon which the cardinal had delivered at St. Michael's Church in Munich on 3 March 1940. A translation of this excerpt appeared on the title page of the OSSERVATORE ROMANO of 14 April

(No. 87 [24.281]) under the title: *La figura e l'opera di Pio XII in un luminoso discorso del cardinale Faulhaber.*

In particular, the words you spoke from the pulpit of St. Michael's Church are, for us, another and heart-moving proof that the severity of the times and the spirit of conflict which they induce are not capable of loosening the sacred bond of trusted confidence that unites the Catholic faithful in Germany to the Center of the Church of Christ. This sermon, which states and interprets the thoughts of our first encyclical<sup>1</sup> in such a masterful form is, at the same time, also elegant proof, which we welcome with thanks to God, that your precious health, which was temporarily the object our loving concern and our urgent prayers, has strengthened again, and that you are once again in charge of the people for whose well-being the Lord God has entrusted you, with your old strength, energy and freshness. We devote ourselves to the glad expectation that this strength newly given you guarantees the further rich successes of your work with the Church in Germany, and we send you our deepest wishes in never-changing trusting love.

On this occasion we consider it advisable that certain communications, the knowledge of which may be of some benefit to you in your assessment of the Church situation and its possible development, should come to you in the highest confidentiality. [A notation in the margin gives instructions to insert verbatim Letter No. 42 to Cardinal Bertram with the report about the Ribbentrop visit. The 'in the name of the Reich government', etc., etc., up to 'appropriate instructions' are to be omitted.]

Convinced that all right-thinking people in Germany understand our position and your basic underlying motives, we will not cease to exert our efforts and vigilance to serve the welfare of the Catholic Church in Germany and the true welfare of the German people. We plead to the Risen Lord for supernatural strength, solace and joy for everyone afflicted by the sorrows of the present, and grant you, your clergy and all believers of the archdiocese the apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart as a pledge of help from above.

From the Vatican, 22 March 1940

1 Enzyklika *Summi Pontificatus* of 20 October 1939.

• **No. 44 Pius XII. to Archbishop Klein/Paderborn**  
Vatican, 12 April 1940



*SEGRETERIA DI S.S. PER LE LETTERE LATINE*: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections by an unknown hand and the marginal comment *All' Arciv. di Paderborn (Germania) / 50 sacerdozio (7 aprile 1940)*.

This letter transmits belated good-luck wishes and blessings after the telegram concerning the 50 year jubilee of his priesthood.

To our venerable brother Caspar Klein, Archbishop of Paderborn:  
When we found out that the 50th anniversary of your ordination was imminent, we immediately saw to it that our fatherly good-luck wishes and blessings were conveyed to you by telegram<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, your particular merits obviously require a clearer expression of our sympathy about the Church. Therefore, we want to send this letter to you, to give unequivocal expression to ...

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Klein had been ordained a priest on 21 March 1890 in Paderborn. The telegram mentioned seems to have been signed by the Cardinal Secretary of State; at any rate, the draft is not to be found among the miscellaneous correspondence.

... our particular goodwill and felicity toward you for having administered your sacred office so circumspectly for such a long time. We will now direct our urgent prayer to God, that He might guard you like a good and watchful shepherd until advanced old age, and that the people entrusted to you, who are the fruit of your office as it were, may be your joy and crown of honor for a long time yet. As a pledge of heavenly protection and a sign of our particular love, we give you, venerable brother, your whole clergy and the people entrusted to your pastoral care our apostolic blessing from our heart in the Lord.

• **No. 45 Pius XII. to Bishop Preysing/Berlin**

Vatican, 22 April 22

A. S. S., CARTE PIO XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Importance of the close connection between the pope and the bishops. Restriction of Catholic literature. Exhibition on woman and mothers. Pastor Willimsky. The encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*. Importance of courageous, open words. Concerning programs on Vatican Radio involving Germany. On the agreement for von Papen to be the German ambassador to the Holy See. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Konrad Count von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin: Before us, venerable brother, are your letters (with enclosures) from the 2nd, 14th and 18th of March, as well as from the 5th of this month. With the deepest thanks for them we affirm anew that our greatest concern when it comes to the situation in Germany is to remain in close contact with the bishops there, especially now during the war, when our relationship with the German Catholics is more restricted or even disrupted than before. Among the enclosures, the one about Catholic literature has especially caught our attention<sup>1</sup>. What is clear from the numbers cited is that many limitations regarding their content are being imposed on those closely-regulated organs still in existence. One wonders, how and where the whole Catholic belief...

1 Bishop Preysing had sent an extensive memorandum about the status of Catholic literature to the Holy See on 14 March 1940 (he had the proceedings of the Fulda Bishops Conference on this matter): only approximately 30% of the literature from 1937/38 was still allowed to be published. Nuncio Orsenigo had also pointed this out in a report on 17 March 1940 (ADSS 1 No. 266 P. 403).

with all its ramifications can still be kept alive there in the consciousness of Catholics. It is typical and sad enough that in the Berlin exhibition "Wife and Mother -- Life-source of the People"<sup>1</sup>, nothing can be found about this in the Catholic literature as far as we can tell.

With particular love we convey our apostolic blessing and deepest sympathy to the relatives of Father Albert Willimsky of your diocese who died under such tragic circumstances<sup>2</sup>. Pastoral duty in the concentration camps is admittedly a very serious issue. We will try again to take steps to help you, unfortunately with little hope of success.

We appreciate the words which this Herr X had to say concerning our encyclical "*Summi Pontificatus*"<sup>3</sup>, because they tell us that through our circulars ...

1 On 2 March 1940, Bishop Preysing had sent a detailed analysis of that exhibition, which was chock-full of spiteful attacks against the Catholic Church. He himself had lodged a protest against the exhibition with the Reich Minister for Church Issues on 13 February 1940. After an enumeration of the various parts of the exhibition which were specifically directed against Christianity, he had closed his letter as follows: "The exhibition, by design, embodies over and over the prevailing anti-Christian and anti-Church propaganda, and represents a new form of the blatant campaign of annihilation against Christianity and the Church in Germany. A short time after the exhibition closed in Berlin, the state police told me that henceforth stern measures would be taken against Church rallies, which are considered as dangerous to the unity of the home front

[compare Letter No. 41, comment 3]. Attacks against Christianity and the Church are taking place -- regardless of the unity of home front. Defense against such attacks is made impossible for the Church -- out of consideration for the unity of the home front" (transcription in A. E. S., CARTE PIO XII). From a letter from Cardinal Bertram to the pope of 8 October 1940 (A. E. S., GERMANIA 749, Reference C. A. 6532) it can be seen that the same exhibition opened on 20 September 1940 in Breslau with no changes, so that the protest of the Bishop of Berlin had been unsuccessful.

2 On 2 March 1940, Bishop Preysing had transmitted the transcript of a communication he had sent to the clergy of his diocese (on 28 February). This had to do with the death of Pastor Albert Willimsky, who had died on 22 February 1940 in a concentration camp; compare H. KÜHN, *Blood Witnesses* [Martyrs], Pp. 160-164.

3 Bishop Preysing had transmitted the transcript with an "X" rather than identify its author. It contained a long section dealing with Pius XII's first encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*: "Since I first read it, the encyclical has held me spellbound. In the present context, I want to say only this much: I see in this religious and historical document our Christian belief in its entire, time-transcending grandeur triumphantly illuminated, in contrast to the onrush of anti-Christian lack of faith; as often as I come back to it, I don't just hear the voice of the venerable Head of the Roman Catholic Church -- no, as he speaks here with the authority of the Holy Spirit of the ONE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, transcending all Church boundaries, to which we ourselves confess in the third article. In view of such a declaration from Rome, under such a pope -- and if I may be permitted to write it down with certainty: under an episcopacy like that of the present day -- none of the reformers, and probably not even our Dr. Martin Luther, would even have thought of repudiating Rome" (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

... also people of good faith outside the Catholic church could be educated and brought closer to God.

Regarding the matter you touched upon in your last letter, and in relation to the visit to Berlin of the Bishops of Gurk and Innsbruck, we have already issued an instruction that nothing should interfere with the immediate and undisturbed relationship of the bishops with us; rather that this should only be enhanced<sup>1</sup>. Besides, if we may quote a remark recently sent us from the German Catholic side: "The Catholic people are thankful for every word from their bishops. When it stops, they perceive it as a lack at leadership"<sup>2</sup>. For our part, we would like to lay two questions before you today, venerable brother. The first involves the reports about the situation of the Catholic Church in Germany over Vatican Radio which, incidentally, are not the usual case. The reports have been made out of consideration for the fact that complete public silence by the Holy See would have discouraged German Catholics and promoted the misconception beyond Germany that the Church situation in Germany was actually rather normal and was likely to improve anyway. The broadcasts were intended to counter this cover-up, which has

been skillfully pursued with ever more success. On the other hand complaints, yes and even distress calls, have been coming in from episcopal sources because of reports of reprisals for the Vatican Radio broadcasts. We certainly do not want to cause German Catholics any more unnecessary hardships when they are already persecuted so much for the sake of their faith. We have therefore had those broadcasts discontinued for the moment, until we can assess the pros and cons with more certainty. We would be very much obliged if you would share with us your valued judgment and experience on this matter<sup>3</sup>.

1 Bishop Preysing had reported that Nuncio Orsenigo said he had read a report by the Bishop of Innsbruck to Pius XII and wanted it altered. The Berlin nunciature was used as a mail relay point between the bishops and the pope (compare Appendix No. 9\*). No more complaints like this can be found later on.

2 It cannot be determined from whom this sentence originated.

3 This question was presumably occasioned by a remark by Nuncio Orsenigo, who on 24 February 1940 had conveyed a complaint by the Reich government about the programs on Vatican Radio (ADSS 1 No. 248 P. 376f.). Bishop Preysing answered the question posed by the pope on 1 May 1940 as follows: "I would like to answer the other question: The Holy See cannot possibly make Church events and such which happen in Germany the object of public discussion in front of the whole world. I would like to dissuade [the Holy See] from publishing internal documents, petitions and protests as such. But news about anticlerical measures, particularly if they are notorious, such as expropriations, dissolution of clubs, confiscations, etc., which pertain to the other question we will discuss with you in the strictest confidence." Moneys of Catholic institutions can, in my opinion, be quite safely discussed according to the law concerning Communist activities, etc. (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII). The nuncio in Berlin, who feared reprisals and deterioration of the climate, remained of the other opinion. On 19 October 1940 he reported on criticism of the programs on Vatican Radio and, in closing, summarized: *Purtroppo queste emissioni, die il Governo crede di poter ritenere ingiuste e non consonc alla neutralità delta Santa Sede, trovano una larga ripercussione nelle sfere governative, perch- vengono raccolte, tirate in copie numerose die poi soso distribuite a tutti gli uffici governativi, per guisa die l'atmosfera ne rimane poi per qualche giorno avvelenata* (N. 835; A. E. S., GERMANIA 785).

... One hears that the German government will, probably very soon, propose Herr von Papen as successor to Herr von Bergen, their present ambassador to the Holy See<sup>1</sup>. The problem is that in view of the position and activities of Herr von Papen during recent years any arrangement the Holy See would make with him would so decimate the basis of trust between us and Catholic Greater Germany, that it would be unworkable. We ask you for your opinion in this case<sup>2</sup>. Since the matter, as we have said, may be brought before the Holy See very soon, it would be expedient if you were to notify

us by telegram as soon as possible after receiving this letter. The words "request blessing on the occasion of the wedding" would mean that the agreement can be made after all; the words "request blessing for the sick" that it should be refused<sup>3</sup>.

To you, venerable brother, your priests and your believers, and in the first place the Diaspora Catholics of Brandenburg and Pomerania, about whom

1 The Catholic politician Franz von Papen (born 1879) had become chancellor in 1932 after breaking with the Center Party, succeeding Chancellor Brüning, and thereafter was decisively involved in Hitler's "takeover". He completed the Reich's Concordat, became a German envoy in 1934, and in 1936 German ambassador in Vienna and in 1939 in Ankara. It cannot be determined who informed Pius XII about the possible transfer of von Papen to Rome.

2 The bishop also wrote on this question 1 May: It would be dangerous for the German Catholics if such a character were to occupy an influential position; the opinions, spoken or unsaid, actions or lack of actions on the part of the Holy See will be influenced by the machinations of this character. -- I am also afraid that somehow this type of a highly-placed Catholic National Socialist would appear to be sanctioned by the Church. It is obvious that, here and in Rome, a clique would form and center itself on this character, and it is likely that they would attempt to spread their false opinions in widening circles. I know that no influence threatening to our situation could ever arise from the Holy See with the cognizance of Your Holiness, but danger exists that many of our good Catholics will be bewildered by this (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

3 Bishop Preysing cabled on 30 April 1940 via the nunciature (foreign telegrams from German subjects were no longer allowed): "The Bishop of Berlin seeks the blessing for the sick. -- Orsenigo" (A. S. S., CARTE Pio XII).

... you have written such a warm pastoral letter<sup>1</sup> and which we will especially remember during the Holy Sacrifice, we grant you from our heart the requested apostolic blessing as a pledge of God's richest mercies.

[From the Vatican] 22 April 1940

• **No. 46 Pius XII to Bishop Preysing/Berlin**

Vatican, 12 June 1940

A. S. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number).

Urgent request by the pope that Preysing give up any thought of resignation. Methodical disagreements possible by agreement. Negative consequences of a resignation. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Konrad von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin:  
After we, venerable brother, had subjected the content of your letters dated the 8th, 17th and 29th of last month, together with their enclosures, to a careful examination, we do not hesitate for one moment to ask you to give no further thought to resigning from your diocese<sup>2</sup>.  
It is a from time to time painful, but humanly also inevitable, characteristic of this difficult time that methodical disagreements also originate, and grow in intensity. ...

1 Bishop Preysing had transmitted his pastoral teaching on the Catholics in the Diaspora on 18 March 1940.

2 The idea of resigning his diocese originated primarily from disagreements with Cardinal Bertram, the chairman of the Fulda Bishops Conference. The climax came when the Cardinal sent a letter to Hitler on his birthday on 20 April 1940; (compare text of the letter and reply in W. ADOLPH, Pastoral Office Pp. 161-163). As a result, Preysing resigned from the press department of the Fulda Bishops Conference and justified this step in a detailed letter to Bertram (IBID. Pp. 164-168). Then, on 29 May 1940, Preysing notified the pope of his willingness to resign: "The discord in important matters with Breslau on my part, the schism it has caused in the episcopacy, and even more the certain expectation of the regime's opposition to me and my diocese in the foreseeable future, make it likely that my activity in Berlin won't be acceptable in the long run. I would already like to deliver my statement to Your Holiness today, that I am in agreement with every decree that Your Holiness wants to make with respect to Berlin, yes even that Your Holiness might regard this letter as my immediate resignation request, if that please Your Holiness ... I certainly don't want to be a deserter, but I would only like to assure Your Holiness that my person should never be even the slightest obstacle when it has to do with Church matters" (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

... We trust that a frank and open discussion will effectively prevent the development of undesirable attitudes within the Fulda Committee<sup>1</sup>.

In view of the trust and the esteem which you with your diocesans and the German Catholics in general enjoy, your resignation or any other suggested or implied preparatory measures could give rise to serious spiritual damage, consternation and maybe bewilderment.

In the coming weeks and months, we will think of you, especially before God, and we grant you the apostolic blessing as a pledge of the patience and strong courage of Jesus Christ, with our special love.

From the Vatican, 12 June 1940.

• **No. 47 Pius XII. to Bishop Galen/Münster**  
Vatican, 12 June 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the wishes conveyed for coronation day. Sympathy for the fate of the Church in Germany. Patriotism and allegiance to the Church. Mission of the German Catholics. Peace and blessings.

To our venerable brother Clemens August von Galen, Bishop of Münster: The blessings, which you, venerable brother, sent us in your last letter at the conclusion of our first, and the beginning of our second, pontifical year<sup>2</sup>, have been for us a welcome and thankfully-greeted sign of the living connection between us, which you and the entire flock entrusted to you, tirelessly maintain with this Apostolic Chair. For our part, we can affirm that the welfare of the German people and the fate of the Holy Church in your Fatherland are the object of our daily prayers to God -- especially now in wartime, when external contact between you and us is particularly impeded, almost even more than before.

Beside the fidelity to and love for the earthly Fatherland, which occupy their secure and honored place in the Christian conception of life,

1 Compare with Letter No. 53, in which the pope particularly emphasizes the unity of the episcopacy. An objective evaluation of the intentions of the Breslau cardinal and the opinions of the Berlin Bishop is at W. ADOLPH, Pastoral Office, Pp. 102-116 and Pp. 117-130

2 Dated 29 January 1940.

... and which also does not hesitate to sacrifice one's life for the general welfare, membership in the great family of Christ's Church and confidence in her Head are sources of spiritual strength, which need, and are worthy of, particular care during the uncertainty of these times.

We have paid particular attention to the enclosures added to your letter<sup>1</sup>. We place the greatest value on seeing the picture of the status and development of the Catholic Church in Germany at all times, even if for the moment we must still wait for a useful and calming intervention.

One of the main tasks of Catholics is to conduct their religious life with peaceful steadfastness, to increase the use of prayer and the methods of mercy, and to create such an atmosphere in family and Church, in which those religiously undernourished in the public schools, yes, and the often even directly endangered youth, are instilled with the spirit of the Catholic view of life and life-formation, and in it can grow up toward always greater strength and consciousness.

To obtain or change things not within our power at the moment, we want to leave in humble trust to divine providence. Where starting points for a gradual improvement in the relationship between Church and state in Germany should appear, it will be for us an affair of the heart to treat each such opportunity favorably and carefully. For the moment, the huge events of the war dominate everything else. We plead to God that at that moment when the clash of arms falls silent and the responsible leaders of the people turn to laying the groundwork of a new future, this may take place in the spirit of justice, wisdom and farsightedness, from which alone the assurance of permanence can arise. That the Lord God might soon smooth the way to such a peace and, as far as Germany is concerned, that this is not only temporal, but also signifies religious happiness and redemption at the same time, is our daily supplication to the Lord. In this spirit we grant you, venerable brother, your clergy and all your faithful, particularly the youth and those serving in the field, the requested apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 12 June 1940<sup>2</sup>

1 In the enclosures, among other things, were treated: Orders against reading of the encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*, establishment of community schools, restrictions on religious instruction, protests of the bishop against the dissolution of the Marianist Congregation, etc.

2 Bishop Galen had written on 27 December 1939: "I have had your fatherly words of love, encouragement and admonition printed, and have distributed 60,000 copies in the churches of our diocese." (A. E. S., CARTE PIO XII).

• **No. 48 Pius XII. to Bishop Landersdorfer/Passau**

Vatican, 20 June 1940 20

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the wishes sent for the Saint's Day. On pastoral work. Efforts to bring about an end to the *Kirchenkampf* in Germany. Telegrams of 10 June 1940. Hope for peace. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Simon Konrad Landersdorfer, O.S.B., Bishop of Passau:

The loyal wishes, that you, venerable brother, sent us for the feast of Pope Saint Eugen, and especially the accompanying intimate prayers, have been



for us a welcome, heartfelt joy amid the growing problems and concerns of our Holy Office, for which we owe you deep thanks<sup>1</sup>.

We follow your eager, cautious and purposeful work among the souls entrusted to your pastoral care, and especially the Catholic youth, always with the same inner sympathy. As painful as it also may be to encounter the spirit of the Anti-Christ in your work, on the other hand it is precisely the danger emanating from it and the vigilance and sense of sacrifice of apostolic souls that elevates the often tiring detailed day-to-day work to a much-deserved higher level, the final victory of certain future work.

Whatever we can do on our part to direct the relations of Church and state in Germany onto new and responsible Christian paths, we have done and will continue to do. Our love for the entire German people and our determination to do everything morally possible for its welfare will not be thwarted by misunderstandings or misinterpretations of our purposes. We have also remained faithful to the principles embodied in the religious (radio) programs of our office in the telegrams you mentioned in your letter<sup>2</sup>, and have not dragged the Holy See into earthly confrontations between various political factions. You will have determined for yourself that they only protected Germany as much as possible for purely political reasons ...

1 Dated 1 June 1940.

2 Compare ADSS 1 No. 301-303 P. 444 f., to it IBID, No. 304 Pp. 445-447, No. 308-310 P. 451 and No. 326 P. 465. As in Germany, Italy's official propaganda also turned against the telegrams of the pope; compare ADSS 1 No. 313 Pp. 453-455 regarding the audience of Italian Ambassador Alfieri with Pius XII on 13 May 1940 and IBID No. 315 P. 456 f. regarding actions against the OSSERVATORE ROMANO.

... as well as avoiding every express reference to the German side, and every expression of compassion on the moral question of the case was stopped. In the case of Abyssinia and Albania and other similar takeovers, it was about principalities which did not have diplomatic relations with the Holy See, so that *paritas casuum* did not govern<sup>1</sup>.

We can only lend expression to the hope that the reorganization of things from the tragic experiences after completion of the monumental battles takes place in a spirit in which justice and humanity can be found. Concerning this, we will plead with increased fervor to the Lord, knowing that in such a new order the tremendous opportunities will also provide the German people with goals and tasks which will last them far into the future.

Meanwhile, we give you, venerable brother, your clergy and all the faithful of your diocese, especially those serving in the field, our apostolic blessing with particular love.

From the Vatican, 20 June 1940

• **No. 49 Pius XII. to Archbishop Gröber/Freiburg**

Vatican, 21 June 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Praise for pastoral eagerness. The Archbishop's memorandum to the Reich's Defense Office. Strict neutrality of the pope. His efforts for peace. The New Year's Eve sermon and the bishop's pastoral letter. The attitude of the clergy. Misgivings. Worries about good priests. Blessings.

1 The Holy See had not protested Italy's invasion of Abyssinia (3 October 1935) or of Albania (7 April 1939). -- Here the pope responds to the objections raised against him in Germany, and which Bishop Landersdorfer had summarized in his letter as follows: "In Party circles and elsewhere there is at present much criticism of the telegrams Your Holiness sent to the heads of state of nations recently drawn into the war against their wills, not only because Your Holiness recently made comments against the Reich, but also because comparisons are being made to the subjugation of Abyssinia and the occupation of Albania by Italy. They fail to realize that in the last-named cases not only the situation of the Holy See but also the various circumstances were considerably different (A. E. S., CARTE PIO XII).

To our venerable brother Conrad Gröber, Archbishop of Freiburg:

We thank you, venerable brother, for your letter dated 16 April with its enclosures<sup>1</sup>. Your lively pastoral eagerness, which manifests itself in every one of your sentences, has caused us great solace, even if your communications also deal with other matters which excite our apprehensions or reinforce already existing ones.

Your memorandum<sup>2</sup> in the enclosures directed to the Reich's Defense Office in Berlin has most strongly grabbed our attention in all its details. Your warm and courageous, yet always fair and balanced intercession for the Catholics merits our special recognition. These and similar reports, which deal with official measures in the Church arena, as well as the positions and attitudes of the faithful, provide information of great value to us just now when, during the course of the war and influenced by its monumental events, the spiritual condition of Catholics can change, gradually or suddenly, from month to month.

You come, venerable brother, to speak of the efforts for peace by the Head of the Church in that memorandum. We emphasize that what you have said there about the "strict neutrality" of the pope in matters of war and peace is the unalterable norm for us, from which nothing of any sort will ever

dissuade us. Also, where we took a public position in certain cases, this was not from any prejudice, but by far only when our moral judgment absolutely demanded our involvement or a word from our highest office. We remain certain that later, more balanced times, will fully acknowledge the far-reaching constraints we have imposed on ourself, in order to avoid even the appearances of any bias. Regarding a future peace, we are firmly committed to stand by the principles set forth in our Christmas allocution<sup>3</sup>: a just and equitable peace which allows for the honor and necessities of life of all parties and therefore promises its longevity.

1 This has to do with several enclosures which are treated, one after the other, in the pope's reply.

2 Before 19 February 1940. The letter was directed to the Ministry for Reich Defense and is in the FEDERAL-ARCHIVE KOBLENZ.

3 Text in AAS 32 (1940) Pp. 5-13 (compare GUIDE No. 158); compare now also the text-critical edition in ADSS 1 No. 235 Pp. 353-361.

And we have particular praise for you, venerable brother, for your last New Year's Eve sermon and your pastoral letter for Childrens' Sunday. The crucial points of the latter have also been read over Vatican Radio.

At the end of your letter, venerable brother, you touch upon the attitude of your clergy and of German clergy in general. What you say agrees with what we are hearing from the other side. The allegiance of the clergy to the Holy See and its willingness to sacrifice for the cause of Christ and his Holy Church gives us so much solace, yet we hear with apprehension of the fears, which are sent to us from other sources, of the younger clergy due to the unhealthy and anti-clerical directions. You and your brothers in the episcopal office know how much the future depends on your upcoming clergy. Do what you can so that the entire clergy remains in contact with bishop and pope with inner conviction, so that Germany has priests who pray a lot, who sacrifice, who struggle and abstain daily with mercy, and who also educate the faithful, so that just now when the Church is exposed to such strong inhibitions, the clergy finally maintains the living awareness of the true sphere of influence of the Church, so far as it reaches the religious and moral life of the people and the whole human community without exception.

In conclusion, we grant you, venerable brother, your priests, lay helpers and all your faithful, particularly the youth of your archdiocese, the requested apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart, as a pledge of the fullness of the strength, love and mercy of Christ.

From the Vatican, 21 June 1940

• **No. 50 Pius XII. to Bishop Machens / Hildesheim**

Vatican, 28 June 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Acknowledgment of the bishop's efforts to protect the Catholic schools. On the Concordat and its relationship to the Reich and national law. Recommendation about religious instructions outside of the schools. Wishes for the clergy. The Holy See's peace efforts. Blessings.

1 Published in the OFFICIAL GAZETTE of FREIBURG No. 10 (11 April 1940) Pp. 249-253. The Childrens' Sunday was set for 21 April 1940.

To our venerable brother Joseph Godehard Machens, Bishop of Hildesheim: Venerable brother, accept our thanks for your letter dated 11 April and its enclosures, as well as our expression of satisfaction that you and your clergy have so manfully defended the rights of Catholic schools in Goslar and other places in your diocese, in fact with reference to the Reich Concordat<sup>1</sup>. Even if success remains denied you, the information in the enclosures has provided an extremely valuable clarification of the situation of the Catholic Church in Germany. On the one hand, the clarification lies in legal opinions like those of Dr. Josef Schmitt<sup>2</sup>, which substantiate the abundance of valid, self-evident jurisprudence that the Concordat is currently the law of the Reich which the contrary Reich and national regulations violate, and on the other hand the fact that the [legal] practice itself contradicts this legal status. With our prayers, worries and hopes we are daily and hourly in touch with our sons and daughters in Germany, not the least with our children of the North German Diaspora. Do everything with your clergy and lay forces to counteract the loss of the Catholic schools as much as possible with home education and religion classes in the churches. We wish your priests a firm belief, the vivacious feeling of affiliation with the Universal Church, joyful collaboration with their bishop and a childlike trust in the representative of Christ, so that they can fill their believers with strength, courage and endurance in this decisive time. We are praying and working for peace, a peace that does permanent justice to the necessities of life and the honor of all participants in the war.

As a pledge of merciful divine providence and the merciful help of God in all these concerns we grant you, venerable brother, your co-workers, all your diocesans, particularly the children, adolescents and soldiers at the front, the sought-after apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 28 June 1940

1 The individual cases are treated extensively in the enclosures.

2 That fact that the expert opinions enclosed with the letter of Bishop Machens dated 11 April 1940, which the former president of the State of Baden (Austria), Josef Schmitt, J.D., Karlsruhe, had worked out, argued against the capriciousness of the national measures, had no influence on the decision, however.

• **No. 51 Pius XII. to Bishop Preysing/Berlin**

Vatican, 21 July 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Pastoral duties for Polish civilian workers in Germany. Care for the Polish prisoners of war. Consequences of the case of Dr. Eder. Common action of the episcopacy. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Konrad Count von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin:  
We thank you, venerable brother, for your two letters of 7 June and the 2nd of this month with the enclosures.

Concerning pastoral duties for the civilian workers of Polish nationality utilized in the Reich, one must temporarily accept the distinct and quite perceptible harshness of the national ordinance, in order not to endanger the stated pastoral duties in general<sup>1</sup>. What should be striven for, however, is the repeal of the prohibition of hearing confessions in the Polish language. On the one hand, the meaning of this prohibition is not obvious, since confession, even when made in German, is in no case subject to monitoring. On the other hand, many of the Poles in question are unable to speak in a language other than their mother tongue. However, it must be assumed that they long for nothing more than the opportunity for private confession. Aside from the national decree regarding pastoral duties for the Polish civilian workers, there still remains, for us and for you, the difficult problem of religious ministry to the Polish prisoners of war<sup>2</sup>. We assume that these questions and their corresponding responses will be discussed at the upcoming Bishop's Conference.

With respect to the case of the Hon. Dr. Eder, it certainly has to do with the most elementary principles of Church freedom that responsible...

1 All regulations concerning the treatment of Polish civilian workers are contained in the circular of the *Reichsführer SS* and the Chief of German Police of 10 September 1943 (S IV D 2c No. 2071/43); these regulate participation in religious activities (in Section E 4), and reiterate, unchanged, the following: "Hearing confessions in the Polish language is not allowed."

2 Pastoral duties for Polish prisoners of war are covered in the circular of the Reich's Main Security Office of 1 March 1940 (IV a 4a No. 1348/39), to which the order from the OKW [Armed Forces High Command] file No. 2f. 24 11a *Kriegsgef.* (prisoners of war) I f of 13 December 1939 (No. 2454/39) and the general circular of the Reich Minister for Church Issues and the head the OKW regarding the pastoral duties to prisoners of war of 1 February 1940 were added.

3 Dr. Gottfried Eder, a pastor in Dipbach near Kitzingen (Bavaria), was sentenced for the crime of misuse of the pulpit by the Bamberg Special Court on 27 May 1940. He had warned the members of his parish about the SS and the Black Corps. Preysing had a transcript and the general circular of the Reich Minister for Church Issues and the head the OKW regarding the pastoral duties to prisoners of war of 1 February 1940 was added.

... pastors can make [their congregations] aware of severe dangers to the faith, even if these dangers are associated with affiliation with an organization, and that they can advise against joining such organizations, all the more when admission is a matter of free choice for the individual. In general, however, according to experience only common action has any hope for success. We therefore consider it to be a task of the Fulda Bishops Conference to take up such questions and to come up with a suitable response to them, and that in the present case competent ordinaries will not refrain from bringing it up there. Plainly, the present case should lend itself to the development of a joint position to be presented to the responsible authorities, since the unresolvable conflicts of conscience of pastoral duties are clearly pointed out by the present situation.

Once again, and from our whole heart, we grant you, venerable brother, and your diocesans, the apostolic blessing.

From the Vatican, 21 July 1940

• **No. 52 Pius XII. to Bishop Gföllner/Linz**

Vatican, 23 July 1940

SEGRETERIA DI S.S. PER LE LETTERE LATINE: Draft Letter No. 16365, with corrections by an unknown hand and the marginal comment *Al Vescovo di Linz (Austria-Germania)/ 25 episcopato (19 agosto 1940).*

The pope is participating in the Bishop's 25-year jubilee through this letter, as the faithful of his diocese prepare the celebration. Praise for the bishop's ardor. Authority to the grant of the apostolic blessing. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Johannes Gföllner, Bishop of Linz:

As we have heard to our pleasure, the loyal believers there, under instructions from their pastors, want to demonstrate to you their gratitude

and their general sympathy, since your jubilee as a bishop is directly imminent<sup>1</sup>. We also gladly take this opportunity to share in the celebration of the joyful event with fatherly love, and to once again confirm to you our good will. Since you were elevated to the dignity and burdens of the bishop's silks, you have worked with untiring care and eagerness for the salvation and improvement of souls, so that you have earned great merit for yourself in the Church. Therefore, together with you, venerable brother, we thank God for His goodness; we congratulate you from our heart as the festivities of the jubilee draw near, and for that we earnestly direct our prayers to God, and wish you all good luck and blessings. However, so that the feast day gains yet another special ceremony through us, we grant you the authority, after the pontifical Mass, to give the blessing and proclaim to them a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions, in our name and with our authority. May the apostolic blessing, which we grant in the Lord from all our heart to you, venerable brother, the Cathedral Chapter and the other clergy, as well as...

1 Bishop Gföllner had been consecrated bishop on 19 August 1915.

... all the people entrusted to your pastoral care, be the intercessor and pledge of the heavenly mercy offerings and at the same time a sign of our particular love.

• **No. 53 Pius XII. to the German Episcopate**

Vatican, 6 August 1940

A. S. S., 1940 DIOCESI 304: Draft Letter No. 7159, with corrections in the pope's own hand; a shorthand transcript of this draft (without number) in A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII is arranged into five subsections, which are followed here.

The task of the Church in wartime. The topics to be discussed at the conference. Retrospective on his own activities as nuncio in Germany. Efforts to settle the *Kirchenkampf*. Differences in assessments of the situation caused by conflicting remarks of authoritative sources. Prevailing misgivings justified, however. Serious reminder for unity and consistency.

Necessity of uniform leadership. Unfounded accusations against the Church. Her mission in these times. One must obey God more than human beings. The alleged bias of the Holy See. Explanation of the principles which determine the position of the Holy See. The pope is impartial, but not insensitive. Maintenance of the principles of the law as an essential component of the Church's proclamation of truth. Misinterpretations on the part of Catholics as well. Declaration of the pope upon the German attack on

Belgium [WWI]. Prerequisites for a just peace. The responsibility-laden and sorrowful task of the pope. Efforts to find the proper comments.

Praise for the German Catholics. Their loyalty to the Church proven during the *Kirchenkampf*. The dangers to belief. Necessity of personal piety. Reminder to the clergy. Assurance the inner ties. Blessings.

To our venerable brothers, the archbishops and bishops of Germany on the occasion of their imminent discussions at the grave Saint Boniface:

Pius PP. XII.

Venerable brothers, greetings and apostolic blessing:

Before long, venerable brothers, the Cathedral City of Fulda will once again make its sacred site available for the annual summer conference of the ordinaries of Germany<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The 1940 Fulda Bishops Conference took place from 20 to 22 August in 1940.

Amid a time of never-before known impact and scope, which spreads across the European continent like an earthquake and shakes ever more countries and peoples unto the depths of their physical and spiritual existence, the Church of Christ is faced with the ancient yet ever-new task of awakening and effectively maintaining in her storm-tossed children the light of sacred belief, the solace of Christian hope, and the reconciling and healing strength of Christian love.

The mission of pastoral duties is not diminished during such times of change, but grows visibly in its extent and even more in its depth. And so, venerable brothers, ahead of your upcoming discussions and consultations, you are faced with an abundance of questions involving the particular circumstances of your people, the salvation of their immortal souls and the welfare of the Church, answers to which are not immediately evident today. Serious work, unprejudiced assessments and unwavering solidity in delving into the prospective practical effects of possible decisions will be required, in order for an outcome to emerge from your discussions, which the clergy and the people longingly expect from their episcopal shepherds in such turbulent times, and upon which they have in their difficult situation more than a just claim.

\* \* \*

During long and busy years, venerable brothers, we have had the opportunity, through God's divine providence, to acquire deep and still vivid insights into the soul of your people -- within and outside of the Church.



When we remember this and see your country today in the forefront of events which require monumental external and spiritual decisions, we only feel all the more strengthened by the always lively desire to leave nothing untried to enable this people, as far as we can, to receive the greatest amount of blessings and attain a harmonious relationship between religious and civil duties, from which can emanate harmony between Church and state.

We therefore gratefully welcome every idea dedicated to this goal, and the continuing efforts in recent months on the part of the episcopacy of Greater Germany and its individual members. Even if the information reaching us does not indicate that a success in this matter is likely during the war, and even if we are also completely aware of the daunting magnitude of the obstacles to overcoming these difficulties, we will give our total attention, encouragement and careful appraisal to every suggestion emerging from such a competent committee as is your conference.

Now the characteristics of the present Church-state situation in your Fatherland, the insecurity and uncertainty which characterize Church-state relations, yet which contain no doubt of the faithful's loyalty to their Church, do not always engender the same opinions with respect to the prerequisites for and prospects of a peace between Church and state, as well as practical ways to bring this about.

On the one hand, assurances have been put forward by the highest levels of state leadership which -- taken at face value -- bring into view the prospects for the development of an honorable peace for both sides. On the other hand, one hears about the remarks of highly-placed political personages, which presage an intensification of the [anti-Church] campaign, even after the end of the war. There is no lack of indications either, which speak of the purpose of a desired and deliberate conflict, which is understood by countless in this sense. Attempts to come up with a new and more trusting atmosphere, conceived in possibly excessive confidence that an understanding might be reached, have failed and been repudiated due to the continued disappointing creation of new conditions to restrict and infringe upon Church rights<sup>1</sup>.

The reflexive effects of such experiences and disappointments are too natural to be surprising. Even if, within the circles of the episcopacy, ever more conscientious doubts creep in after initial hopes and if, according to the predominance of hope over skepticism, a different assessment of the outlook for success began to emerge, we understand better than others that the development phases of the past years could not continue.

We trust that you, venerable brothers, can carry out and assess these impossible to avoid human opinions and tensions in the spirit of apostolic

candor and brotherly openness so that that which has been your strength in former years, and has simultaneously led to admiration:

1 As was also well known in Germany at that time (the editor himself remembers), the German bishops evaluated the individual aspects of the situation differently. Cardinal Bertram's letter to Hitler of 20 April 1940 intensified these disagreements within the episcopacy. The pope's admonitions for consistency and unity are to be understood in this sense; compare Letter No. 46.

the spiritual unity of the episcopacy, its consistency in desire and actions emerges from such discussions purified and strengthened, and that everyone of you can be certain that his goals and motives are understood and appreciated by each of his brothers, then, if for once -- spoken metaphorically and biblically -- the way of Peter and the way of Paul are not the same in each and every one<sup>1</sup>. The more frankly the testing of contrary opinions can be carried out in your committee, the more completely will that requirement be satisfied, which in the present hour is almost even more prevailing: namely, that the remarks and enactments made in the name of the entire episcopacy and the clarifications of consciousness, representing the consent and the will of everyone, will become your reward.

\* \* \*

Never but never have the faithful people of Germany had a greater longing and a greater need for a healing leadership through its episcopal shepherds than at the present moment. Day by day, thousands of anticlerical and anti-Christian influences are poured upon the souls of the faithful, through the spoken and written word and the attitudes of a more or less de-Christianizing environment, and subject them to a spiritual pressure which -- combined with external taunts and discrimination -- often sees them abandon the heroic loyalty to the faith required of them. And unfortunately it is lacking also among those who call themselves Christians and Catholics, not only in those who are the victims of this spiritual uncertainty, partly from ignorance, partly from predictable human fears, and partly from misguided self-worth, but also in those who are ready to adopt as their own the vocabulary and trains of thought of the adversary, and to ascribe the guilt for the non-realization of a religious peace on the Church or its representatives in Germany. If one wanted to believe them, the coming of this peace would therefore only be a matter of time, because the entitlements expected by the Church from the state correspond to a lack of understanding or good will; as if the resentments of a political past continued to have an effect; as if they

sense that forms of government will be reinstated simply by overhauling them ...

1 Compare Gal. 2, 11-14.

... or at least to slow down the incubation and growth of new forms of national life as such.

The Church of Christ, which is sent forth to all ages and to all people, would lose sight of her most particular mission and would stand in the way of her own religious apostolate, if she were to think in so narrow, so small, so development-adverse a way as she is accused of by her detractors. Your task is to serve the propagation of Christ's realm, to facilitate the coming of his Spirit to individuals and communities. The preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the administration of the merciful methods entrusted to you by the Lord takes place in all languages and lands with the same dedication and love, to form and shape life and law, as determined by the national community lifestyles of the relevant peoples. Holy Mother the Church knows only children, not stepchildren. The Christian beliefs learned from her, the maintenance and development of the concept of the Children of God conferred through Christ's mercy, the life and work in the spirit of this children of God concept in the private as well as the social and public domains, allows the believer to follow the instructions of the Church in his relationships with the national authorities in complete freedom as ordained by the divine moral law, whose limits are redefined by the fervent Word which he must obey more than that of human beings<sup>1</sup>. Within this far-flung, all great and noble domain of freedom, every nationality can find the means to develop the organization and strengths lying within its depths. In exercising this right and this continuously self-renewing mission, no people can expect anything from the Church other than maternal delight and satisfaction over every step of advancement which it has been able to make in the course of its history and in fighting for a worthy place within the community of nations. The joyful and assertive affirmation of one's people and homeland, which through good times and bad has proven that no religious requirements stand in opposition to one's loyalty to Fatherland, but rather is implicit in them, and proceeds from the worldly to the sacred sphere of belief, which comes from Christ and whose pure activity leads to Christ. Only those whose outlook is darkened by ignorance or passion, and ...

1 Compare Apg. 5, 29

... see and judge familiar persons, places and institutions with the prejudice of enemies of the Church, can come upon the bizarre thought that the Holy See would allow itself to be distanced from any one people opposed to the principles enumerated above. In this context, we cannot express to you enough, venerable brothers, our displeasure over the statements of an organ which calls itself the "German Catholic Weekly" and -- for quite some time before this note has been recommended by a Church agency as the "best Catholic Sunday newspaper"<sup>1</sup>." This incident shows what caution -- especially since after the unjustified suppression or "restriction" of so many unobjectionable diocesan papers<sup>2</sup> -- is necessary when conferring respect, and how necessary it is to take precautions that such accolades don't create the impression of approval of publications which are far removed from the ecclesiastical spirit and from the truth.

\* \* \*

In these times, when the objectivity of judgment is threatened by mass opinions and collective moods everywhere, which is inevitable in the passionate hardship- and conflicted atmosphere of the war, it is a duty, an especially sacred and steadfast duty, for all those who labor at the pastoral duty of the Church, which is a duty of truth and love, to see to it that the position of the Church and the authority of those who represent the Church are not seen through the eyes of adversaries by the members of the Church, but rather in the light of the principles which we and our predecessors who rest in God have set form innumerable times.

1 DER NEUE WILLE, a German Catholic Weekly, in No. 22, of 2 June 1940, P. 5, in the 2nd year of its publication, accused, under the title "With German Frankness" the OSSERVATORE ROMANO of taking positions hostile to Germany, which indirectly railed against the three telegrams of the pope on 10 May 1940 (compare Letter No. 48, Footnote 2). Franz Justus Rarkowski, the Armed Forces' Field Bishop, in a letter dated 2 February 1940 to the publishing house director, Dr. G. Schmitt, Frankfurt/Main, recommended this weekly as the best Catholic Sunday newspaper in Germany.

2 Bishop Preysing had reported extensively about the proscription of diocesan newspapers while he still headed the press department of the Fulda Bishops Conference, on March 1940 (compare Letter No. 45, Footnote 1). With the ordinance requiring verification of membership in the Reich Literature Council of 17 July 1940 and the corresponding transaction requirements (RGLB I of 27 July 1940, No. 133) even more restrictions were imposed; compare F. ZIPPEL, *Kirchenkampf* Pp. 497-501.

Viewed in the light of these principles, we took care to see to it that our position since the outbreak of the war concerning this effort was one of only

the most conscientious impartiality, right up to the last moment. This impartiality presupposed the same consideration of all the states and peoples involved in the war, all of whose Catholics look to the pope as their common father, and who have the right to find this spiritual community with the Center of the Church despite any warlike entanglements.

We have been so certain of this impartiality of the Representative of Christ that we have imposed upon ourself extensive restraint with respect to the contentious political goals of the combatants and the reasons for the same given by them, and so have carefully striven to protect the Holy See against entanglement in the details of worldly confrontations, yet this impartiality has not been allowed to become synonymous with insensitivity and silence where moral and human considerations necessitated a frank word. The maintenance of the principles of law and ethics, be that in the private or the public arena, by the occupant of the highest pastoral and teaching position in the Church, is not merely the result of historical evolution, which among other requirements is subject to complete degeneration, but is, rather, an essential part of the Church's mission of truth and salvation. In such cases of the Church being accused of unauthorized interference into politics -- as also occasionally happens with Catholics, yes and also from those who, as teachers of the holy sciences, should practice the "*sentire cum Ecclesi* " to a special degree<sup>1</sup> -- it is the task of the Church authorities to act in such a way that neither the rights nor the dignity of the Church of Christ are restricted. We are immediately certain, venerable brothers, that you know to appreciate the religious bases and inducements of this position of the pope in agreement with the overwhelming majority of your priests and believers, and that the misinterpretations of our press release, where we spoke of our compassion for the need of certain states drawn into the war against their will ...

1 Which theology professors are meant here cannot be determined with certainty. The remarks about the Tübing theology professor Karl Adam by G. LEWY, P. 419, Footnote 111, are surely inadequate, although LEWY himself supports Bishop Buchberger in a marginal note; because the pope speaks in the imperial plural, several other cases of the same type are therefore implied.

... have found with you the reception and criticism which they deserve. If in 1914 the responsible German statesman acknowledged the invasion of neutral Belgium as being beyond international law without being questioned about his fundamental patriotic attitude<sup>1</sup> -- can a reasonable and impartial judge then blame the Father of Christianity if he, during the jarring repetition and expansion of this process, pronounces to the people who stand in official

relationships to the Holy See his fatherly compassion and expectation that after the war -- in the framework of the new peace order he is working on -- this small and peaceful people will be given another chance at living their lives in justice and freedom again<sup>2</sup>?

In this announcement, which followed from human and moral considerations, the one express reference to Germany and each purely political comment consciously avoided anything that could be construed as an unfriendly act against the German people; it is no coincidence that in the converse case the omission of such a sympathetic act with respect to them would have been painfully felt. An "anti-German slant " could only be seen in it by one who dared to attribute the intent to offend here, in contrast to repeated explanations by the German state leadership, not to the desire that the post-war peace be guided from the point of view of justice, but by scheming for the infringement of the rights to life of other nations.

After we saw and felt, during our years in Germany, how badly the German people suffered under the burdensome and humiliating consequences of their defeat [in WWI], and after we witnessed how antagonisms arose with ominous consistency from the imbalances of the last peace agreement [Versailles], and when we see how the world today raises its tolerance levels for methods of force, we can only give fervent expression to the hope that at that moment, known only to Providence, when the war ends, the victors will remain accessible to the voice of fairness, justice, wisdom and restraint, without which no so solemnly

1 In the Reichstag on 4 August 1914, Reich Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg called the German invasion of Belgium contrary to international law.

2 Refers to Pius XII's three telegrams of 10 May 1940; compare Letter No. 48, Footnote 2.

concluded a peace could have continuing and blessingful consequences, which all people expect with deep longing.

God has assigned to us the responsibility-laden and sorrowful task, amid the antagonisms of an ever-expanding, murderous war, of keeping Christianity and mankind aware of their natural and supernatural community values, and continually urging them on to victory, so that these community values will be realized tomorrow when the fighting fades away into the most essential bases of the new order of justice and peace, which will be worthy of its name. Every thought we think, every word we speak, every prayer that ascends to heaven from our heart, is directed toward this highest of goals. In innermost agreement with our predecessors Benedict XV and Pius XI,

who rest in God, and in trusted application of the principles which they followed during the tempestuous times of the last world war and the postwar era as the norm for their shepherd-in-chief resolutions<sup>1</sup>, we have in an incomparable and more difficult and complicated overall situation, always troubled to choose our own comments in such a way that they stood in complete unison with the principle "*Veritatem facientes in caritate*"<sup>2</sup>. We hope most earnestly that in all people -- irrespective of which side they find themselves on in the present fighting -- the number is great and becomes ever greater, of those who in their need and the spiritual hopelessness of these days turn all the more fervently to Him from whom alone salvation can come, and at your dark hour of fear and doubts to the words of [Simon] the future Peter, who spoke the unforgettable words: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (John 6, 69).

\* \* \*

The hard trials and tests of the times which have overtaken Germany, in which the Catholic members of your people, along with their fellow countrymen, have now also proven,

1 Important opinions concerning these political questions were, among other things, in the peace suggestions of Benedict XV of 1 August 1917, "To the heads of the belligerent peoples"! (Text: AAS 9 (1917) Pp. 417-420, WIPPERMANN 1917/11,1 P. 349ff. and elsewhere on occasion; and finally in W. STEGLICH Pp. 117-231 and the encyclical of Pius XI *Ubi arcano* of 23 December 1922 (Text: AAS 14 [1922] Pp. 673-700), which had pronounced *Pax Christi in regno Christi* as its guiding principle and the goal of his pontificate: compare STAATSLEXIKON I, Cols. 1035-1038 and VI, Cols. 279-281 with further literature

2 Eph 4,15: The truth redeems in love.

through their dedication and unshakeable fidelity to their sacrificing and suffering community, that there is still no noticeable deviation or attenuation. And of course we are certain: Despite drab and pastorally-painful experiences with changing effects, but always the same unchanging patterns, others have always been called throughout the centuries to turn, in hope and confidence, to the *via Crucis* of the Church. For the elite troops of Catholic thought and action, it is precisely the surrounding threat that prepares them with vigilance and around-the-clock readiness for that unconditional participation and dedication which are the unintentional noble fruits of the persecution of the Church of Christ by its adversaries, and from which will grow new victories for the Church at a time determined by the

Lord. What we have read in many of your reports about the exemplary eagerness of your priests and believers, and especially also about the youth still remaining in active contact with the Church, is for us a solace and a promise of the future for which we express our deepest thanks to the Lord, as well as to you and your co-workers in the clergy and the laity.

You yourselves, venerable brothers, know best from the daily experiences of your responsible pastoral offices which increasing dangers your faithful-living Catholics are exposed to. This time of extraordinary hazard to souls must be also be the time of extraordinary achievements of pastoral duties. If it is the obvious task of these pastoral duties to bring to awareness and action the delightful, the beautiful, the triumphant in Catholic belief through religious education, above all to the youth, it would be an ominous deception to believe, with a false supernaturalism, that one could increase this effect through attenuation of the "*vigilare et orare*," about which the Divine Master has reminded us so earnestly and seriously (Mark 14, 38), through underemphasis of the absolute necessity of personal involvement with mercy, through incorrect underevaluation of the fight against sin and for purity of heart -- and that in the moment, when, as we would almost like to say, a doubling and tripling of good will is needed in order to be able to stand before God, (cf. Luke 21, 36)<sup>1</sup>.

We don't need to remind you how very much needs to be done by you about such unhealthy, pernicious trends in the spiritual life of your believers...

1 The Bible text reads: Be vigilant at all times.

... and, even more, to protect your clergy; however, your priests must not forget that the most effective pastoral weapon always was, and today still is, a sacred ardor in prayer, which God has the authority, as it were, do to, as well as a life of daily fighting about priestly thoroughness and continuous sacrifice for the things of Christ and the salvation of souls.

Still more than during other times, the members of the spiritual estate must be careful to avoid anything in their pastoral activity which could rightly give rise to the appearance that any of the aims of their priestly work have no relationship to the actual tasks of the Church. Through all their words and actions, above all in the exercise of their duty to preach, which has become doubly difficult due to circumstances, they should keep in mind Paul's reminder: "*Nemini dantes ullam offensionem, ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum*" (2 Cor. 6, 3)<sup>1</sup>.

The more the servants of the sanctuary keep away from entanglement in purely worldly disagreements and from the attitudes of political parties, the



more unassailable will be their priestly authority and pastoral work, the more convincingly will they be able to raise their voices when it has to do with proclaiming Catholic belief with all its truths through to its final practical conclusions, against the errors and prejudices of the day. Then the Catholic people, and also many of those who are outside the fold, will perceive in them something of the spirit which the People's Apostle [Paul] wanted to instill in the children of the Gospel in his day: "*In omnibus exhibeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros in multa patientia, in tribulationibus, in necessitatibus, in angustiis, in plagis, in carceribus, in seditionibus, in laboribus, in vigiliis, in jejuniis, in castitate, in scientia, in longanimitate, in suavitate, in caritate non ficta, in verbo veritatis, in virtute Dei, per arma justitiae*" (2 Cor. 6, 4-7)<sup>2</sup>.

May all of you, venerable brothers, as you journey to the grave of the Apostle of the Germans [St. Boniface], and during your discussions, be accompanied by the awareness that we draw even closer to you spiritually than normally during these significant times, that your concerns are our concerns, your grief is our grief, your joy is ours, and they will remain so forever. In deep supplication, we call down the inspiring strength of the Almighty upon you and hope that the...

1 The translation of the Latin quotation is: "We cause no one to stumble in anything, in order that no fault may be found with our ministry."

2 The translation of the Latin quotation is: "... on the contrary, in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, through much endurance, in afflictions, hardships, constraints, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, vigils, fasts; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love, in truthful speech, in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness at the right and at the left; ..."

... immortal souls entrusted to you in all districts of the German Reich gain a new ardor of belief from your decisions, with steadfast, tough courage and resolute willingness to suffer for Christ and, in connection with this, that they do not overestimate their own strength, but have a vision of victory rooted in trust in the omnipotence and all-knowingness of God which every martyr's grave preaches, and in the triumphant words engraved on the statue of St. Boniface in Fulda, which are our solace in difficult times: "*Verbum Domini manet in aeternum*"<sup>1</sup>. In this hope, we send you, venerable brothers, your priests and members of the orders, the faithful of all ranks and levels, the Catholic youth, those serving in the field, the wounded and the sick and all other sorrowing victims of the war, the apostolic blessing with particular love from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, on the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, 6 August 1940.

• **No. 54 Pius XII to Diocesan Vicar Rohracher/Gurk**

Vatican, 7 August 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Negotiations with government agencies. Austria as a Concordat-free area. Dangers threatening religious institutions. Religious instructions. Confidence in the future. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Andreas Rohracher, Auxiliary Bishop of Isba, Diocesan Vicar of Gurk:

We thank you, venerable brother, for your letter dated 8 June with the enclosures. The first of these, the transcript for the record, has claimed our special attention<sup>2</sup>. The obligatory tone on the part of the government agency in the Berlin discussion leaves no doubt that there has been no satisfactory decision or solution to any of the issues addressed. However, based on other similar occasions, the latter experience needs no inducement to avoid such contacts with that government.

1 The Word of our God will stand forever (compare Is. 40, 8).

2 Bishop Rohracher had negotiated on 16 May 1940 with Ministerial Director Roth in the Reich Ministry for Church Issues over the national interventions into Church life in Austria and had reported to the pope about it.

The cautious but frank manner which you brought to this discussion and your certain sense for maintaining reservations and responsibilities permits us to wish that, if such opportunities present themselves again, you will take advantage of them. We have complete confidence in the constancy of your fundamental attitude and your balanced judgement.

The government's statement of their position that Austria is an area exempt from the Concordat is remarkable. Then, from the legal standpoint, one would logically have to grant the Church side full immunity from seizure of Church offices. In this case the claim to the "right of the state to seize bishop's offices and appoint an apostolic administrator" would violate the law and set an ominous precedent, not only regarding various Church matters in the German Reich, but also for restricting Church freedoms in other countries not covered by the Concordat. In such crucial questions, only precise law can be the basis for proceeding practically.

Regarding the St. Hermagora's Brotherhood of Books<sup>1</sup>, do what you can to save them by amending the statutes or deferring the dissolution, or at least to preserve their assets for the diocese. The same holds for the Episcopal Boys' Seminary<sup>2</sup>. We agree with your plan. In the case of the Maria-Loretto Church at St. Andrä in the Lavanttal, consideration of pastoral duties will probably indicate which is the best avenue to follow<sup>3</sup>.

The government's reason for the dissolution of the Society of the Passing Away of Saint Joseph<sup>4</sup>, namely that its leadership is located in foreign countries -- is of fundamental importance. On principle that reason would entail ominous effects and complications. Also, even tacit acknowledgment of the same cannot be possible on the part of the Church. It would be good if you could see whether it comes up again in national actions.

All news which comes in about religious instruction in the schools reminds us to provide, develop and secure extracurricular, purely religious instruction by the Church.

1 The Borromäus Guild in Germany is similar to the Slovenian *Volksteil*.

2 The Boys' Theological Seminary had already been expropriated in 1939; this was about the confiscation of assets for which the diocese was to have been the trustee.

3 This church belonged to the expropriated Jesuit College of St. Andrä in the Lavanttal (compare letter No. 40). The state wanted to return the Loretto church without providing for its structural maintenance or making available the earned income from its assets to the Church.

4 This devout brotherhood had been dissolved by order of the Reich's governor in Vienna.

We confidently leave the fate of the Holy Church in German lands after the war to divine providence. Despite the severity and insecurity of the situation, there is no lack of facts and circumstances which are favorable and will work in favor of the Church.

We remember you in our daily prayers and grant you, venerable brother, and your whole diocese, especially also those serving in the military, our apostolic blessing from our whole heart.

From the Vatican, 7 August 1940

• **No. 55 Pius XII to the German Episcopate**

Vatican, 29 September 1940

SEGRETERIA DEI BREVI AI PRINCIPI: Draft letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand and the remark *Ex aud[ientia] S[ancti]S[is]mi 6—XII-40* / *Non publicares* by the hand of the Substitute Secretary of State.

Thanks for the joint communique. Your loyalty to the Holy See and the unity and ardor of soul of the bishops is obvious from it. In general, decisions praised. Particularly emphasized: the eagerness in defense against the errors of the times and the concern about unabridged Christian teaching and its realization in everyday life. Especially urgent are the youth pastoral duties in the schools and in outside instruction. Necessity of educating the believers to frequently receive the Eucharist. Commendation of priests' practices. Particular concern for Christian family life and for good priest formation. Reminiscence on the years as nuncio in Germany. Praise for the ardor of soul and the allegiance to the Church which the love of Fatherland does not preclude. Reminder to resistance. Blessings.

We were quite pleased when we read the joint letter which you sent us from Fulda, where you convened at the grave of Saint Boniface, the Apostle of Germany<sup>1</sup>. Once again it became apparent to us, which we incidentally had already discovered on more than one occasion, that not only are you most tightly connected with this Holy See, but that you are also united in brotherly love and reciprocal understanding among each other, in that above all you make sure that the spiritual salvation of your people and the expansion of Christian life are provided to everyone in the most practical manner. In order to attain this goal with apostolic zeal you have, after entreating the Holy Spirit for His inspiration and effective assistance in your discussions, drafted excellent resolutions which correspond completely with your prudence. Above all, we would like to support with fatherly praise and confirm with our authority those resolutions among them which deal with the defense against the errors of the times which confuse the hearts of the faithful and seek to diminish the authentic brilliance of Catholic belief through the darkness of human arrogance. No less, however, we want to approve the guidelines, which pertain to the protection and proclamation of the whole and unabridged truth of the Gospel and the special advancement of Christian life at all levels of society. As you yourselves know, for this it is not only helpful, but absolutely necessary, that all believers and particularly the youth know the commandments of Christianity and internalize them with enthusiasm, in families at home as well as in church and also, as far as this is still possible at all under the present circumstances, in the public schools and home schooling; and the youth is to be seriously encouraged to assimilate a sufficient and thorough religious knowledge, to love its religion and to follow it. Along with this, however, the lifestyle of the individual has to be congruent with the totality of religion as revealed by God, which is the only path to salvation for the individual as well as for the nation, and ...

1 The Bishops Conference had taken place in Fulda from 20 - 22 August 1940.

... which confers on people the strength from above to achieve their salvation; your pastoral concern, as you yourselves have written, ought to be directed as frequently as possible toward unacquainted believers and, if possible, to see that they go to the Table of the Lord daily, and that either the priests celebrate Mass in houses specifically equipped for this purpose, or at least participate by themselves at home with all eagerness. Furthermore, as you yourselves recognize, there are two more tasks of your pastoral offices - - namely the sanctity of family life and the proper education of candidates for the priesthood -- of such substance and importance, that they indeed also merit a word of fatherly caution on our part. -- However, all of this is probably well known to you and was considered by you with all due diligence during your mutual discussions at the grave of the holy Boniface. It therefore only remains for us to encourage you to the active and consistent execution of your decisions, and to beg for the necessary merciful assistance from the First and Highest Archbishop. -- You know exactly with what fatherly love we are devoted to your people, among whom we gladly spent so many years as the representative [nuncio] of the Representative of Jesus Christ, and which we always recall in grateful remembrance. We are therefore especially pleased when we see how your apostolic zeal is directed toward leading the sheep entrusted to you, who have strayed from the straight and narrow path, back to the pasture of salvation, and when we are witness to how you, in the present emergency of the Catholic Church, simultaneously remain attached to your Fatherland in complete unanimity and with genuine love, and how you seek with all eagerness to bring about a practical agreement between Church and state, that prerequisite of true happiness and right order, with all the means that the sacred laws of religion and your obligations of conscience permit. Don't hesitate to circumspectly and unfalteringly do all that is needed, and be confident that we also long for nothing more and beg for nothing more earnestly in our daily prayers to God the Almighty. -- As a pledge of heavenly mercy and a sign of our good will we grant all of you, beloved sons and venerable brothers, as well as all the faithful entrusted to you, the apostolic blessing from our heart.

• **No. 56 Pius XII. to Bishop Sproll/Rottenburg**

Vatican, 25 November 1940

SEGRETERIA DI S.S. PER LE LETTERE LATINE: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in an unknown hand and the marginal remark *Al Vescovo di Rottenburg (Germania)/ 25 episcopato (25 novembre 1940).*

Congratulations on the bishop's 25 year jubilee. How the pope is joined in this hour of affliction to the bishop during this festive commemoration. Thanks be to God. Praise for the faithful. Authority to grant the apostolic blessing. Blessings.

1 Bishop Sproll was consecrated auxiliary bishop on 25 November 1915 and consecrated bishop on 18 June 1916.

2 The pope refers to the banishment of the bishop from his diocese; compare F. ZIPFEL, *Kirchenkampf*, P. 464 f.

3 The Auxiliary Bishop the Diocese of Rottenburg since 1929 had been Franz Josef Fischer (d. 1958).

To our venerable brother Johann Baptist, Bishop of Rottenburg:

To our joy, we have recently learned that you will soon celebrate the 25th anniversary of your consecration as bishop<sup>1</sup>. Just as we wanted to be near you during the unfavorable events<sup>2</sup>, so we now congratulate you from our whole heart on this glad day of memories of your sacred consecration and send you our blessings and wishes for your happiness. We also want to properly thank God with you for the numerous blessings which He has bestowed upon you in His goodness during this long period of your pastoral activities. And we are certain that your loyal believers will also pay you the same thanks for providing them your love in the Diocese of Rottenburg for such a long time already. We earnestly pray to our benign God, however, that He may allow you to remain with your Church for quite a long time yet and that you, above all in these uneasy times, are richly granted the mercies of heavenly solace. However, so that the anniversary of your consecration as bishop may bring richer blessings to your people, we grant you the authority to impart, in our name and with our authority, on a day to be determined either by yourself or your auxiliary bishop, or by another spiritual dignitary, after the celebration of the pontifical Mass, to the faithful present, the apostolic blessing, and to proclaim to them a plenary indulgence, which can be obtained under the familiar conditions of the Church. As a pledge of the heavenly mercies and a sign of our particular good will, we grant you, venerable brother, your auxiliary bishop, as well as your whole clergy and people, the apostolic blessing in the Lord from all our heart.

• **No. 57 Pius XII. to Cardinal Bertram/Breslau**

Vatican, 8 December 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter No. 10880, with corrections in the pope's own hand and the comment *Aud[ientia] del S. Padre 26. XII. 1940* /

*Conservare la data dell'8 dic[embre] by the hand of the Substitute Secretary of State and the expediting remark questa lettera fu spedita il 28--XII--40.*

Thanks for the transmitted reports. The Fulda Bishops Conference. The visit of two bishops to Rome. Deterioration of the Church's situation in Germany. Various measures against the Church. Efforts to bring about a justifiable peace acceptable before God. Stand of the Holy See on the war. New kinds of pastoral duties. Pastoral care of the soldiers. Youth and the itinerant Church. Worries about the clergy. Liturgical movement, liturgical language. Concern about the religious conditions in Poland. Blessings.

1 Bishop Sproll was consecrated auxiliary bishop on 25 November 1915 and consecrated bishop on 18 June 1916.

2 The pope refers to the banishment of the bishop from his diocese; compare F. ZIPFEL, *Kirchenkampf*, P. 464 f.

3 The Auxiliary Bishop the Diocese of Rottenburg since 1929 had been Franz Josef Fischer (d. 1958).

To our beloved son Adolf Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau  
Pius PP. XII:

You have sent us, beloved son, via your letter dated 8 September, the proceedings of the plenary conference of the bishops of the dioceses of Germany in Fulda on 20 to 22 August of this year as well as a transcript of your clarification directed to Cardinal Schulte of 25 June<sup>1</sup>. With deep thanks we convey to you and your brothers in the episcopate the expression of our particular acknowledgment and satisfaction for the unusually tight production schedule which you have managed to maintain at your conference, and for having dealt so extensively and thoroughly with the issues which are of top priority for the Catholic Church in Germany today. We desire very much to be able to broaden our understanding of the written material by means of oral discussions with the two of you<sup>2</sup>; as the present situation calls for more frequent visits of the German bishops to Rome, we have accepted the two occurring visits as a welcome substitute for a larger number which, unfortunately, obviously cannot be attained under the present circumstances.

If we, in our letter to you on the occasion of the last Fulda conference, held out little hope for the establishment of a better relationship between Church and state in Germany, the months which have passed in the meantime have, after all, as is well known to us, lowered those expectations even further. We think, among many other things, about the development of the school system with you and also in the newly-included western regions, and furthermore about the actions of the other side regarding life in the orders

and the victimization of the incomparably beneficial work of the Sisters' Cooperative, and described in your proceedings under No. 27g, which appear to have undergone jarring developments in the meantime. You know yourself, how greatly such things impede the peace between Church...

1 The letter from Cardinal Bertram to Cardinal Schulte of 25 June 1940 contains an explanation of the Bertram/Hitler correspondence on the occasion of Hitler's birthday on 20 April 1940 (compare W. ADOLPH, *Hirtenamt*, Pp. 161-163), and represents an implicit answer to the misgivings raised by Bishop Preysing (compare letter No. 46).

2 One of the two bishops was Bishop Berning of Osnabrück, who was received in audience by the pope on 14 October; the other bishop, Ferdinand Pawlikowski of Seckau (Graz), was presumably in Rome shortly thereafter. The news was spread by Swiss newspapers at the time that three German bishops had been in Rome right before the Fulda Bishops Conference; this report was denied on 9 October 1940 by the *OSSERVATORE ROMANO* (No. 234 [24.427] P. 1).

3 No. 27g of the minutes deals with the killing of the insane, already begun in Germany, and euphemistically described as "euthanasia."

... and state, since it is impossible for the Church to come to terms with them silently. Nevertheless, we still consider it our duty of conscience to allow no opportunity which could lead to a reasonable peace between Church and state to pass by unexplored. We emphasize, before God and the future, that we are talking about a justifiable peace for the Catholic Church in Germany: a peace which guarantees the life of the Church, and maybe also its kinds of activities -- in some [respects] -- others may be as in the past. -- However, we are not speaking about a "peace at any price": such a formula as a manifestation of the Church's peace endeavors would be incompatible with the principles of our faith and the nature of the Catholic Church.

Your words have caused us perceptible satisfaction over the full understanding that you have for the Holy See's position on the war<sup>1</sup>. In order not to incite a public demonstration on your side, we have discussed this issue at length in our letter to the Fulda conference, so that no trace of misunderstanding caused by this side takes hold between us and the German Catholics. We ourselves have even been careful in our behavior, precisely because of the needs of the Church with which you live, to avoid confrontations over the war with no one as much as with the German people. We have received great solace, upon studying the transcript of your conference, from the realization, which we had already had time and again during the years we spent in Germany, of how quickly and how energetically the German bishops and their co-workers, as soon as new religious circumstances appear, find and take new paths in their pastoral duties. You



may be assured that we remember your efforts and the present religious situation in our daily prayers and offerings to the Lord. Your needs are great and we feel them completely, the same as you. As for the religious and moral needs of those in the field: we have heard desperate and bitter complaints about how intolerably their religious care is severely restricted and impeded. Should the religious needs of the youth actually mount still more in the future, as they threaten to do, your entire school-age youth could be left with teachers without any religious formation. Re: the needs of the "itinerant church": We have read the informative report which your transcript<sup>2</sup> contains about this, not without feeling depressed. The pastors and the...

1 Cardinal Bertram had written about this on 8 September 1940: "All the bishops are united in their full understanding of the position of the Holy See on the European conflagration, and of the demonstrated complete impartiality of the [pope's] fatherly involvement with the destiny of those nations which have suffered the most heavily under the events."

2 Enclosure 8 of the conference transcript deals with the itinerant church; (Pp. 32-34); regarding this term, see also Letter No. 60, Footnote 3.

... believers in the new Diaspora and the new settlements have our very special blessings. With respect to concerns about the education of enough clergy, grounded in spirituality, but above all profoundly faithful, devout and loyal to the Church: We are certain that you and your brothers in the pastoral office will turn your full attention to this absolutely essential task. In particular, what concerns the desires and efforts in the liturgical area is a matter for the bishops -- and you have done well at that -- to insure that the common devotional practices remain within the framework and in the spirit of the Holy Canons. The Church will broad-mindedly approve everything which increases the healthy psychological effects of grasping the beauty and elegance of the Mass by the plain folk, and contributes to their true edification. Clergy and believers should not forget, however, the crucial and always merciful effects of sacred action, and that these are always available to the individual in all their richness by commandment, even when their manifest form is less impressive and attractive. We will examine with good will those cases in which the episcopacy believes that the edification and promotion of spiritual salvation can really be enhanced through the use of the mother tongue. However, the young clergy should also be aware (in order to foresee, from a whole range of other considerations here), of exactly what significance the uniform liturgical language [Latin] has for the celebration the Holy Sacrifice over almost the entire world, transcending

space and time, serving as a community-forming force against unhealthy limitations and impediments and avoiding, or at least minimizing, many embarrassing tensions in nationally- and linguistically-mingled territories. We owe you special thanks for the noble fundamental attitude and brotherly concerns which you and your brothers in the episcopacy have brought to bear on the religious conditions in Poland. We need not tell you how very much we hope that the reciprocal trust...

1 For the whole question of the liturgical movement in Germany compare *MOUVEMENT LITURGIQUE*. When the pope in the following emphasized the importance of the Latin liturgical language for nationally and linguistically mixed territories, he should also have considered the experiences of the last weeks before the outbreak of war in the German-Polish border regions; concerning the language difficulties with the Mass compare ADSS 1 No. 70 P. 186, No. 88 P. 204 and following, No. 92 P. 212f.

2 The last chapter of the conference transcript dealt with this.

... and the same pastoral eagerness on both sides will find ways and means (as far as they don't conflict with *vires maiores*<sup>1</sup>), in order to secure the pastoral duties of all Catholics in the eastern districts. Calling down God's mercies on the apostolic concerns, hopes and love expressed in the decisions reached in your Fulda discussions, we grant you, beloved son, your clergy and your faithful the sought-after apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart.  
From the Vatican, 8 December 1940.

### **No. 58 Pius XII. to Bishop Preysing/ Berlin**

Vatican, 15 [25] December 1940

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand and dated 15 December; a transcript No. 56/41 of the copy in A. E. S., Germania 785 is similar to the copy (in DA BERLIN) dated 25 December.

Importance of the information. Thanks for transmitted news. About the Fulda Bishops Conference. Contents of the pope's letter to Cardinal Bertram. Not a peace at any price. Various actions against the Church. Campaign against religious literature. Public position of the Holy Office. Blessings for the new year.

To our venerable brother Konrad von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin:

Before the year comes to an end, we don't want to forget to give you our deepest thanks for your efforts to send us, in every case, valuable news and your well-balanced evaluations of the course of Church events in Germany. Letters of this kind are always welcome from you and other members of the episcopacy, even when they have little pleasant to report. They support us in our endeavors to maintain a balance between light and darkness in our judgment, resolutions and measures, through a maximum of clearly objective information.

Your reports of 9 and 30 August, 6, 14 and 20 September, 19 and 26 October, 1, 2, 16 and 20 November were proof of your loyal connection to us and your zealous concern for the honor, the rights and the freedom the Holy Church ...

1 That is, a higher authority.

... which these attitudes as well as your comments have determined during the fundamental discussions which took place at the last Fulda conference. You regret that some of these disputes were not completely settled. It will always be difficult in cases where objective reasons and private considerations collide, and moreover where tensions arise between fundamental motives and considerations of practicality, to arrive at final, conclusive lucidity. Nevertheless, other conferees were, completely or partially, divided concerning your fundamental opinion that, because of the circumstances, a deeper discussion and a more final clarification of the issues were not advisable, nor even any longer necessary.

In our letter to Cardinal Bertram<sup>2</sup> -- in response to the copious transcript of last August's Fulda Conference -- we emphasized, in consideration of the many sorrowful, unsolved questions still existing between Church and state, that we feel conscience-bound to let no opportunity to smooth the path of peace between both sides pass by unused, but when we think of a just peace in the future for the Church in Germany, it will not be a "peace any any price," since such an arrangement would be irreconcilable with the belief and the nature of the Catholic Church. The material sent us has given us clear insight in each case. The two cases: the prohibition of the Lenten pastoral letter of the Bishop of Eichstätt<sup>3</sup> and the proscription of the first part of Cardinal Faulhaber's pastoral letter "Strongly in the Lord"<sup>4</sup> (which lies before us), are both typically depressing reminders of the extent to which Church freedoms and the independent words of the bishops are limited and choked off. The second example belongs to a whole group of cases of which we have heard and, as far as we can tell, which only illustrate the endeavors

of the Party to keep religious and Catholic reading materials away from the Army altogether. ....

1 The conference had taken place from 20 to 22 August 1940. Concerning the discussion compare W. ADOLPH, *Hirtenamt*, P. 169 and following with a handwritten record by the Bishop of Berlin of the Fulda Bishops Conference of 1940. Especially important there is the paragraph on P. 170: "If it appears that the actions of the Bishop of Berlin were somewhat inconsistent, it is true that he did not resign from the Fulda Conference. He was also ready to resign his bishopric, but was dissuaded from this step by the urgent pleas of the Holy Father."

2 See Letter No. 57.

3 Bishop Michael Rackl; his pastoral letter of 2 February 1940 bore the title "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath!" and was purely of a religious nature.

4 This pastoral letter, dated 20 January 1940, was also of a purely religious nature.

That portends the start of a campaign against religious texts displayed in the churches or intended to be distributed in the field so they have, as we can see from the documents, also proved to be untenable<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, no reason or "possibility" exists to explain to someone of the opinion that the previous position of Catholic literature corresponded less to obligations toward the Fatherland -- especially since the other side, as you have correctly noted, probably only intended, in pressing that issue, to induce the Catholic episcopate to an explanation which, in truth, it would not have been able to give.

Regarding the jarring processes which were the subject of the courageous letter from Württemberg, the Holy Office has meanwhile issued a public opinion based on the fundamentals. We have spoken out briefly and objectively with our highest authority, so far as it was possible. We would have shirked our duty had we been silent regarding such actions. It is now up to the German bishops to decide what to do, depending on the circumstances and locale.

The approaching new year shows only one gleam of light so far, namely the certainty that we must live through these events right up to their final conclusion and until its most helpless victims stand under the protection of the omniscient, almighty Providence. In this solace, which is greater than all current problems, we beg for you, venerable brother, the clergy and the faithful of your Berlin diocese, in grateful reply to the Christmas...

1 The accusations against Catholic literature were raised on the occasion of a conference in the Reich's Propaganda Ministry on 13 September 1940: representatives the Catholic and Protestant Church press had been called together; active support of government policies was demanded, they presented cases of supposedly damaging behavior and told

the bishops to introduce countermanding measures, otherwise there would be no more allotment of funds. The nuncio in Berlin also reported extensively on this meeting in his report No. 772 of 26 September 1940 (A. E. S., GERMANIA): *Scopo del convegno era di ammonire i ministri delle due confessioni religiose per il loro atteggiamento, giudicato dal Governo ostile al regime e specialmente disfattista in ordine all' attuale guerra. Un Direttore ministeriale tenne a questo scopo un discorso, in cui, dopo aver messo in rilievo, che mentre il clero delle nazioni ostili alla Germania ... anima ed incita il popolo alla guerra, i ministri delle due confessioni religiose in Germania sono invece taciturni o meglio contrari ... La Conferenza fu chiusa molto rapidamente, togliendo agli intervenuti ogni possibilità di chiarimenti e di discussioni. La situazione della Chiesa Cattolica, dopo questa accusa, che per di più agli occhi del partito appare documentata, non è facile. Non vorrei essere pessimista nel vedervi un primo passo per preparare un' accusa di antipatriottismo, che dovrebbe, poi servire a suo tempo: ma sarebbe ... imprudente bagatellizzare la cosa e non metterci sull' attend, per evitare la possibilità di ulteriori accuse di questo genere.*

2 That is the Protestant Provincial Bishop of Württemberg, Th. Worm, to Reichsminister Frick on 19 March 1940 in protest against the "euthanasia" of the insane, particularly in the Grafeneck Institution; compare also F. ZIFPEL, *Kirchenkampf*, P. 224.

3 Compare AAS 32 (1940) P. 353f. as well as F. ZIPFEL, *Kirchenkampf*, Pp. 222-225 and W. ADOLPH, *Hirtenamt* P. 85 ff.

... wishes you conveyed to us with your letter dated the 16th of this month<sup>1</sup>, the whole wealth of the mercy and the peace of the Divine Child, and grant you, as a pledge of His deepest love for all of you, the sought-after apostolic blessing.

From the Vatican, 15 December 1940

<sup>1</sup> This supplement proves that the transcribed shorthand letter originally dated 15 December was prepared only several days later.