

# The 1943 Letters of Pius XII to the German Bishops

## • No. 94 Pius XII. to the German Catholics

Vatican, 3 January 1943

A. E. S., GERMANIA 859: Draft Letter No. 114/43, with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Report about efforts to achieve a balance in Germany. Intensification of the *Kirchenkampf*. Mourning for the fallen. The number of the faithful followers is larger. The religious fate of the youth. The task of the family. Praise for the Catholic youth. The Church is a home for all people. The Church and the German way. Blessings on the Church's fidelity. Longing for peace. Prayers for peace. Blessings.

To our beloved sons and daughters in the German Reich from Pope Pius XII:  
Beloved sons and daughters!

Your homeland, whose internal and external progress has occupied such an important place in the history of the Christian West, has been for years the point of departure and the focus of a confrontation which has had, with ever greater clarity, the distinct goal of fighting against Christian belief and the Christian way of life.

Despite many attempts undertaken with the maximum desire for communication by the bearers of public responsibility with an active sympathy to avoid this challenge and to spare the believers of our sacred faith difficult trials in German lands, developments have taken just the opposite course.

During the recent decade, Catholic life, work and the profession of faith on German soil have become a Way of the Cross, the disturbing extent of whose bitterness and destruction are known to God alone.

A Way of the Cross on which, however -- thanks to the mighty mercy of the Lord -- the boldness of belief and the faithfulness of the living generations has proven them to be worthy examples of the holy traditions which formed the fame of the "*Germania sacra*"<sup>1</sup> of earlier times.

<sup>1</sup> Literally: "Holy Germany;" under this banner the individual dioceses began the great Church history of Germany in the 18th Century. Obviously, the medieval designation *Sacrum Imperium* might also be being alluded to here, which title has lived on, since early modern times, in the name "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation."

We feel deep pastoral sorrow for all those who have broken their loyalty oath to Christ and his Church. The hour will come, when those who have

taken their detours and wrong paths, i.e. sacrificing fear of God for fear of man and sacrificing the eternal for the temporal, will also comprehend our love and our prayers.

Meanwhile, we are filled still more with grateful joy at the realization that the number of the weak-kneed or even the declared turncoats is small in comparison to the proud ranks of those who still cluster heroically around the altar of the true God, resisting all enticements and threats to confess Him loudly and joyfully, nurturing their belief at His sacrificial table and drawing the strength of love from His Sacred Heart, which is stronger than death (compare Cant. 8, 6). For this we thank you, and above all we also give thanks to God, whose strong arm and all-surmounting mercy can save the life of the Church in German lands from the presently-menacing dangers, as we hope in full confidence.

That about which you particularly worry, beloved sons and daughters, is the upcoming Catholic generation, the religious fate of the youth, the belief of your children. It's not as though the youth were spared problems with their religious belief in times past. But earlier, methods were available to you in rich fullness to develop the qualities of belief in your children and to protect them against dangers. Under what you are now so very much suffering, a powerful public influence is already depriving your children of the religious and moral influence of the parental home and the Church in their earliest years, in order to permeate them with a spirit foreign and hostile to your educational values. We comprehend your spiritual need, because it is our own primary concern. But we bear it without allowing it to discourage us. Here, too, the words of Holy Scripture are applicable: "God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10, 13).

Where it is made impossible for you to exert parental authority over your children, commend them to God's fatherly kindness and the mother's love of the Virgin Mary in fervent prayer and daily sacrifice. During the years which the children spend with their families, either completely or partially, instruct, teach and form them with twice the zeal. The circumstances require you to often take on the work of the priests and the Church with your children as well. The best and most crucial thing you can give your children for their lives is the example of the innermost attitudes of a true Christian way of life. Give them your extravagant fatherly and motherly love, that their hearts be unbreakably joined to you, and through you to Christ and the Church. Don't forget that nature and mercy merge into a strong current in Christian family living, which is able to overcome all obstacles. The Catholic youth which still stands despite the mind-bewildering frenzy of the

past years and, as they tell us, still holds confidently and courageously to the things of Christ, is both witness and fruit of that source of strength. You may confidently hope that your example, together with your pleas and supplications before God, will lead back many of those who have become madmen into their abandoned paternal home of the Catholic Church with its abundances of truth and life, in reconciliation and peace, in mercy and in love.

The paternal home of the Catholic Church stands open to all persons and peoples. Everyone can earn the same rights within her. Your forefathers have found their spiritual home and inner happiness in the Church for over a thousand years, without ever having had to sacrifice the welfare, property and nobility of their national individuality. Men like Karl the Great <sup>1</sup> [Charlemagne] and Heinrich the Holy, women like the Holy Hildegard and Elisabeth, belong completely to you and completely to the Catholic church, and along with them hundreds and thousands of others, even up to our times, whose names your Fatherland mentions with thanks and the Church with a mother's pride. What they built is a quite homeland-style and a quite Christian culture. Don't be confused if catchwords such as these are shouted at your ears today: Christian belief and the Catholic Church are foreign to German nature. History testifies overwhelmingly to just the opposite. How could Christ, "... God Who is over all be blessed forever." (Romans 9, 5), how could the Church, His bride, "... that He acquired with His own blood." (Acts 20, 28), how could the fullness of the truth and mercy which Christ brought us, how could they be foreign to a people? What every nation finds to be real, true and according to Nature, "all the beauty of heaven and earth<sup>2</sup>," is willingly affirmed by the Church to be ennobled by mercy and blessed and sanctified by Christ in your God and creation.

From a confident and deep approval of Christianity the German people, like all peoples, can only gain enrichment, refinement, and strength in the best and highest sense of the words. Therefore, whoever stakes everything on the blessings and mercy of the Cross of Christ, like you, in order to protect the national character of his homeland, is a more far-seeing and more level-headed architect of the true greatness and future of his people than he who -- misunderstanding and violating the spiritual heritage of the past and the deepest longings of the present -- undertakes to write the charter the New Order envisioned by them on the tombstone of Christian Germany.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that Pius also names Charlemagne among the German saints, even though his canonization in the year 1166 by an antipope (Paschalis III) took place during the dispute between Friedrich Barbarossa and the rightful pope, Alexander III.

2 From the hymn "Most Beautiful Lord Jesus."

The time will come, when the prejudices and misjudgements of the day will be obvious for their triviality, and when your successors will gratefully count all those whose suffering for the salvation of Christian Germany is shown to be worthwhile among the co-creators of true prosperity for their Fatherland.

We look forward to the end of the present bloody fighting with a burning desire. We have not failed to take any steps which might somehow have been useful in relieving its unspeakable destitution. Our determination and efforts for peace apply in equal measure to all peoples swept up in the scourge of war. We strive for a true and lasting peace for all without exception, which secures [decent] living conditions for all.

It is our daily and hourly prayer that such a peace will soon be granted to all the countries dragged into the war. For this we call upon God's mercies for you as well as for all. We call upon them for your priests in the homeland and in the war zones, that their hearts may be full of the love of God and the patience of Christ for all without exception and against all hardships, physical and spiritual. We call them down upon those who have suffered, and are still suffering, for Christ's name's sake (compare Apoc. 2, 3), that their sacrifice may become the seed of a new flowering of Christian belief and sacred custom among you. We call them down with fervor on your children, that they may see happier times for the faithfulness of their belief, and that they might lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity (compare 1 Tim. 2, 2). We call them down upon your spouses, sons and brothers in the field. We call them down upon your sick and needy. We call them down upon your dead. We call God's mercies down upon all of you, that you might hold fast to the comforting words which He Himself spoke to you: "The Lord is good, a refuge on the day of distress; He takes care of those who have recourse to Him, when the flood rages." (Nahum 1, 7). As a pledge of God's overabundant mercies, we grant you all the apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart and with particular love.

From the Vatican, on the feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, 3 January 1943<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This letter by the pope to the German Catholics stems from an express wish of the German bishops. On 13 September 1942, the Chairman of the Fulda Bishops Conference had reported on the conference, which had taken place on 18 to 20 August; after he had set forth the difficulties which the Church was experiencing in Germany, and the ineffectiveness of all the protests, he continued: "Perhaps Your Holiness might find an opportunity to raise the courage of our clergy and people. Nothing is more necessary

than an invincible faith in God and a confidence in victory, a genuine spirit of the catacombs... I cannot close these few lines without making the urgent request that the episcopacy, clergy and people be granted a suitable and especially heartfelt blessing.” For transmission with the papal letter. The manner of publication was left to cardinal Bertram; in the accompanying letter by the Cardinal Secretary of State it says: ... *Attamen, attentis praesentis temporis difficultatibus et periculis, Beatissimus Pater tibi, qui eximia es prudentia, iudicandum plene committit an expediat quando et quomodo has Suas Litteras inter Gerraniae clerum et populum vulgari, ne quis ullo modo suspicetur Augustuni Pontificem, bello saeviente, aliquid agere velle quod Gerraniae populo nocere possit* (A. E. S., GERMANIA 859). Actually, the other German bishops were only informed of the letter at the Fulda Conference in August of 1943, due to difficulties in mail delivery, of which Cardinal Bertram (who could not participate in person for health reasons) reminded them. The publication of the pope's letter was delayed due to the long time interval (compare also Letter No. 112).

• **No. 95 Pius XII. to Archbishop Frings/Cologne**

Vatican, 20 January 1943

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand and the comment *Copiare / 28-1-1943* by an unknown hand.

Thanks for the Christmas wishes. Assurance of the commemoration. The air raid on Cologne of 31 May 1942. Consoling words for all affected by the air raids. Joy over the religious spirit of the youth. Loyalty oaths. The pope's considerable worries. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Joseph Frings, Archbishop of Cologne:  
The loyal wishes which you bade us, venerable brother, for the holy Christmas celebration and for the New Year, were all the more welcome to us since they were the first greetings we had from you since you took on the pastoral concerns of the Archdiocese of Cologne<sup>1</sup>. We reciprocate them with all tenderness, in that we wish for you and your episcopal activities the whole wealth of god's blessings and mercy, and in that we affirm that we are always mindful of the profound needs of the Catholic Church in Germany, and allow no day to pass without commending our brothers who occupy the archbishoprics there to the Divine Shepherd and Guardian of Souls at the Holy Sacrifice. You speak in your letter of the dreadful night of last 31 May, on which Cologne was attacked and which, as you say, was unparalleled in all its history<sup>2</sup>. Even though we now gladly hear that the time-honored churches from the 11th to the 13th centuries which, along with the cathedral, yes and in some respects were even more the pride of the *Colonia sacra*, ...

1 That is, since 1 May 1942; the letter is dated 8 December 1942.

2 Concerning the air raid, the archbishop had written: Since on the Feast of Saint Aloisius this year His Excellency the Most Reverend Apostolic Nuncio Cesare Orsenigo consecrated me bishop in the high cathedral at Cologne, the city had been attacked three weeks later during a dreadful night, such has never been seen in the history of Cologne (A. E. S., CARTE PIO XII).

... had for the most part been spared, we were still profoundly disturbed when we learned right after that night and also in the meantime about the fate of your city. Ever since the start of the war, every time the news of an air raid reaches us, regardless of on which side it occurs, our prayers and blessings go out to all who have become the victims of this devastation and havoc. We can comprehend their need and feel it completely along with them. However, we do them no harm if we add the fatherly reminder that they might also view the terrible events into which they have been dragged through the eyes of faith, and take the divine trials, which are presently so evident and tangible across Greater Cologne, as an occasion for healing, for turning towards God, for doing penance and arranging their lives completely according to final and eternal things. We add this reminder all the more confidently, since we hear that the calamitous night has induced thousands upon thousands to seek their peace with God and His mercy in the holy sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.

We are also consoled by your reports, venerable brother, of the walking tours through the archdiocese which you undertook right at the beginning of your pastoral office<sup>1</sup>. What pleases us the most is the courageous and lively participation of the Catholic youth in the life of the Church. We know about the considerable, yes even alarming, dangers and losses sustained by your youth for the past ten years, and do not deceive ourselves about the seriousness of the situation. But what you and others report inspires confidence in the future. Even foreigners who have been in Germany tell of the strong spirit with which the Catholic population is countering the religious and moral decay.

When you speak of the Cologne Archdiocese as the "always faithful daughter of the Roman church," this expression, which you used so cheerfully and in such a carefree manner in former times, as well as when we dwelt among you, has a touching meaning and acts almost as a loyalty oath today, when it is all about the existence or the non-existence of the Catholic Church in your Fatherland. That these content-laden words are now finding their full validity, and that God's grace is exceeding every expectation regarding the three big concerns which lie within your heart more than everything else: the belief and moral purity of your youth; priestly

and order vocations (we think a lot about the young blood flourishing your sisters-cooperative up to now); and preservation of the Christian family -- and that God directs everything for the best<sup>2</sup>, we therefore grant you, venerable brother, your courageous and...

1 In his report about his visits to the separate parts of the archdiocese, the archbishop refers particularly to the great participation of the youth in the Mass.

2 Compare Romans 8, 28.

... indefatigable working clergy, the joyfully-sacrificing laity and all your believers from the fullness of our heart the requested apostolic blessing.  
From the Vatican, 20 January 1943

• **No. 96 Pius XII. to Cardinal Faulhaber/Munich**

Vatican, 31 January 1943

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand and the comment *Copiare / 10. II. 43* by an unknown hand.

Thanks for the holiday greetings. Connection of the pope with Germany and his sympathy for those affected by the air raids. Wishes for peace. The difficult position of the Holy See. Mistrust of his efforts. His impartiality. Special regard for Germany. The Wednesday addresses of the pope to the newly-weds. The threat to family ideals. The Christmas address. Priests in the Medical Corps. The concern about recruiting new priests. Blessings.

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

We reciprocate the good luck wishes which you sent for the Holy Feast<sup>1</sup>, in your name and also in the name of your clergy and your diocesans, with cordial love and concerned sympathy. Our old heartfelt relationship to you personally, our redoubled connection with you as former apostolic nuncio and now as common father of all believers, and finally the terrible severity of the present hour, gives these feelings a special tenderness and depth. We pray a lot and pray daily for the City of Munich and for all places which have had to suffer so heavily from the air raids; we empathize with their populations, as though we lived among them; we cherish the hope that God's mighty cry, which can be heard amid such trials, is not ignored and brings many of them closer to their Lord and Creator again. It therefore comforts us to hear how in Munich the believers rushed with devotion to the holy sacraments of Penance and Communion after the large-scale attacks. We

pray for you that God's omnipotent providence might soon give you -- outwardly as well as inwardly -- the invaluable gift of peace. We wish you...

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1 Dated 30 November 1942.

... in particular, that during the current year and for many coming years yet, you remain in good health and remain in charge of your flock. The present war has caused an unspeakably difficult situation for the Holy See, in which an enormous amount of overlapping and criss-crossing political and religious-Church questions have arisen in ever-increasing numbers. You yourself touch on this so sorrowful a subject in your letter of 30 November, where you speak of the misinterpretations which led to our best intentions being thwarted during the past year, and of the cold mistrust with which our assurance that we are devoted to all peoples, without exception and with the same love, has been met in certain circles incapable of dispassionate judgment. We really don't know how they could do us a greater injustice than with these misinterpretations. We have characterized our approach to war questions by the word "impartiality"<sup>1</sup>; not with the word "neutrality." Neutrality could be understood in the sense of a passive indifference which the Head of the Church could not entertain regarding such events. For us, impartiality means evaluation of things according to truth and justice, which means that when it has to do with public pronouncements on our part, we must treat the situation of the Church in various countries with all possible regard, so as to spare the Catholics there any avoidable difficulties. Precisely due to this notion of impartiality, as we have already explained, we bring the same love to all peoples without exception, because the people are, taking everything into consideration, certainly not responsible for the unparalleled catastrophe which has come over the world. What we have also said earlier on one occasion or another is also valid for the year just flown away: if we were to give special consideration to any one people, it would certainly be the Germans, and we would do it in consideration of the awkward situation of the Church in lands under German control. You mention our Wednesday addresses in your letter<sup>2</sup>. These, like our other addresses in the religious area are part of our...

1 This phrase is located in the Christmas address of 24 December 1942 (... *con cura; particolare e uguale imparzialità* ...): AAS 35 (1943) P. 10.

2 On the occasion of the general audiences, particularly for newly-weds. Pius had further elaborated on the thoughts here, particularly in his speech to the womens' groups of

Catholic Action on 24 April 1943 (AAS 35 [1943] Pp. 134-143; compare GUIDE: No. 499).

... weekly "pastoral hour" which is, despite some effort, the innermost desire of our pastoral heart and which is, as we are told, not without results. In Italy, our addresses are printed in large numbers and disseminated to the newly-weds, discussed in Catholic Action circles, and published in book form every year by various publishing houses. In the movies, "radical changes" from old Italian folk customs to the modern lifestyle are depicted which, like everywhere else, is placing conventional lofty female morals in jeopardy; we are striving to assist in rescuing Catholic ideals of marriage and the family in these modern times through our weekly addresses. Even partial successes are ample reward to us for our expended efforts. The translation of the marriage vows into foreign idioms is already being considered. We hear that a Lucerne publishing house<sup>1</sup> is planning a German edition; the translation is probably by a group of *Germanicum* alumni. You have also recalled our last Christmas message<sup>2</sup> in a separate letter. It is true that these messages have received an open, warm reception throughout the whole world, a passionate approval such as none of our declarations on the questions of war and peace have. The overwhelming majority of mankind, as one would like to judge, is filled with a very great longing for a coexistence in which the Christian view of the human being and human society prevails and reflects the "*benignitas et humanitas Salvatoris nostri Dei*" (Tit. 3, 4). That is some consolation in a present in which compulsion and violence are increasing intolerably and are being manifested in gruesome forms.

1 The most important Italian collection of these addresses to newly-weds is the five volumes of PIO XII AGLI SPOSI (1939-1943) *Discorsi des S. Padre agli sposi novelli*. Rome 1943-1944. These addresses are also collected sequentially in the annual volumes of the DISCORSI: in Volume I, there are 22 addresses, in Volume II, there are 21, in Volume III, there are 15, in Volume IV, there are 17 and in Volume V there are 4 more addresses. A consequence of the war situation also appears in there. The German translation mentioned by the pope was published by Lucerne's Rex-Verlag in 1943 under the title: DAS IDEAL DER CHRISTLICHEN EHE (THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE). Addresses to Bridal Couples (translated by KARL SCHULER). A French language edition appeared in 1941 in Gembloux (Belgium) under the title: *EPOUSAILLES CHRÉTIENNES. Allocutions de SA SAINTETÉ PIE XII à de jeunes mariés; tr. et introd. de MGR. LOUIS PICARD.*

2 Christmas orations to the Roman Curia, see AAS 35 (1943) Pp. 5-8 and radio message IBID Pp. 9-24 (GUIDE No. 474 and No. 473). Faulhaber's letter is dated 2 January 1943.

The news that you have been able to equip your priests serving in the Medical Corps with the vessels necessary for celebrating Mass and distributing Holy Communion was very agreeable to us. May they have the opportunity to help quite a few because, as we hear again and again, their official duties as military chaplains make it nearly impossible for them to perform their priestly functions. Concerning the prevailing total war losses of the German clergy, we are considering this particular piece of information before us<sup>1</sup>: the shortage of priests and seminarians will certainly be one of the most burning questions for the Church after the war, not for you alone, but for all of Europe. We hope that the judgment which goes out over the world also inspires the priesthood, where it is needed, to an even greater simplicity of lifestyle, and is a powerful incentive to the attainment of more priestly sanctity in a spirit of belief, fundamental Church attitudes, selflessness and an eagerness of soul.

We still have your two official petitions of 19 December 1942 before us. [...]<sup>2</sup>.

It only remains for us, once again and with always the same old love with which we are devoted to you, as a pledge of God's mercies, which we beg for you in overabundant measure for the so uncertain future, to impart the requested apostolic blessing to you, beloved son, your clergy and all your believers.

From the Vatican, 31 January 1943

1 This summary of the war losses of the German clergy through the end of 1942 could not be found.

2 This paragraph was omitted since it involved the appointment of an auxiliary bishop for Munich and the personnel questions connected with it.

• **No. 97 Pius XII. to Cardinal Bertram/Breslau**

Vatican, 2 February 1943

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand and the expediting stamp *Spedito 11 mar[zo] 1943*.

Thanks for the Christmas wishes and joy over the connection via the letters. The pope laments the disruption of personal contacts. The papal audiences as an opportunity to proclaim the truth. Dangers from new attacks against the Church. Blessings.

To our beloved son Adolf Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau:  
The profoundly agitated words with which you addressed the Chair of Peter in fidelity and dedication on the occasion of Christmas and the New Year<sup>1</sup> provide us with additional evidence of the externally-imposed separation

which is preventing the German bishops from traveling to Rome, which you very much long to do amid the worries and tasks of your episcopal office, to take up questions and concerns related to your area of responsibility with the Supreme Shepherd at the Center of the Church in trusting frankness, and to receive light and strength at the Grave of Peter, which every bearer of religious responsibility needs today more than ever. Nobody feels and laments more profoundly than we the disruption of personal contacts, from which so much encouragement and guidance could flow, brought about, in part perchance by actual physical obstacles, and certainly in part through deliberate inhibitions. It is all the more valuable to us to know and to experience anew through your letter, that you and many more of your episcopal brothers are taking pains to keep open the path of the living word of the Representative of Christ to the ears and hearts of the faithful. While we here are striving -- at every opportunity where it is allowed us by the extra heavy burdens incumbent upon our office! -- to bring the truths and values of holy belief in concerned pastoral love to the sons and daughters of the Church who come to us<sup>2</sup>, our thoughts go beyond them to those who are physically far away from us at present, fighting for the most sacred things. Nothing can console us more than the certainty that the Bread of Truth, which we break here, always and continually increases under the hands of our episcopal brothers and priestly co-workers all over the world, and with the mercy of Almighty God contributes to the feeding of those hungering spiritually and strengthens them on their hard way through the wilderness of this life with the vigor of the Lord.

Knowing how heavily the burden of these days and the fear of more attacks by the enemies of the Church both within and outside of your diocese must press upon your pastoral heart, we include your spiritual concerns and those of your zealous clergy and your faithful people in our daily prayer and sacrifice, and grant you, together with the clergy and the faithful of your archdiocese, the apostolic blessing with our particular love as a pledge of divine mercy.

From the Vatican, on the feast of Maria Candlemas 1943

1 Dated 1 December 1942.

2 An indication of the many audiences which Pius XII granted during the war years.

• **No. 98 Pius XII. to Bishop Bornewasser/Trier**

Vatican, 2 February 1943

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand and the comment *copiare / 8. III. 43* by an unknown hand.

Thanks for the holiday wishes. The unity between pope and bishops. The special tasks of the bishops now in this difficult time. The religious situation of the diocese.

Acknowledgment of the theology students and priests in the military service. Their losses. Sympathy with those affected by the air war. The illness of the auxiliary bishop and wishes for him. Assurance of prayer dedication. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Franz Rudolf Bornewasser, Bishop of Trier: Your exemplary fidelity to the Center of the Church on Christmas Eve and on the threshold of the New Year has once again allowed us to feel that the needs of the times and the obstruction of the direct connection between *Urbs et Orbis* [the city (Rome) and the world] have not, in the final analysis, done any harm to the ever-maturing spiritual connection between the Vicar of Christ and the members of the Church -- the bishops, priests, religious and laity<sup>1</sup>. Just the opposite! At the substantial barriers created by the enemies of the Church the relationship of the shepherd and his flock are being rekindled by the fires of divine mercy to a level of intimacy which, compared to outwardly more carefree times, has the advantage of being the blessed fruit of their mutual distress over God's Reich on Earth. The more the way of the Church turns into a Way of the Cross, the closer the Lord is to her, and she to the Lord. As unpleasant as your earthly beliefs and feelings may be during your wanderings along this way shown you and sanctified by the Lord -- the servants of the sanctuary and the true believers today are allowed, less than ever, to deny or even only to think of being or becoming full-time students in the Lord's school of suffering. This is also quite particularly applicable to your German homeland. Your letter, for which we give you cordial thanks, has allowed us to feel anew how strongly dwells the awareness in your courageous and loyal heart of what it means, amid such distress and danger, to be bishop, teacher, admonisher, awakener, father, comforter and never-tiring helper to the people entrusted to you.

<sup>1</sup> The bishop's letter is dated 13 December 1942.

We rejoice that our last two letters<sup>1</sup> have had such a blessing-full effect -- thanks to your precaution -- on the clergy and people of the Diocese of Trier who are so precious to us. We are likewise grateful to you for your efforts to

find so many opportunities to allow our pastoral teachings to reach your diocesans despite all existing and still growing restraints. The more determined the enemies of the Church are to impose a zone of emptiness and silence between Peter and the believers longing to hear his pastoral voice, all the more watchfully and carefully must their harmful planning be counteracted for the true well-being of the German people with methods specifically in accord with the religious mission of the Church and which you still have at your disposal.

The numbers which you gave us about Church visits and Easter Communion are a comforting proof of the religious ardor of the Trier diocesans<sup>2</sup>. The excerpts from the letters from your priests and seminarians serving so distinctively at the front caused us profound joy<sup>3</sup>. They show how God's protecting and shielding mercy works in its own mysterious, wonderful and adorable ways amid the horrors, dangers and temptations of the war. That not all heed the call of mercy but unfortunately also sporadically follow the attention getting-voice of temptation is for you, whose hands ordained them to the honor of the priesthood, a burning pain which we share most deeply with you while we plead to God for the mercies of enlightenment and spiritual homecoming for the lost.

From one of the enclosures to your letter we note the high percentage of your priests, and above all candidates for the priesthood of your diocese, who are among the victims and casualties of the war<sup>4</sup>. We have no more heartfelt wish than that hopefully at the far too distant conclusion of this destructive world war as great a number of them as possible -- strengthened and purified through experiencing such enormous sorrow -- can resume their pastoral duties with all the greater priestly spirit of sacrifice and can return to their studies with all the greater sacred longing for the priesthood, in order to dedicate themselves to the maximum to the considerable work of the spiritual reconstruction and rescue of immortal souls.

1 The bishop had notified the dean of the two letters from the pope dated 20 February 12 June 1942.

2 The bishop had communicated the numbers from 1940 and 1941, which indicated a marked increase.

3 Sections from letters from a military chaplain and a retired priest in the medical service, both of whom had seen action in Russia.

4 The bishop had reported that 137 priests and 187 theology students had been drafted into military service, of which 8 priests and 25 theologians were reported as killed or missing in action; compare also Letter No. 78, third Footnote 1.

That the *Immaculata*, whose statue towers benevolently over the Trier Valley, has protected the cathedral city against air-raid damage thus far, is good news to us<sup>1</sup> and a daily reminder to the inhabitants of the cities and villages near the Saar, Moselle and Rhine who have been spared the horrors of this type of warfare.

We hear with particular sympathy of the now already so long-lasting illness of your loyal co-worker, Auxiliary Bishop Albert Fuchs<sup>2</sup>. We can appreciate what it must mean to him, who labored in trusted and restless pastoral and administrative work, to be condemned to idleness. The priestly spirit, with which he was always filled, will certainly teach him that these sorrows sent him by the Lord are not to be seen as an interruption, but rather a continuation and increase of his priestly and episcopal mission. In this belief, we convey to him our greeting and blessing, plead to the Lord for courage and humility for him and also, if it is agreeable to His sacred will, for a speedy return to his longed-for activities.

But you, venerable brother, may be certain that you, together with your intimates -- your co-workers, your cathedral chapter and the secular and religious clergy of your Diocese -- all believers, especially the youth and all those who are especially needy in this time of trials, remain continually included in the prayers and the holy sacrifice, which we offer daily to the Eternal Father. Looking up to Him and pleading that He will send down His grace upon you, we grant you the requested apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart with our ever-constant love.

From the Vatican, on the feast of Maria Candlemas, 1943

1 However, Trier was destroyed to the extent of about 40% by air raids in 1944/45.

2 Auxiliary Bishop Albert M. Fuchs, in office since 1935, had fallen seriously ill in December 1941.

• **No. 99 Pius XII. to Bishop Splett/Danzig**

Vatican, February 1943

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

Thanks for the Christmas greetings. About the joy and loyalty of belief. Remembering the martyrs. Disturbing report about the Diocese of Kulm. The increasing persecution of the Church. Independence of pastoral duties from all secondary purposes. Not ethnic hatred but communication with people. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Carl Maria Splett, Bishop of Danzig and Apostolic Administrator Pro Tempore of Kulm<sup>1</sup>:

Your heartfelt prayers accompanied by loyal wishes at the Holy Feast of Christmas and the New Year, for which we give our heartfelt thanks to you, your so devoted and beneficially working clergy and all the believers entrusted to your pastoral care, regardless of their nationality or mother tongue, and for which we certainly express our appreciation and fatherly response, because they came from a place where shepherd and flock have to carry an exceptionally large share of the sorrow and the worries of these days. That amid this sorrow and the quite extraordinary trials which have afflicted, and continue to afflict, the clergy and people of the Diocese of Kulm, of which you are the apostolic administrator at the moment, the joy and faithfulness of belief of young and old alike is, on the whole, unperturbed among all the storms and dangers, we are obliged, besides giving fervent thanks to God, the dispenser of all mercies, to cordially and sympathetically commemorate those who have suffered in Jesus' name, and offered their lives to Him in such great numbers<sup>2</sup>.

The comprehensive report on conditions in the Diocese of Kulm enclosed with your letter of 12 December is a disturbing reflection of what has happened since the...

1 Bishop Splett was appointed Apostolic Administrator *ad nutum S. Sedis* of Chelmno (Kulm) on 15 December 1939, after the residing bishop, S. Okoniewski, had been expelled from his diocese. Concerning the Church situation in this Polish diocese compare A. MARTINI, *Appelli alla Santa Sede*. It should be noted that the Bishop of Danzig was not formally recognized as a proper member of the German episcopacy. Allowing for the special situation of the Free City of Danzig, the Holy See had already directed in 1923 that the Bishop of Danzig should attend neither the Fulda Bishops Conference nor the Conference of Polish bishops. When the Bishop of Danzig in 1941 applied for an invitation to the Fulda Bishops Conference, giving as the reason that Danzig now belonged to Germany and that the territory surrounding the Diocese of Kulm had been incorporated into the German Reich, the conference chairman, Cardinal Bertram, sent this request on to the Holy See, but added that he recommended a denial (letter of 2 May 1941): ... *sed opportunius esse videtur expectare, an proximis annis status et circumscriptio dioecesium auctoritate Sanctae Sedis mutantur. Ordinarius dioecesis Danzig in Fuldensibus Conventibus hucusque non comparuit. Dioecesis Culmensis vero ... pertinet ad Provinciam Ecclesiasticam Gnesen-Posen. Incertum omnino est, an proximis annis nova superveniat constitutio Provinciarum Ecclesiasticarum* (A. E. S., GERMANIA 820). The Holy See adjudicated in favor of the Breslau cardinal (A. E. S., GERMANIA 820). Letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State dated 27 May 1941: No. 3856/41).

2 Regarding the considerable number of blood-victims of the Polish clergy through the persecution of the National socialists, compare B. STASIEWSKI in LThK VIII, Column 586; there 2,647 priests are named as certain victims. The Diocese of Chelmno was among the most heavily persecuted districts in Poland.

... unleashing of the war on this unhappy borderland. Apart from the blood-letting among the secular clergy and the members of the religious communities, through which the greater part of the most eager champions of Church life was removed, there is the confiscation of the order-houses, the prohibition of every order activity in the occupied areas and other acts tantamount to the thoroughgoing crippling of an orderly pastoral work. All the more stirring is the solemn reception, in a spirit of genuine belief, which you received from the members of the Polish nation during the traveling visits upon which you were sent by the Head of the Church. We take note with satisfaction of your endeavors to defend, in this time of the over-running and the continued change, the actual and legal status of the sacred interests of the Church, which places the salvation of souls above all else, with that determination which will be beheld with honor by the eyes of the Eternal Judge and, after the conclusion of the tempestuous developments of this agitated present, will also be honored by the judgment of posterity. It is not the task of pastoral duties to become subservient to earthly goals, and certainly not if those goals are contrary to the eternal principles of love and justice. One of pastoral duties to be carried out in the spirit of Christ is to not become faint-hearted on the occasion of misunderstandings and persecutions by an uncomprehending or malevolent environment, but rather to let this be an incentive drawn from your Lord to find ways to remain unabashedly loyal. We trust, venerable brother, that your ardor and vigilance will succeed in deeply anchoring an awareness of the fundamental independence of pastoral works from any inwardly foreign or even contradictory secondary purposes in the souls of the clergy entrusted to you, and to so strengthen it that it may grow despite severe ordeals. In that way, you will not only be a shepherd after the model of the Good Shepherd of the souls of the flock entrusted to you, but also a benefactor of your own people, whose successful future development can only suffer from ethnic hatred, and can only benefit from communication between peoples. Calling down God's light and merciful assistance upon you, the clergy and the faithful of both dioceses, we grant you the requested apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart as a comfort in your struggles and as a consolation in your sorrows.

From the Vatican, 12 February 1943

• **No. 100 Pius XII to Diocesan Vicar Rohracher / Gurk**

Vatican, 17 February 1943

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter No. 63755, with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Consecration of the clergy to the [Sacred] Heart of Jesus. Preparation for the consecration of the diocese. The Austrian Bishops Conference. Obstruction of youth pastoral duties and religion classes. Expropriation of Church property. Care of the Slovenian people. The report about the occupied areas. The vespers. Special indulgences on the occasion of the forthcoming consecration of the diocese. Blessings.

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

We note with heartfelt joy the report, sent to us as of 2 December last, in which you, venerable brother, told of the solemn consecration of the clergy to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which took place on the Thursday after last year's Feast of Christ the King in the local cathedral. When could this act of consecration, undertaken by the priesthood of the entire diocese, in which the oath of loyalty to the Eternal High Priest, the prayer of thanksgiving for so many mercies, the prayer of atonement for so many frailties, the longing call for the increase of God's Reich in souls, the call for divine mercy for the uncertain and those fallen away, the brotherly intercession for those who have died, evoke a deeper sense and a keener meaning than in this difficult present time, filled with responsibilities and dangers, in which the conflict demands such a high level of alertness regarding the most sacred goods of clergy and people! We allow ourselves the confident hope that the spiritual preparation of the believers ahead of the planned consecration to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on Sacred Heart Sunday this year<sup>1</sup> wins over more and more of them far and wide so that the "Holy Year" of the Diocese of Gurk turns out to be a true year of mercy for the present and the future.

That a certain easing of Church-political relations could be detected at the last Austrian Bishops Conference, without wanting to thereby deny the seriousness of the overall situation, filled us with satisfaction in the interest of the faithful people who have hitherto had to suffer so much already. However, what you told us about the obstruction of youth pastoral activities and even the extracurricular religion classes demonstrates how delicate the situation remains and how easily, ...

<sup>1</sup> In 1943 Sacred Heart Sunday was to have been celebrated on 4 July. The consecration of the clergy had taken place on 29 October 1942; compare Letter No. 92.

... depending on the opinions of one or another of the local authorities, apparent tranquility can turn into open antagonism.

In the questions of the expropriation of Church property, the cancellation of tax privileges, the surrender of Church bullion assets, as well as other

relevant difficulties, which arise partly from the fundamental anticlerical attitude of state or Party officials, and partly from specific war needs, we have to the trust that responsible bishops will strive for solutions which maintain Church principles and that, with the return of better times, more favorable regulations will no longer hinder the ways of the Church. We are filled with great solace<sup>1</sup> that in the occupied areas of Carinthia and Kranj [in Slovenia, across the border from Austria] subordinated to you a certain degree of relaxation has taken place in the situation, and that accordingly the pastoral care of the Slovenian people has become somewhat easier. The more severe are the sufferings of the loyal sons and daughters of the Church marooned in these political areas, all the more necessary is it that they feel equally loved and entitled in the sanctuary of the Church, in the same supernatural brotherhood, as children of the one Father in heaven. We heartily thank you and your clergy for everything you have done to this end. We have before us the text of the memorandum from the German bishops to various agencies of the Reich in the matter of the occupied areas<sup>2</sup>. We have taken particular note of what you write about the vespers<sup>3</sup>. We will give very careful consideration to your appeal for special authority and privileges as a part of the upcoming year of consecration of your diocese to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Meanwhile, we grant you, your clergy and all of the faithful entrusted to your care, the requested apostolic blessing as a pledge of heaven's merciful help for all your intentions, with our most particular fatherly love. From the Vatican, 17 February 1943

1 The bishop had reported: "... the situation has calmed down to such an extent in the areas subordinated to me that entering and departing are now permitted. This has led to the pleasant consequence that I can send out for temporary priests from Klagenfurt and Villach to help out on Sundays" (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

2 This memorandum was developed by the Archbishop of Paderborn (compare Letter No. 92, second Footnote 1). Bishop Rohracher had written on 2 December that he did not know whether the memorandum had already been submitted to the appropriate authorities; it was submitted on 18 December 1942.

3 Concerning the vespers (evening Masses), the bishop had written: "With great thanks to Your Holiness, the individual dioceses are reporting the good news of excellent attendance at the evening Masses, and asking that this practice might be continued when the war is over." (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

• **No. 101 Pius XII. to Bishop Galen/ Münster**

Vatican, 24 February 1943

A. B. S., CARTE PIO XII: Draft Letter No 63757, with corrections in the pope's own hand. Excerpts reported in the MB BAMBERG of 9 December 1943, printed in part by M. BIERBAUM, P. 235 and following

Thanks for the good luck wishes. Recognition of the episcopal rallies. Human dignity, family and Church are defended in common. Pleasure from the courage of the German bishops. The 1942 Christmas message. Explanation of the bases for a permanent peace. Measures against the Church in the Diocese of Münster. The shortage of priests. Concern for a responsible clergy. Comforting indications of a better future. Visit of the bishop to Rome. Thanks for the solidity of belief of the German Catholics. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Clemens August von Galen, Bishop of Münster: We accept with thanks and joy the good luck wishes which you, venerable brother, sent us<sup>1</sup> on the occasion of the anniversary of our election and coronation in your own name as well as in the name of your diocesans. They come from a shepherd who has an especially lively awareness of his relationship with the Representative of Christ through the Catholic traditions of his house<sup>2</sup>, through his faithful understanding of his episcopal office, and from a flock which has always distinguished itself through its loyalty to the Church. Above all, we thank you for your prayers; for the prayers you have sent upwards to God on the occasion of our bishop's jubilee, as well as for your prayers for God's blessing on the fifth year of our pontificate during Sunday "*Invocabit*."<sup>3</sup> We can only encourage you to persist in your intercessions for the Successor of Peter, since it is difficult to decide which is greater: the needs and dangers in which the Holy Church finds herself and which still threaten her, or the monumental tasks and world-wide hopes which are open to her for the near and more distant future. We don't need to add that for our part we remember you and your concerns -- and we know how many and worrisome they are -- in our daily prayers and during the Holy Sacrifices. We thank you for the two enclosures, the pastoral teaching of 22 March 1942 which was read in Western Germany and almost identically in Bavaria, and for your Advent pastoral letter which was read in the west as well as in Berlin<sup>4</sup>.

1 Dated 25 January 1943.

2 The von Galen family was a part of the original Westphalian aristocracy. A member of this family, Christoph Bernhard von Galen, was Bishop of Münster, 1650 - 1678.

3 14 March 1943.

4 The pastoral letter of 13 December 1942, to be read out on 20 December, dealt with law and justice. The pastoral teaching of 20 March, to be read out on 21 March, but already sent to Rome in January, dealt with the basic rights of human beings (text: W. CORSTEN No. 214 Pp. 260-262).

Both declarations have our unanimous O.K. because they fight so courageously for the rights of the Church, the family and individual human beings. Rarely, maybe never, in the modern history of the Church, has the destiny of these three been so interconnected: human dignity, the family and the Church become so tangibly manifest as today. It is a consolation to us every time we hear of open and courageous words from a German bishop or the German bishops. Broad-minded consideration will also convince you that you will not harm the reputation of your people in foreign countries if you intercede manfully against hardship and injustice in favor of truth and righteousness, but rather this may be of use to you if others raise accusations against you to the contrary in momentary unfortunate misjudgment of the situation. Incidentally, you, venerable brother, are the last one, aside from us, to specifically mention this.

The two pastoral letters you forwarded have been based on our Christmas message of 24 December 1942<sup>1</sup>. We hear with pleasure that you have had the contents of our message sent on to the deanship conferences. That strengthened the spiritual connection between us and your clergy, and between you and the broader Catholic world. Our words have found a deep resonance over the whole earth, in the belligerent nations and in those countries not yet directly touched very much by the war. Our pronouncements, above all our Christmas messages since 1939, didn't assume that they could appreciably influence events of the war by themselves. We were only following our duty as the Representative of Christ to prepare the way for the significant reorganization of the existing international and intrastate orders according to natural law and the law of Christ, to confront the dangers of unchristian thinking and an exaggerated nationalism on the part of our believers, and finally, if it pleases God so that He gives His blessing to it, to prepare for the groundbreaking, clarifying and reconciling solutions and attitudes which must be implemented with the end of the war.

The sorrowful troubles which you relate from your diocese: Priests banished or imprisoned in concentration camps for the sake of their beliefs (their parishes and...

1 Text: AAS 35 (1943) Pp. 4-24; compare GUIDE No. 473.

... the relatives of those who died there have our particular blessing); the elimination of the meritorious course of episcopal lectures for seminarians and Catholic laity in Gaesdonck<sup>1</sup>, the shortage of priests due to losses in the war and the drafting of young priests into the armed forces -- these concern the overall needs of the Catholic Church in Germany, which we earnestly share with you bishops. The shortage of priests is at the point of becoming a problem for the Church in Europe, and will also have an ominous effect on the mission lands. After all, the churches will still accept the shortage of priests as the lesser of the evils, and gradually overcome it with God's help, if only the remaining clergy, particularly the younger ones and those returning home from the field, remain loyal to the Church, spiritually united with their bishops and pope in sincere trust, humble, unselfish and zealous for souls, and stand ready with open eyes for two urgent priestly tasks: the persuasive proclamation and defense of Catholic belief and the entire Catholic philosophy through to their eventual implementations for the individual and the community, and the renewal or re-creation of a Christian life-style. We therefore cannot express in words how much we worry that the clergy is aware of how the responsibilities of its task have grown, particularly when it comes to the loyal, conscientious administration of the penitential sacraments and its teaching function. What strengthens and comforts us in our concerns is news like that in your letter about the visits to the Marian pilgrimage spots<sup>2</sup> in your diocese during the past year. As long as the indicators of religious life stand at such high levels, you need and we need not worry despite the storms of the past years and the darkness of the future. We also don't doubt that, if it is God's will the world will come to salvation, blessing and peace through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

Your wish, venerable brother, to come to visit the Holy Father in Rome again, cannot be stronger than our desire to welcome you and the other German bishops in our house and to be able to discuss the concerns of the Catholic Church in Germany with you. It has now been a long time since we saw German archbishops here. Nevertheless, we appreciate and approve

...

1 The "*Collegium Augustinianum*" is in Gaesdonck by Goch in the Lower Rhineland part of the diocese.

2 By this are meant primarily Kevelaer and Telgte. The bishop had written: "Even if because of the wartime transport limitations and the prohibition of all public processions the influx of pilgrims to Kevelaer is less than that in peacetime, all the Marian pilgrimage locations in our diocese were visited

this year by individual pilgrims and small pilgrim groups in very substantial numbers" (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

... your plan to postpone the "*Visitatio liminum Apostolorum*"<sup>1</sup> for the moment; we only hope that events may free the way to Rome for you as soon as possible.

Tell your diocesans that we are praying, sacrificing and working for a peace which brings all peoples, without exception, tolerable relations; that we care about few things as much as the "freedom and increase" of the Catholic Church<sup>2</sup>, and the entire religious life in your homeland; that we thank God for the solid belief of the German Catholics and paternally remind them to maintain their fidelity to Christ's divine providence with strong courage, patience and unbroken trust. As a pledge of His invincible assistance and His ubiquitous mercy we grant you, venerable brother, your clergy and your believers, and especially the youth and those serving at the front, the requested apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 24 February 1943

1 The (European) bishops were obligated by Canon Law (CIC Can. 340), to visit Rome every five years. The German dioceses were planned for 1943.

2 Words from the "Prayer after Holy Mass" which Leo XIII had prescribed.

• **No. 102 Pius XII. to Bishop Ehrenfried/Würzburg**

Vatican, 11 April 1943

A. E. S., CARTE PIO XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand and the comment *Copiare | 125. V. [!] 43* by an unknown hand.

Thanks for the Christmas letter. The sense of the distresses and sufferings. The religious ardor of the clergy and the believers. The Lenten pastoral letter. Trust in the special help of the Virgin Mary. On the veneration of Mary. The longed-for peace. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Matthias Ehrenfried, Bishop of Würzburg in Würzburg:

You have correctly reminded us, beloved son, in your letter of homage and congratulations<sup>3</sup> of last New Year's, of the sorrowful and meaningful parallels between the first appearance of the Lord in this world and the lot of the Church established by Him in the present. Each of your words written not only in the language of the Church, but also completely permeated by the spirit of the Church, attests to the spiritual pain your pastoral heart must feel ...

3 Dated 20 December 1942.

... by the way this side is relinquishing and losing its views of mankind and by the grief that has befallen every single member of the great family of man. Amidst the storms of the time you trouble yourself to help your humble believers to grasp the mysterious, humanly unfathomable, subtle and adorable intentions with which the wisdom, omnipotence and love of the Father in heaven will, in the final analysis, steer the evils arising from the misuse of creature-like freedoms toward the goodness and salvation of faithfulness and great courage which remain amid so much infidelity and weakness. And in that you look at the in-depth ailments and trials of this time with the eyes of belief, there grows in you the will and the willingness to bring to your priests and the immortal souls entrusted to you by the eternal High Priest the maximum of pastoral love, pastoral care and pastoral vigilance, to which they have all the more claim the greater the dangers and threats presented to them by the spiritual environment.

The picture of religious life in your diocese which you have drawn us in your letter gives us the certainty that the spirit of Saint Boniface<sup>1</sup>, their founder, has not left them. We hear with heartfelt solace of the exemplary zeal with which your priests agree with all your suggestions, leading to their personal sanctification, the orientation of their pastoral duties to the particular needs and tasks of the present, their fervent fundamental attitudinal connection with the Center of the Church, and their steadfast fidelity to the visible Representative of Christ. We hear with the same joy of the willing and joyful resonance the efforts of you and your priests are evoking in all circles of the Würzburg diocesans and, last but not least, also among the Catholic youth. You should let your diocesans know how consoling it is for the Common Father of Christianity to be able to say to himself that the miraculous bond of love which unites you with us is stronger than everything which the forces of evil can muster against us. That the Lenten pastoral letter<sup>2</sup> which you sent us with your letter dated 2 March of this year was dedicated to that great helper of Christians, the Virgin Mary, and that you have invited your diocesans to take refuge in her as their protectress in these difficult times, makes us aware of the acceptance of our own...

1 The Diocese of Würzburg was established in 741. Its first bishop, Burchardus, companion of Saint Boniface, had come from England like him.

2 The Lenten pastoral letter of 24 February 1943 was dedicated to Mary, our protectress in difficult times.

... intent, as announced to the whole Catholic world. The call to venerate Mary by the souls and their children upon whom so many trials and dangers press and who are beset by so much sorrow in the storm that swirls around them is the legitimate reaction of the Church and the prayer of entreaty directed to the Spotless One: "*Da mihi virtutem contra host tuos*"<sup>1</sup> is today, where the denial of God and the fight against His anointed throw their shadows over the West and the world, a distress call of most extreme danger, but also a watchword for confidence in fully consoling victory. We have no more heartfelt wish than that your pastoral words awaken in the hearts of your diocesans the holy decision that "Maria the Duchess of the Franks," as she is called in the age-old folk song<sup>2</sup>, will permit all of you, bishop, priests and faithful to experience, after this unprecedented misery has been surmounted, a peace which guarantees the fundamentals of true welfare to all peoples, including the German people -- a peace which neither stands under the hard tyranny of the sword, nor under the unfortunate banner of self-righteousness and selfishness, but under the control of a justice which watches over all the opportunities of life, which consciously proclaims that there is no greater wisdom than this: to place the demanded as well as the provided justice under the scepter of love.

In this expectation and with this wish, we send you, venerable brother, your clergy and the entire faithful people of your diocese, and above all those who must bear the sacrifices and sufferings of this war, the requested apostolic blessing in ever-constant love as a visible pledge of the richest divine mercies, from all our heart.

From the Vatican, on Passion Sunday 1943<sup>3</sup>

1 Give me strength against your enemies -- the response to the invocation *Dignare me laudare te virgo sacrata* (verse from the Marian antiphon *Ave Regina caelorum*).

2 The bishop had quoted this song in his pastoral letter.

3 This is the fifth Sunday of Lent, two weeks before Easter, at that time 11 April.

• **No. 103 Pius XII to Archbishop Kolb / Bamberg**

Vatican, 14 April 1943

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand. Reported in AB BAMBERG of 24 July 1943.

Thanks for the report about the funeral of Archbishop von Hauck. Reminiscence of the pope on his visit to Bamberg. Expression of confidence. Reminders. Blessings and wishes for peace.

To our venerable brother Joseph Kolb, Archbishop of Bamberg:

The report which you sent us<sup>1</sup> concerning the funeral of Archbishop Jakobus von Hauck, who died in the peace of the Lord, was for us a striking proof of the love and respect which the deceased had earned during the more than 31 years of his pastoral duties among all circles of the clergy and the faithful of the Archdiocese of Bamberg and beyond. We ourselves always remember the cathedral city of Bamberg, since we were allowed to take part in the unforgettable St. Heinrich's jubilee of 1924, and were at that time witness to the eagerness of belief and the affirmation of fidelity with which the [now] immortalized one knew how to educate and strengthen his flock<sup>2</sup>. Our joy and satisfaction over this is all the greater, since we were immediately able to provide a happy solution to the question of succession to the immortalized archbishop despite the awkward circumstances<sup>3</sup>.

We cherish the comforting confidence the fact that you, venerable brother, with the loyal cooperation of the local Metropolitan Cathedral Chapter and your eager clergy, protect and defend with farsightedness and strong courage the almost thousand-year-old "*Dei agricultura, Dei aedificatio*" (cf. 1 Cor. 3, 9), which the Archdiocese of Bamberg represents, as demanded by the severity of the time and the fear lurking within it. History will note the former storms...

1 Archbishop Jakob von Hauck (who was appointed bishop prior to 1918 by the King of Bavaria and elevated by him to the peerage) headed the Bamberg archdiocese from 1912 until his death on 20 January 1943. The Diocesan Vicar, later the Archbishop Kolb, had reported on the burial.

2 compare Letter No. 34, Footnote 2.

3 The successor, auxiliary bishop since 1935, was consecrated on 26 January 1943. The bishop's consecration in Bavaria was per the Bavarian Concordat concluded in 1924 (Article 14; compare J. RESTREPO, Concordata Pp. 74-77; L. SCHÖPPE P. 49): Selection by the Holy See from a list submitted by him. The conspicuously quick selection is explained by the fact that Auxiliary Bishop Kolb was proposed as *coadiutor cum iure*, so that the preparatory steps necessary for his appointment had already been taken at the time the seat became vacant.

... which are now also breaking over the Church in Bamberg and leaving deep scars in her structure, which bear witness to the serious responsibilities of the bearers of episcopal authority in such times, so [we hope] this reminder does not discourage you, but rather actually spurs you on to convince, reprimand and encourage, through all patience and teaching, the flock entrusted to you for the sake of our faith (cf. 2 Tim. 4, 2). May the reminder of the great Pope Gregory I: "*studio vigilantissimi cum Dei timore*

*secundum canonum praecepta cuncta dispone vel ordina*" (Ep. I, 79)<sup>1</sup> prevail over the pastoral work of you and co-workers day by day. We ourselves are always close to all of you with our love and concern; hoping also against all hope (cf. Rom. 4, 18), we pray and plead to God for you daily, that He might make a merciful end to the miseries of the Church and the war, and lead you to a pure and sanctified internal and external peace. As a pledge of God's mercies, we impart to you, venerable brother, your clergy and all your faithful, the apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 14 April 1943

1 PL 77,533 B. Translation of the quotation: Control and order everything with lively eagerness in the fear of the Lord, according to Church regulations.

• **No. 104 Pius XII. to Bishop Buchberger/Regensburg**

Vatican, 15 April 1943

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

Thanks for the holiday wishes. The visit of the German bishops to Rome. Audiences for members of the German armed forces. The close connection between the pope and the faithful. Approval of evening masses. The report of the Freising Bishops Conference. Thanks for the Peter's Pence. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Michael Buchberger, Bishop of Regensburg: Regarding the decline of the last year you have, venerable brother, along with your clergy and your people, expressed devoted wishes<sup>2</sup> and a longing to implement the *Visitatio ss. liminum*<sup>3</sup> this year in the hopes for a return of peace, and in that way to offer us your loyal support in person, as was so eloquently expressed in each line of your letter.

2 Dated 24 November 1942.

3 Compare Letter No. 102, Footnote 1.

Please realize how very much your wish is the same as ours and how earnestly we desire at present to keep in touch with the shepherds of the German dioceses as provided for by Canon Law and which was always accompanied by such rich rewards. Unfortunately, [according to] a sober appraisal of the overall situation is not possible to arouse hopes for the fulfillment of such justifiable longings in the near term. The *Confessio S. Petri* will probably have to wait a considerable time yet for the visits of very

many bishops from around the world for whom it is not possible to follow the desires of their hearts due to the hindrances of wartime or due to other circumstances.

What applies to the shepherds is also valid for the faithful, for whom a pilgrimage to the sacred places of Rome has always been a deep spiritual experience. And so the Eternal City unfortunately can, in an admittedly limited yet painful sense, make its own the words of the prophet: "*Viae Sion lugent, eo quod non sint qui veniant ad solemnitatem*" (Thren. 1, 4)<sup>1</sup>. At least, we gratefully see evidence of Divine Providence in the almost daily presence so far this year of members of the German *Wehrmacht* (armed forces) among the rest of the visitors, who are striving to practice with respect to us the "*placere in bonum aedificationem*"<sup>2</sup> (cf. Rom. 15, 2). It is a double consolation for us to know that the forced outward isolation between us and you doesn't decrease the awareness of our innermost solidarity, but rather increases it. Your words are for us a renewed proof that the connection between the Center of the Church and her children, priests and believers has protected its own laws, and those given and desired by God, and that against this good will no power in the world will be capable of breaking the "golden ring" which encloses the shepherd and his flock<sup>3</sup>.

We hear with joy that the alleviation measures and [temporary] authorities which we considered appropriate in view of the necessities occasioned by the war have also been well received and eagerly implemented by you. It is a particular consolation to us to know that the evening Masses give many the opportunity, after a hard day's work, to summon the strength from the eucharistic source of mercy which they need so desperately amidst the wearying needs and moral threats of the present.

Meanwhile, we have taken note with eager attention of the memorandum you submitted regarding the last Freising Bishops Conference about the ...

1 The ways to Sion are sad because nobody is there who would have come to the festival.

2 The pleasure of edification.

3 The bishop had especially emphasized the connection of the believers with the Holy See.

... pastoral duties awaiting you. The paper offered us much that was valuable in many respects, even if it didn't always contain consoling information or confirmations. Regarding the pressing situation, however, you must not overlook the way in which you have led the Church in your homeland on the Way of the Cross for the past ten years and during the war, so that the inner

religious life of the true believers -- and they comprise the overwhelming majority despite the failures<sup>1</sup> -- is evidently on the increase. Just in the last few weeks we have received reports from various sources which have profoundly comforted us, even if we in no way underestimate the alarming menace to the youth and future generations. Anyway, you may be assured that the fate of the Catholic Church in Germany, as well as the whole religious future of the German people, is our continuous concern and the object of our daily prayers and sacrifices. We remain as close to you as you are to us.

With heartfelt thanks for the magnanimous donation<sup>2</sup> which you have offered our nunciature for the noble purposes of the Holy See, and with most heartfelt wishes for your person and your episcopal activities, we grant you, venerable brother, your trusted clergy and all your diocesans, the requested apostolic blessing as a pledge of the richest divine mercies, in always the same love.

From the Vatican, 15 April 1943

1 This memorandum could not be validated.

2 The bishop had remitted the Peter's Pence to the nunciature; it amounted to 20,000 Reichsmarks.

• **No. 105 Pius XII. to Bishop Preysing/Berlin**

Vatican, 30 April 1943

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand. Reported in the MB BAMBERG of 9 December 1943 in the form of an abstract (together with excerpts and under the address of Letter No. 101 to Bishop Galen/Münster); with a remark printed by W. ADOLPH, *Verfälschte Geschichte* (Fake History), Pp. 39-47.

Thanks for the good luck wishes and the promise of prayers. The difficult position of the Holy See. The air raids. Efforts of the pope towards humanizing the air war. The information service for prisoners of war. German restrictions on news about prisoners. Inquiries in Russia. Acknowledgment of the bishop's articulate sermons. Positive effects of such open declarations in the future. Acknowledgments of the pope's help for non-Aryans. Sympathy for the fate of Prelate Lichtenberg. Worry about the protection of the youth against the pernicious opinions of the times. In contrast, the liturgical question is secondary. Regarding place and location, it is to be evaluated whether the declarations of the Church could possibly lead to fearful reprisals or not. The reasons for the pope's restraint. Anti-Church measures in Poland, particularly in the Warthegau. The priests, especially Polish, in concentration camps. Statement of the German episcopacy to the regime. Help for non-Aryans through the Holy See. Limitations on this help. The fidelity of the German Catholics, special concerns for the youth. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Konrad von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin:  
First, let us express to you, venerable brother, our most heartfelt thanks for the good wishes which you personally, as well as in the name of your clergy and your diocesans, have sent us on various occasions, back in December for the Holy Feast, at the turn of the year and finally on the anniversary of our election as Supreme Shepherd of the Church<sup>1</sup>. We know from what loyal and belief-filled hearts they come. We particularly thank you and your flock for your devout prayers. In your letter dated 27 February of this year, you assure us of your urgent intercession out of the awareness "that probably rarely has a pope been so encumbered by such a heavy burden by God at the outset of his pontificate" as us "through the terrible world war and all that is painful and sinful as a result." It is certainly always best to be cautious if one wants to compare the present with the past, and far be it from us to underestimate the troubles and hardships which have weighed on the shoulders of our predecessors. But surely it is the honest will of the popes, in long-range and disturbing confrontations, to engage all among the powers of this earth with full impartiality, while simultaneously also carefully watching over the matters of the Holy Church; yet rarely has an endurance test been encountered such as that which the Holy See has to undergo at present. Meanwhile, what is even more depressing is, as you rightly say, "all that is painful and sinful as a result of the war". The recklessly mounting, matter-of-fact cruelty of the technology of war makes the thought of a still longer duration of this mutual murder unbearable; the inhumanities we hear of day by day and year by year, which lie absolutely beyond the serious requirements of war, are both crippling and earth-shaking. The escape into prayer to the omniscient God and...

<sup>1</sup> Thus on 7 May 1942 on the pope's 25-year bishop's jubilee, on 18 December 1942 for the Christmas celebration and on 27 February 1943 on the anniversary of the pope's election. Preysing had written on 7 May 1942: "If any country, then Germany, has reason to give thanks to God and to remember with particular thanks the bishop's jubilee after these past 25 years. I know that Your Holiness will seriously commemorate this day in compassion with the million-fold sorrows of the world under the strain of immense responsibilities ..."

... to the Redeemer in the tabernacle, alone gives the moral strength to emotionally resist the impressions of such events.  
Also you have had to experience the horrors of the war in the unspeakably severe form of the air raids. We convey to you and your diocesans our empathetic deep regret at the collapse of St. Hedwig's Cathedral as a result

of the recent attack on Berlin<sup>1</sup>. The believers should know that we pray for them in particular every day and bestow our blessing on those who were invaded on that day on one side or the other by the air raids. We are doing everything in our power to alleviate the suffering from the war and, undeterred by the scant outlook for success, have fought again and again for the greatest possible protection of the civilian population. It is not our fault that an even treatment of all sides of the war question compels us now, when Germany has become the most severely stricken party due to the air raids, to work toward circumspect mediation -- refraining completely from [commenting on] the official German position on the presence of the Archbishop of New York<sup>2</sup> in Rome, or better on the occasion of the rumors swirling around his visit to Rome, to let the public know that Germany is not interested in the pope's efforts to humanize the war. Our steps for humanity in the war are based on the same concern for all victims of the war, on all the material and spiritual needs among those suffering from the war -- and these are looking for our help in Germany, just like in the rest of the world. We would also very gladly have let our information service about prisoners of war<sup>3</sup> benefit Germany. Our information service has, according to inquiries reaching the Holy See and the requests for intercession, not always been in concert with news from other sources, but has had to develop independently, which it now is. Together with our other war assistance, it has -- and we say this with deepest thanks to God -- been able to do much and extensive good. It is incomprehensible to us...

1 St. Hedwig's Cathedral was struck by bombs during the night of 1 - 2 March 1943, and burned down to just the exterior masonry shell within two hours. When the pope speaks again of his sympathy here, it is to be understood that he had already done so, probably through the nuncio; because in the meantime the pope had sent no other letters to Preysing, as can be inferred from the prelude to this letter.

2 Francis Spellman, Archbishop of New York since 1939, cardinal since 1946, sojourned at the Vatican from the end of February to the beginning of March 1943. It can not be determined when and in which manner it was ascertained that Germany was not interested in [the pope's] efforts to humanize the air war (compare Letter No. 117, second Footnote 1).

3 For this, compare Letter No. 112.

... that they could have come up with any objective reasons which could have induced the German authorities to deny the papal relief organization entry into Germany. Also the suggestions made in the letter from the office of the chairman of the Fulda Bishops Conference dated 12 March 1942<sup>1</sup> are not comprehensible to us. If the national authorities believed without

justification that they should warn the war victims about the papal information service, one could reasonably expect them to indicate as much to the bishops. The German barrier against news of prisoners from here has made it seem as though, among other things, it was therefore about the thousands of reports about German prisoners of war that our information service had obtained and wanted to pass along to their relatives in Germany. It has finally succeeded, but only after detours and with the greatest of difficulties. Since the autumn of 1942, inquiries about prisoners and missing persons whose last known location was on the Russian front, mostly at Stalingrad, have been coming from Germany in ever-increasing numbers. These inquiries indicate a disturbing need. Every possible attempt has been made by our side to obtain information about prisoners of war detained in Russia, unfortunately so far without success.

We are you grateful to you, venerable brother, for the clear and frank words which you have directed at your believers and therefore also to the general public on various occasions; we are thinking, among other things, of your explanations of 28 June 1942 about the Christian legal interpretation<sup>2</sup>; of last November's All Souls' Day about the right to life and love to which each human being is entitled<sup>3</sup>; we are thinking particularly of your Advent pastoral letter<sup>4</sup>, which was also given to the...

1 Preysing had sent an announcement to Rome on 4 April 1942 from the commissariate of the Fulda Bishops Conference led by Auxiliary Bishop Heinrich Wienken, in which it was stated that the episcopal ordinariates would have to notify the papal information office of all intercession activity. The paragraph to which the pope refers here reads in the circular: "Since important reasons were put forward for the aforesaid statement of the Reich Church Ministry, as it was explained to me -- I can report on it orally at the appropriate opportunity -- we have asked for an exact elaboration." Compare also Letter No. 112, Footnote 4.

2 That was a Sunday, on which the Feast of the Prince of the Apostles (29 June) was celebrated. Preysing had given the sermon regarding the pope's 25 year bishop's jubilee in St. Hedwig's Cathedral (letter dated 3 July 1942).

3 Preysing said in this sermon of 15 November 1942, among other things: "... What blissful happiness that doesn't blur the differences of personality, nationality and race over there, but is associated with a higher unity. This love may not exclude anybody; certainly not because he possibly speaks another language or is of a foreign race. Every human being carries God's image in his soul. Every human being has a right to life and love... It is never allowed to take human rights from a member of a foreign race, the right to freedom, the right to property, the right to an indissoluble marriage; it is never allowed to commit such cruelties towards any such person ..."

4 Sent on 5 December 1942. The draft had been proposed by Preysing at the West German Bishops Conference, which had met in November in Kvelaer.

... West German Church provinces, about God's sovereign authority and the rights of the individual and the family; and which was still very impressive in the version which finally came to be read.

One doesn't object to the fact that episcopal declarations, which courageously oppose your own government regarding the rights of religion, the Church, the human character, interceding for the unprotected violated by the public might, no matter whether those affected are children of the Church or outsiders -- might harm your Fatherland in the eyes of the world. Every courageous intercession for law and humanity will not compromise your Fatherland, but rather will create more respect for you and it in the eyes of the world, and can have a very favorable effect on it in the future.

As the Supreme Shepherd of the faithful, we are also concerned that your Catholics will affirm their pure convictions and not come to terms with principles and actions in conflict with God's law and the Spirit of Christ, yes, or even speak scornfully of them. It has consoled us to hear, to take an obvious example, that the Catholics, and even the Berlin Catholics, have brought much love to the so-called non-Aryans<sup>1</sup> in their affliction, and in this connection we have a particular word of fatherly recognition and heartfelt compassion for the imprisoned Prelate Lichtenberg<sup>2</sup>. -- But we are already pained by the thought that these opinions could gradually, maybe even without being noticed, creep into the world of thought of Catholics through the power of familiarization and under the effect of incessant propaganda, particularly among the younger generation. You know that the Holy See regards your liturgical processes as being sufficiently important to deal with them itself<sup>3</sup>. However, we confess that for us...

1 Finally, Preysing had reported on 6 March 1943; after he had spoken of the air raids he continued: "There is probably no bitterer trial for us here in Berlin than the new wave of Jewish deportations, which started in the days right before the first of March. It has to do with many thousands of them, whose probable fate was intimated by Your Holiness in your Christmas radio message. There are also many Catholics among the deportees. Would it not be possible for Your Holiness to try once again to intercede on behalf of the many unlucky innocent ones? This is the last hope of so many and the heartfelt request of all right-thinking people." (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

2 On 3 July 1942, Preysing had transmitted a copy of the verdict issued on 22 May 1942, after he had reported on 25 October 1941 on the arrest which had taken place on the afternoon of Thursday, 23 October: It had to do, as far as he could tell, with a public prayer which he [the prelate] had made for the arrested Jews during evening prayers in the cathedral. "I am confident that the holy prelate's deep piety and believer's spirituality, along with God's mercy, will keep him spiritually honest in prison, but I fear that captivity will have an unfavorable influence on his already very fragile health." Compare with Prelate Lichtenberg LThK VI, Column 1028.

3 Compare especially Letters No. 108 and 110.

... maintaining your Christian convictions in the face of all the poisons disproportionately threatening you is still more important than your liturgical questions. An even more beautiful [kind of] public worship would be if the thoughts and actions of the faithful were not alienated from the law and love of Christ!

We leave it to the archbishops active on the spot to evaluate whether and to what degree it appears advisable to practice restraint *ad maiora mala vitanda*<sup>1</sup> in the face of the danger of reprisals and other pressures in the case of episcopal declarations, as well as other circumstances possibly occasioned by the length and psychology of the war, in spite of the quoted motives. Herein lies one of the reasons why we ourselves impose limitations on our own pronouncements: the experience we had in 1942 with passing on to the faithful our optional papal documents which justified our stand as we saw it<sup>2</sup>.

We have discussed these questions with you extensively, not as though you would need our encouragement to act, but on the contrary because, on the one hand, we know your strong feelings for the honor of the Holy Church and your courage, and on the other hand we know that you will evaluate the overall situation with judicious rationality. For the Representative of Christ, the path which he must follow in order to find the correct balance between the self-conflicting demands of his pastoral office grows ever more tortuous and thorny.

We have in mind the measures directed against the Church, of which you notified us in your letter: the confiscation of Church property, the elimination of your episcopal seminary at Hedwigshöhe, the restriction or prevention of pastoral duties in German-occupied Poland and of religion classes for Polish children, the prohibition of marriage in Poland, etc., all of which are only a fraction of their greater strategy and extensive plan for choking off the vitality of the Church in German-controlled areas<sup>3</sup>. The hardest hit, as you know, is the Catholic Church in the Warthegau<sup>4</sup>. ...

1 To prevent even greater evils.

2 Certainly the pope means here the letters sent to the Polish bishops; compare A. MARTINI, *Silenzi e parole*, particularly P. 239 and following.

3 Almost every one of Preysing's letters had enclosures documenting the *Kirchenkampf*.

4 On 20 June 1942 already, Preysing had written: "Your Holiness is probably well informed of the even sadder circumstances in the Warthegau." The Warthegau was regarded as a part of the Reich. On 27 March 1942, Preysing had reported extensively on the Church's situation there, for which, above all, the so-called thirteen points, stated

orally at the Posen Consistory on 10 July 1940, were applicable. Mentioned therein, among other things, were: curtailment of the churches on mere union bylaws; prohibition of any contact with communities outside the Warthegau; membership rights only for those of legal age; prohibition of any religion classes in the schools, etc. Compare in particular B. STASIEWSKI, Warthegau, P. 53/55. The most far-reaching ordinance concerning the legal status of the churches was published on 13 September 1941 in the *VERORDNUNGSBLATT DES REICHSTATTHALTERS IM WARTHEGAU* (RECORD OF ORDINANCES OF THE REICH GOVERNOR OF THE WARTHEGAU), No. 30, Pp. 463-465; compare A.A.O.S. Pp. 56-58, as well as A. MARTINI, Appelli alla S. Sede und W. ADOLPH, *Hirtenamt* (pastoral Office) P. 80 f, F. ZIPPEL, *Kirchenkampf* P. 257. At almost at the same time that the pope wrote this letter to Bishop Preysing, Cardinal Bertram had lodged, on 12 April 1943, a complaint about the situation of the Church in the Warthegau with the Chief of the Reich Chancellery (reference: C.A. 2181); Lammers considered on 13 August 1943 (reference: Rk 9172 EV) these troubles to be irrelevant (transcriptions of the two documents in A. E. S., GERMANIA 859). Also compare the note from the Holy See to the government of the German Reich of 2 March 1943 (text in Italian translation by M. MACCARRONE Pp. 242-252, soon in its original wording by D. ALBRECHT, *Notenwechsel* II).

... Every attempt to mediate the unspeakable needs of the believers right there with government agencies has run into the brusquest of refusals. The considerations mentioned further up in the speech led, in the special case of the Warthegau, above all to the fear of also endangering what pastoral duties still remain there, and have so far prevented us from openly mentioning the local Church conditions there. We are relatively well informed regarding the circumstances and the fate of the priests incarcerated in the concentration camps, among whom those in Poland are of primary concern<sup>1</sup>. If the opportunity somehow presents itself, you should always let those priests and their fellow prisoners know that they have our most heartfelt compassion, and that we find ourself closer to few destinies other than their own in this time filled with sorrow and horrors, and that we daily pray for them very much.

The wording of the memorandum, that [!] the German episcopate has sent to the highest offices of the Reich lies before us<sup>2</sup>. Now you yourself know what slim prospects of success a document, sent in confidentiality to the regime, has; however, by all means the memorandum will be a valuable justification of the episcopacy before posterity.

For the Catholic non-Aryans as well as the observant Jews, the Holy See has charitably done everything, moral and economic, in its power. For our part, it has required the maximum of patience and self-renunciation for the action arms of our relief organizations to deal with the expectations and requests of the help seekers, as well as mastering the ever-emerging diplomatic

difficulties. We don't want to talk about the very high amounts which we have to shell out in American currency for...

1 On 17 October 1942, Preysing had transmitted statistics regarding the priests who had died in Dachau: in May 1942 35 priests, among them 34 Polish; in June 1942 119 priests, among them 110 Polish and 5 German; in July 1942 174 priests, among them 160 Polish and 8 German. Concerning the priests in Dachau, compare Letter No. 78, Footnote 3.  
2 Dated 18 December 1942.

... the overseas voyages of emigrants; we did it gladly because the people were in need; we did it for the love of God, we did it well, and not for any earthly reward. After all, the Holy See has received the warmest acknowledgment of its rescue work by the Jewish leadership<sup>1</sup>.

We have addressed a few remarks in our Christmas message to those in the German realm who are against the non-Aryans at the moment<sup>2</sup>. It was short, but nevertheless well understood. Because the non-Aryans and half-Aryan Catholics are children of the Church just like everyone else, now, in the disintegration of their outer existence and in their spiritual need, our fatherly love and fatherly concern is expressed in high masses. Unfortunately, in the current situation we can give them no effective help other than our prayers. However, we are determined, as the circumstances demand or permit, to raise our voice for them again.

We have just recently heard again of the steadfast fidelity of the German Catholics to their belief and their Church. However, beyond all that is depressing and exalting in the present, one difficult future question stands out for us: How shall the Catholic youth, as in the coming generations, escape from the anti-Christian influence and education of the closed system which, through the Party organizations, can be expected to form new schools under the already well-established regulations of the People's Law, how are they to protect their Catholic belief and pass it on unadulterated? For the moment, we can only comfort ourselves with the promise of the Holy Scriptures: "God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial He will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10, 13).

As a pledge of this "good outcome," we grant you, venerable brother -- doubly and triply "in the sign of the Cross," as you yourself have said in your pastoral teaching of the last Papal Sunday -- your co-workers in the apostolate and all your diocesans, the requested apostolic blessing in fatherly love from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 30 April 1943

1 Various Jewish congregations and groups had sent telegrams and letters of thanks to Pope Pius XII at the end of 1942, including Jewish communities from Bolivia, Costa Rica, South Africa, Chile, the Union Of Orthodox Rabbis of America and Canada and the *Großrabbiner* of Zagreb, among others.

2 AAS 35 (1943) Pp. 9-24 (GUIDE No. 473); the section to which the pope refers here: P. 23; compare also P. 14.

• **No. 106 Pius XII. to Bishop Kaller/Ermland**

Vatican, 29 June 1943

A. S. S., 1942 SOL.E CONGR. 1: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

Thanks for the good luck wishes on our coronation day, for the prayers and for the transmitted news. The difficult position of the Holy See. The letter concerning the 700-year celebration of the diocese. The increase in the reception of the Eucharist in the diocese. Praise for the bishop's administration. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Maximilian Kaller, Bishop of Ermland:<sup>1</sup>  
Your letter dated 28 February, with which you offered us your good luck wishes and those of your Diocese of Ermland on our coronation day<sup>2</sup>, has given us great solace in three ways: it speaks of the faithful and trusting dedication to the Successor of Peter which you have always inspired; we take it that you pray and sacrifice a great deal for us; and you report to us that the situation of the Church and the entire religious life in your diocese is hopeful despite the distress of recent years. We thank you, venerable brother, and your believers, and we ask you to not let up in your prayers for the Representative of Christ, because if prewar events had already assumed a menacing character for the situation of the Church, last but not least in the German realm, now the needs and dangers for the Holy Church and her supreme leadership are incomparably increased and multiplied by the war. We gladly agree to your wish that we address a word to your diocesans<sup>3</sup> on the occasion of the seven-century celebration of the Diocese of Ermland. It is appended to this letter, and we will be pleased if it should contribute to an even closer solidarity between your clergy and believers and the Head of the Church.

We know what deep worries the present situation and the uncertainty of the future cause you. The fact that in your diocese alone the number...

1 This letter was (like No. 107) sent during the first days of July 1943 and handed over to the nunciature in Berlin on 10 July. As it appears from a communication preserved in the archives of the Berlin Diocese, which the Herr Vicar-General Prelate W. Adolph has

thankfully brought to our attention, neither letter reached its addressee for unknown reasons. Transcriptions were sent to Bishop Kaller in June 1945 after restoration of mail service (A. S. S., 1942 SOL.E CONG. 1, No. 97 421).

2 12 March; the bishop's letter is located with the draft of the pope's letter.

3 Compare Letter No. 107.

... of holy communions has doubled<sup>1</sup> within two years, allows us to recognize how very much you are under the particular control of divine providence and mercy. That God may continue to strengthen and increase you, venerable brother, for the eagerness and miraculous trust that marks your episcopal administration, we grant you the apostolic blessing in particular love.

From the Vatican, 29 June 1943

1 These numbers were not stated in bishop's letter. It is not apparent on what this statement in the pope's letter is based. The communion numbers stated in the CHURCH HANDBOOK, Volume XX - XII for those years indicate an increase of approximately 15% for the years 1934-1938, and then a slight decrease, however. So there is obviously a mistake here.

**• No. 107 Pius XII. to the Catholics in the Diocese of Ermland**

Vatican, 29 June 1943

A. S. S., 1942 SOL.E CONGR. 1: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand.

The 700 year celebration of the diocese and its consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Frauenberg Cathedral and the Pilgrim Church in Heiligelinde have been built in your honor. Under their protection stood and stands the religious life of the diocese. A prayer for peace. Reminder for the loyal avowal of belief. Blessings.

To our beloved sons and daughters, the clergy and the faithful of the Diocese of Ermland:

With great joy we have heard from your bishop that on the day on which the Diocese of Ermland completes the seventh century of its existence, he intends to renew the consecration of the diocese to the protection and love of the Virgin Mary, just as it was when it was established 700 years ago<sup>2</sup>.

The affairs of your diocese have indeed always been under the banner of the Virgin Mary. The Knights of the German Order recognized Mary as their mistress in their time<sup>3</sup>. 600 years ago, your fathers dedicated the fifty-year construction of the cathedral at Frauenburg to Mary<sup>4</sup>, that noble product of the...

2 The Diocese of Ermland was established by the legate of Pope Innocent IV, Wilhelm of Modena, on 29 July 1243 -- at the same time as the dioceses of Kulm, Pomerania and Samland.

3 Compare LThK III Sp. 274-277.

4 Today Frauenburg, a small city on the Baltic lagoon of Frischen, is called Frombork. The grave of Copernicus is located in its Gothic cathedral, built 1329-1380.

... church architecture of a joyously faithful time, which through the centuries bore witness to the extremely turbulent history of the [shifting] boundaries and religious life of your homeland, a bastion of God's mercies through disastrous trials and storms. The names of so many villages and sacred places in East Prussia proclaim Mary's veneration. In honor of the Queen of Heaven, thankfully rejoicing, as it were, for the rescue of belief from the highest danger and for a new blossoming of Church life after stressful hardships, the lofty Pilgrim Church of Heiligelindel<sup>1</sup> stands there, welcoming the many thousands of pilgrims from Catholic Ermland as well as from the wider diaspora regions, year in and year out, in order to expiate their guilt for sins, achieve reconciliation with God and obtain heaven's help, solace and strength in the tribulations of life through the maternal intercession of Mary for the needs of their souls and so that all might accomplish the tasks which time and eternity place upon them.

May Mary, the mother of beautiful love, lay your thanks at the throne of the triune God for the excess of blessings and mercy bestowed upon the Diocese of Ermland over the course of seven centuries: thanks for the sanctification of the millions and millions of people who, through her motherly concern and the prayers, the sacrifices and the entire work of the Holy Church, have been reborn as children of God and heirs of heaven, Catholics strong in their belief and possibly formed to the full maturity of Christian heroism (cf. Eph. 4, 13); it is the goal and meaning of all Church works that people live, grow and die in God's mercy. Thanks for pure and joyful youth, Christian married life and peaceful family happiness. Thanks for priests and bishops after God's heart that God has given you so often in ancient times and modern. Thanks for the fidelity to belief which you have demonstrated during the trials of recent years, as for your growing love in Jesus Christ, about which your episcopal "shepherd" has so consolingly informed us<sup>2</sup>. Thanks for these and countless other blessings from our almighty and compassionate God on the day of jubilee: "For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be glory forever." (Rom. 11, 36).

The seven-hundred year celebration of your diocese comes at a time when a more heavily laden fate can hardly be imagined. Unspeakably oppressive, the war weighs upon you.

1 The pilgrim church of Heiligelinde, visited since about 1400 as a place of pilgrimage in the Rastenburg district (today: *Swigta Lipka, Kr. Ketrzyn*), was built by the Jesuits, 1681-1693.

2 In the letter dated 28 February 1942, which Pius XII covers in his letter to the bishop (No. 106).

The longer it lasts, all the more earnestly may you beseech Mary that she, the Mighty Virgin, the Queen of Peace, might obtain from God a quick end to the bloody fighting, and that she might point the way for mankind to a true peace and the gateway to Paradise Lost: to an honorable and lasting peace; to a peace of justice and equitable compensation, where the measure of the individual wishes and requirements of each participant is also the standard for the appraisal of the wishes and requirements of all the others; to a peace which guarantees all people without exception their right to exist and to achieve their full potential. Appeal to Mary for such a peace with all the fervor of your hearts!

For a decade you have been involved in extremely tough fighting for your Catholic beliefs and the Christian culture, which were the treasure and pride of your homeland for centuries past, born of its richness in the good, the source of its resistance during evil times, to which the history and the monuments of East Prussia bear witness a thousandfold to its earthly as well as eternal blessings. Confess your faith courageously and without compromise, right up to its final consequences for the moral character and the coexistence of your people. Stake everything on preserving this for your youth, for the coming generations and for the coming centuries. Be aware also of your noble duty to stay connected, through prayer and sanctity, with the life of your diocese, to whose altars your fathers once flocked with the same belief with which you approach them, and bend your knees before the God of the Eucharist as does the whole Reich: to regain truth and mercy in the one Church of Jesus Christ.

That He, upon the intercession of Mary, the Mother of Divine Mercy, "... Who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us ..." (Eph. 3, 20) may pour forth His overabundant mercies over you and the dawning eighth century of the Diocese of Ermland, validating our prayers and sacrifices for you on your day of jubilation, and as a pledge of all He gives you, we impart to you, bishop, clergy and people, in fatherly love and from the fullness of our heart, the apostolic blessing. From the Vatican, on the Feast of the Apostle Princes Peter and Paul, 29 June 1943.

• **No. 108 Pius XII. to Bishop Stohr/Mainz**

Vatican, 16 August 1943

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

Thanks for sending the memorandum concerning the liturgical question. Assurance of far-sighted consideration. Anxieties expressed in Germany. Three points to pay attention to in this regard: the merciful effect of the sacraments must not be obscured, the personal quest for sanctity is to be emphasized and more important questions may not be overlooked. Concerning the emergence of the "young Church." The cities afflicted by air raids, including Mainz. Retrospective view of his own participation in the cathedral renovation celebration. Air raids on Rome. Reasons for the pope to stay in Rome. His sympathy for the fate of the German people. Longing for peace. The charitable tasks of the Holy See. The Vatican's prisoner news service. Difficulties because of the German and Russian governments. The lack of a personal connection between the German bishops and the pope. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Albertus Stohr, Bishop of Mainz:

We confirm with thanks, venerable brother, the receipt of your letter of 27 March and the memorandum about the status of the liturgical question in your diocese. The memorandum is like other statements by other German bishops because other congregations are examining this issue<sup>1</sup>.

Your letter contains the request to "transfer the entire (liturgical) issue out of the atmosphere of anxiety into one of trust." In reference to this, we can only reiterate what we have already observed on another occasion<sup>2</sup>, namely that the assigned cardinals are considering this question here with calmness and vision, and that the Holy See is willing to accommodate the requirements of pastoral duties in Germany within the framework of the possible. The apprehensions are primarily with you yourself and, as you know, have also been aired from the bishops' side<sup>3</sup>. One cannot say that they are all unfounded. They certainly don't exclusively involve the liturgical question, but rather touch upon almost all devotional living and the ascetic attitudes of the believers. The article in the "*Klerusblatt* (Clergy News)" of 14 July 1943 (No. 28-29, Pp. 205 to 210), "On the internal Church situation in...

1 The memorandum can no longer be found among the correspondence.

2 Compare Letters Nos. 57, 71 and 105.

3 Refers to the professional opinion of Archbishop Gröber with his 17 points; compare Letter No. 110, Footnote 1.

... Germany”<sup>1</sup> confirms this anew from the intellectual-historical point of view. It can therefore only be salutary if now, on the occasion of the treatment of the liturgical question, healthy and unhealthy aspects are cleanly separated. This has already happened, incidentally, with a number of the points raised in our encyclical "*Mystici Corporis Christi*"<sup>2</sup>. As for what we believe should be important, firstly the "liturgical movement" should not shove the sense of, and the high esteem for, the merciful effects of the holy mysteries into the background through one-sided emphasis of their psychological effects; secondly that the awareness of the fundamental meaning of the eternal truths and the personal struggle against sin, the personal quest for virtue and holiness, suffer no damage through an overemphasis on the liturgical; and finally that other tasks are not overlooked beside those in the liturgical area. We<sup>3</sup> frankly confess how much more it makes us worry that the fate of the German Catholics has been the object of our efforts, night and day, in years past, that they might hold themselves immune from all the unchristian, yes, and often even godless opinions thrown at them. We have heard disturbing examples of such unreasonable demands from the war zones, and not only from them, but also -- and that comforts us -- of cases of courageous belief. The beneficial future of the Catholic Church in Germany depends upon your believers, particularly the younger generation, withstanding the assault of those pernicious opinions. We might add that we are not pleased with the term "young Church"<sup>4</sup>. Does this not sound insulting to the older generation? ...

1 Compiled by UNIV.-PROF. HANS PFEIL, Münster (Westf.). The article purports to describe, in the spirit of love and for purposes of clarification, certain attempts at renewal and bizarre tendencies which seem to be beginning to emerge within the Church. The author seeks to prove that some of these tendencies, which originate from an exaggerated influence on the part of dialectical theology, can be traced back to a vitalistic philosophy, and hint of modernism in their content, but are also so distinctly different that one could almost refer to them as a kind of supra-naturalistic modernism (P. 205).

2 From 29 June 1943: AAS 35 (1943) Pp. 193-248 (compare GUIDE n. 517). The negotiations and discussions led to the encyclical *Mediator Dei* of 20 November 1947: AAS 39 (1947) Pp. 521-600 (GUIDE n. 1032).

3 From here up to the end of the section in February 1944 by the KIPA in Fribourg with a few text alterations, and published with the fictitious date of January 1944, and taken over by the REUTER agency. This resulted in a *demarche* of the German ambassador to the Holy See (A. S. S., 1944 DIOCESI 82).

4 The pope found the term "young Church" in the article by HANS PFEIL, who writes about it: "A so-called 'young church,' which above all wants to take in the youth of the

Church, has arisen in our midst, which wants to reorganize and reform the entire Church through the youth, impressing upon her an uncatholic character ... "...

... Right now, when nameless misery overshadows your people and all are dragged indiscriminately into the horrors of the war, the need for universal love and noble consideration among the faithful is doubled. When we speak of war misery with you, we immediately think primarily of the fate of the cities afflicted by the air raids. Beautiful Mainz has been target of these attacks repeated times, which have also caused severe devastation to the local church buildings<sup>1</sup>. We read your reports about this with the most heartfelt sympathy. We have also felt the damage to the Mainz Cathedral very personally since we participated, as apostolic nuncio, in the memorable ceremonies commemorating the complete restoration of this place of worship of such historic importance<sup>2</sup>. We don't need to tell you and your brothers in the episcopal office how much suffering this inhuman form of warfare has caused us since the beginning of the war, which has meanwhile even come to the Eternal City. Even though we reacted in a forceful manner after the first attack on Rome<sup>3</sup> and have fought for protection of the city, that didn't happen, as if we would have wanted to overemphasize this attack unilaterally or even unsympathetically. That attack, like the subsequent ones, was intense and resulted in many fatalities, but we know full well how many other cities in Italy and other countries, and also German cities, have suffered and are suffering. However, we believe the message which we gave in the form of a letter to our Vicar-General for the Diocese of Rome<sup>4</sup>, that not only our own diocesans but to the same extent the entire Church, to be responsible for maintaining Rome as their historical and living center. Rome is unique not only for its secular history, but even more for its Church history, belonging to all and encompassing all. The response from the entire Catholic world has validated our words.

Besides, we suffer, sacrifice and pray with all classes of the population, who are doomed to death or unspeakable misery through the air raids ...

1 Bishop Stohr had already reported extensively on this on 20 August 1942 from Fulda.

2 Restoration work was carried out at the cathedral during the years 1910 to 1928; at their conclusion the mentioned ceremonies were held; Nuncio Pacelli was in Mainz on 15 and 16 October 1928. Compare E. PACELLI, *Speeches*, Pp. 147-152.

3 The first attack on Rome (districts in the east and southeast of the city) took place on 19 July 1943.

4 The pope's letter to Cardinal-Vicar Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani of 20 July 1943: AAS 35 (1943) Pp. 252-254 (GUIDE n. 522); compare GIOVANNETTI, *Rome*, P. 12 f., 112-120.

... and so our thoughts presently dwell almost even more than before with your people. We can only beseech Divine Providence to grant a merciful end to this war for all involved. The hardships will not end when the war is over, but hard times and more sacrifices will arrive, which we will accept humbly from the hand of God. If only the new times could gradually become more religious and more full of faith again, and the members of the Church rise to the almost superhuman tasks awaiting them.

The Holy See's works of charity during this world war, of which you speak in your letter, have developed into what they now are based on the pleas for help reaching us<sup>1</sup>. And the German sector of our work offers striking examples of this. To mention just one, during recent months many thousands of handwritten greetings and communications from German prisoners to their relatives have reached the Holy See from the British Empire, above all from Australia. It was and still is difficult to make certain these tidings reach their destinations<sup>2</sup>. How much more good would have resulted if only the German and Russian governments had allowed the intercession of the Holy See. It grieves us that we could only slightly ease, or not ease at all, the deeply moving spiritual needs arising from German inquiries after persons missing on the Russian front, primarily the Stalingrad front. May God comfort the fearful and the miserable!

How very much we yearn to be able to greet you (as well as the other bishops from the German lands) here again. Also, a range of questions which you have raised in your letter could be better discussed then. We can recognize from various examples and on different occasions, how strongly the German Catholics are separated from the rest of the Universal Church at the moment, and also cut off from its Center. The almost daily visit of German soldiers has given us joy to be sure, and it has, as we hear, been well received by the German people. By itself it can be no substitute for the spiritual connection with the Head of the Church which should prevail in such times. It has comforted us all the more to hear from you and the other bishops that the closest unity exists with you between bishop, priests and people. The goal of driving a wedge between clergy and people the other side set for itself, has therefore not been attained.

1 Stohr writes about this: "We regard it as self-evident that the Holy Father would put all his energies into the service of charitable activities and the quest for peace, when we can hardly do anything about it due to the hermetic news barrier and the absolute lack of a Church press in our country" (A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII).

2 The German government had practically crippled this information service right from the beginning; compare also Letter no. 105, fourth Footnote 1.

Toward the strengthening of unity, and as a pledge of God's love and mercy in the dark and difficult future which lies ahead of you, we grant you, venerable brother, your co-workers in the apostolate, the priests and the laity, and all your believers, the requested apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 16 August 1943

• **No. 109 Pius XII. to Bishop Berning/Osnabrück**

Vatican, 18 August 1943

Copy (without address) in the MB BAMBERG of 9 December 1943.

Sympathy on the occasion of the heavy air raids on Hamburg. Recollection of his visit as nuncio to that Hanseatic city. Assurance of remembrance in prayers. Reminder to be helpful and patient. Blessings.

The horrible fate that has befallen the City of Hamburg<sup>1</sup> in your diocese urges us to give voice to our deepest-felt sympathy for you, your faithful, and all the other inhabitants. Admittedly, for the past four years we have heard cries of anguish almost daily, yes even hourly. But what we hear these days about the destruction of that proud and rich Hanseatic city and the masses dying there, often in the most agonizing ways, has jarred us to the depths of our soul amidst the present general misery. The fact that we visited your city, as apostolic nuncio in Germany years ago<sup>2</sup>, can only increase our pain over its indescribable misery.

We remember the dead and the survivors in our prayers and at the Holy Sacrifice. In fatherly love, we remind our sons and daughters in Hamburg not to be mad at Divine Providence that the penalizing hand of the Lord has now struck their home city so very severely, but to rather humbly submit to the inscrutable decisions of the Almighty, and to accept the misfortune befallen them in a spirit of penance and reform their lives, in an attitude and with the works of charity among each other; and that they may distinguish themselves to all their fellow citizens and through the example of Christian patience...

1 The intense air raids on Hamburg took place during the last days of July 1943; the heaviest attack occurred on the night of 27 - 28 July. The number of fatalities was estimated at approximately 40,000.

2 The volume of the nuncio's speeches contains nothing about Pacelli's visit to Hamburg mentioned here.

... and endurance and so bring those alienated from God's religious truth closer to belief once again.

That God in His mercy might turn Hamburg's greatest calamity towards the temporal and eternal salvation of all those concerned, and that His fatherly kindness might direct your fate to all the best, we grant you, venerable brother, your priestly co-workers, the City of Hamburg and all believers there, as well as the whole Diocese of Osnabrück, the apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 18 August 1943

• **No. 110 Pius XII. to Archbishop Gröber/Freiburg**

Vatican, 22 August 1943

A. E. S., CARTE Pio XII: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections in the pope's own hand and the comment *Si può copiare* in an unknown hand.

Acknowledgment of two memoranda. Expert opinions regarding the question of the liturgical movement. Assurance of a broad-minded treatment. Retranslation of the psalms. Priority of other questions. Thanks for the promise of prayers. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Conrad Gröber, Archbishop of Freiburg:

We acknowledge, and are indebted to you, venerable brother, for the friendly delivery of your memoranda concerning unhealthy or dangerous undercurrents within certain Catholic circles in Germany, as well as for your comments on the report which Cardinal Bertram has conveyed to the Holy See as a statement of the German bishops regarding the liturgical question<sup>1</sup>. Both documents have been sent to the offices here charged with the examination of the matter.

We ourselves have taken note of both memoranda with close attention. You will understand however, if in our judgment we keep our distance, for the moment anyway. Many of the questions regarding the liturgical business touched upon in one or the other of your memoranda naturally recur in the professional opinions reaching us from the German episcopacy ...

<sup>1</sup> The one memorandum had already become well-known during the war and was sent to all the German bishops in a letter with which Gröber likewise illustrated the many dangers to the orthodoxy of Church teaching in 17 points. The opinion on the liturgical question is no longer found with the correspondence since it, as was said at the beginning of Letter No. 108, was turned over to the responsible congregations for examination of the issue.

... are at the moment therefore now "*sub iudice*." Questions dealing with individual parts have already been dealt with in our circular "*Mystici Corporis Christi*"<sup>1</sup>, particularly in the third part. -- Time should be allowed the German bishops, as well as all those who are entrusted with the formation of future clergy, to form a balanced judgment concerning the degree to which some of the practices identified by you have taken root among the clergy and believers and pose a real danger. In this regard, the article in the "*Klerusblatt* (Clergy News)" No. 28-29 of 14 July 1943, Pp. 205 to 210, "On the Internal Situation of the Church in Germany"<sup>2</sup> was of interest to us.

Regarding your other memorandum, one point has struck us pleasantly anyway: If one listens to the voices of those individuals advocating liturgical reform, one would be likely to say that parish life and the Order of the Mass with you have been simply lousy up till now. You rightly emphasize that this is just not so, and that in recent decades you have been "totally satisfied" with your Mass. Actually, the conscientious eagerness of German Catholics to keep the Sabbath and the dignity of their Mass is praiseworthy. We don't say that because we want to obstruct new devotional and practical forms of participation in the liturgy. We will consider the bishops' desires, as stated to us, with broad-mindedness. We don't even want to deny acceptance of their objections to the Vulgate Text of the psalms. It would certainly be desirable if the psalms, which amount to such a big part of the daily breviary, were available to the priests in an easily understandable form faithful to their original meaning, and reflecting the poetic beauty of the original Latin translations<sup>3</sup>.

The question of the Order of the Mass will be resolved with calmness and intelligent maturity, with Christian love and noble mutual consideration, and above all in such a way that the Church authorities maintain firm control of leadership. We have already told other bishops that this not the most pressing matter for us<sup>4</sup> -- especially at the present moment. The immunization of the German Catholics against all the false, often inhuman ...

1 AAS 35 (1943) Pp. 193-248 (GUIDE n. 517). The third part (not marked as such in the Latin text), IBID. Pp. 233-247.

2 Compare Letter No. 108, second Footnote 1.

3 At that time, Pius XII had already given the Papal Bible Institute the job of coming up with a new rendition of the Latin translation of the psalms. The translation appeared in Rome in 1945 and was particularly acknowledged by the pope through the *Motu Proprio In quotidianis precibus* of 24 March 1945 (AAS 37 [1945], Pp. 65-67; GUIDE No. 646); compare A. BEA.

4 compare Letters Nos. 105 and 108.

... and godless opinions and procedures that have been foisted on them during the last 5 years, as well as the external and "moral" war needs exceeding all moderation, causes us disproportionately more concern. It seems to us to be somewhat unworldly and not in keeping with the times when the liturgical question is described as the [burning] question of the day. We thank you, venerable brother, for your devout and zealous prayers. Also we remember you constantly in our intercessions with God, and especially those who are dragged ever deeper into the horrors of the war. We can only hope that your metropolis with its appealing charms and the wonder of its Gothic *Münsterturm* [tower]<sup>1</sup> remains spared from the harrowing fate of so many of its sister cities in your Homeland as well as in the entire theater of war<sup>2</sup>. We ask you to increase your prayers and penitential acts so that God might make a merciful end to this almost hopeless-appearing war as soon as possible.

In this confidence, we grant you, venerable brother, your clergy and your believers, the apostolic blessing in ever-constant love.

From the Vatican, 22 August 1943

1 Pius XII was still in Freiburg as nuncio for the Catholic Conference of 1929, shortly before his departure for Rome; compare E. PACELLI, *Speeches* Pp. 175-181.

2 The pope's wish was not fulfilled. On 27 November 1944, an intense air raid was carried out on Freiburg, destroying approximately 90% of the old part of town; Münster, however, was spared.

• **No. 111 Pius XII to Bishop Preysing/Berlin**

Vatican, 3 September 1943

A. S. S., CARTE PIO XII: Copy (without number).

Letter of consolation for the inhabitants of the City of Berlin.

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

In your letter dated 26 August, venerable brother, you asked us for our blessing for the City of Berlin, which is living through difficult days.

Although only sparse news has come to us regarding the fate of the capital of the Reich the last three weeks, it has sufficed to allow us to understand the hardships of your faithful as well as the entire population of Berlin; not just the frightful situation which the massive air raids have wrought on the city here and now, but likewise the misery, the homelessness and bereavement which spread outward from the city and went everywhere else. All have our compassion, our sympathy and our pity, all the more since the Berlin of happier times was a home to us for years, to which we are joined

by pleasant and friendly memories; meanwhile, the happier these memories are, the more painfully the tidings of the unspeakable misfortune befalling the city affects us.

We commend Berlin's dead to God's mercy and pray for the survivors, that these days of grimmest trial may become for them days of redemption. We don't doubt that, as we have heard about Catholics in other cities attacked by air raids, your believers, too, through prayer and faith in God during the deadly peril, through patience and endurance, through Christian helpfulness and charity, will be edified, raised up and strengthened and, if they are distant from God, brought closer to Him.

We can't and won't abandon the confident hope that God, whose judgments are inscrutable and whose ways are unsearchable (cf. Rom. 11, 33), out of His omnipotence, wisdom and love, will transform the awful miseries of the present into better times, the foundation of which will be the love and fear of God, the only foundation upon which the certain continued existence and the true prosperity of the cities and countries can be based.

As a pledge of this hope and as God's consolation in this all-consuming sorrow, we grant you, venerable brother, your clergy and your believers the requested apostolic blessing in fatherly concern and from the fullness of our heart.

From the Vatican, 3 September 1943<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The text is taken from Preysing's statement "To the Believers of my Diocese" of 29 September 1943, to be read on Sunday, 3 October; Preysing had sent a copy of this statement to the pope, which is the basis of the text presented here, since the draft of the letter could no longer be found.

### • **No. 112 Pius XII to Bishop Preysing/ Berlin**

Vatican, 5 September 1943

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

The importance of information. The Fulda Bishops Conference and the common pastoral letter. Remarks on the pope's letter of 3 January 1943. The papal information service for prisoners of war. Fundamental advice on the cooperation of Church offices with government edicts. Consoling words for the Catholics in Pomerania and in Berlin. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Konrad von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin:  
You know, venerable brother, how desirous we always are to get communications from the bishops about Church life in Germany, now even

more than before, since on the one hand the Church's circumstances are quite fluid because of the general dislocations there and change almost from month to month, and on the other hand the news reaching us about the fate of the Church in Germany has become so sparse. We are therefore grateful to have received your three letters dated 3 and 18 June as well as that of 26 August.

What you report about this year's Fulda Bishops Conference<sup>1</sup>, is the first news we got from them. We have taken note with satisfaction of the common pastoral teaching of the conference<sup>2</sup>. Our letter dated 3 January to the German Catholics<sup>3</sup> has resulted from a suggestion to us from Cardinal Bertram himself, who held that a word from the pope to the faithful in Germany would be appropriate. We would have liked to agree to the request but wanted to defer the publication of our pastoral message because of what we considered to be the tricky situation there. The letter naturally took into consideration the circumstances as of the last New Year. We were pleased by the welcome reception it found at your conference. However, nothing more will probably come of the publication, since the time for its consideration has since elapsed.

Concerning the circular that was passed out on 12 March 1942 by the secretariat of the Fulda Bishops Conference in the matter of the papal information office for prisoners of war, we have taken note of your communication<sup>4</sup>. The fundamental stand of Church authorities can only be that: if the government wants to enact ordinances which appear detrimental to the honor or the freedom of the Church, it should be left to the government organs ...

1 The conference took place from 17 to 19 August 1943. The hectographed minutes run to 46 pages.

2 Preysing had transmitted the common pastoral letter of 19 August 1943, which was to be read on 12 September 1943 and dealt with the Ten Commandments (text: W. CORSTEN No. 227, Pp. 298-304; Excerpts by W. ADOLPH, *Hirtenamt*, P. 90 and following and J. NEUHÄUSLER, *Kreuz und Hakenkreuz* (Cross and Swastika) II, Pp. 69-71). During its treatment of the Fifth Commandment, the pastoral letter unequivocally condemned so-called "euthanasia" and the murderous justice of the regime.

3 Compare Letter No. 94.

4 Compare Letter No. 105, fourth Footnote 1. From the conference it emerged that the Wienken communication derived from an instruction of Bertram's.

... to make the same known; the Church authorities cannot allow themselves to take on a joint responsibility for this, or even the appearances of such a thing.

We have particular words of consolation and blessing for your believers in Stettin and Pomerania<sup>1</sup> affected by such spiteful and dangerous defamations. However, we assume that the Catholic-baiters there have been shoved into the background by the terrible events that have afflicted Berlin in the meantime<sup>2</sup>. As an expression of our heartfelt sympathy over the bitter events that have smitten your cathedral city, we enclose this letter<sup>3</sup>. Wishing you in particular God's protection and strength during these dim days, we grant you the requested apostolic blessing with heartfelt love.  
From the Vatican, 5 September 1943

1 Approximately 25 persons, priests and Catholic laymen, were arrested by the Gestapo in Stettin and Pomerania in February 1943, because of alleged espionage, defeatism, etc; a considerable number of them were sentenced to death and executed; compare H. KÜHN, *Blutzeugen* (Martyrs), Pp. 45-87.

2 The pope's expectation was not fulfilled. Despite the heavy air raids, the persecution of Catholics continued in Stettin.

3 Letter No. 111.

#### • **No. 113 Pius XII to the German Bishops**

Vatican, 18 October 1943

*SEGRETERIA DI S. S. PER LE LETTERE LATINE*: Draft Letter (without number), with corrections and the marginal comment *All'Episcopato Germanico | dopo la conferenza di Fulda | (Settembre 1943)* by an unknown hand. Preliminary outline in A. S. S. 1943, DIOCESI 287. The letter was dispatched on 23 October 1943.

Thanks for the devotional address. Reference to the horrors of the war. Constant efforts of the Holy See to end the war or at least abate its consequences. Necessity of a close connection between the Holy See and the bishops. Joy over the good news about the vigorous religious life in Germany. Commendation of the devotions and days of contemplation. The dangers threatening the Church. Slackening of the strength of belief. Dangers to marriage and the family, obstruction of youth education, decline in candidates for the priesthood. Praise of the clergy's eagerness for pastoral duties. Attacks against the fabric of the Church. Reminders for solidarity and determination. Assurance of dedications of prayers. Blessings.

The unambiguous expression of respect and devotion which you made in your joint letter at your assembly in Fulda and also throughout the year<sup>3</sup>, has moved our heart all the more because of the difficult cares and anxieties which beset the bishops and the faithful of Germany. Our heart also suffers over the misery and horrors of the immense catastrophe with which humanity is tortured more every day, and for the hardships of such

unfortunate and defeated people which always increase ever more cruelly. We never stop considering and trying everything to bring an end to this most terrible war ...

3 The Fulda conference had taken place from 17 to 19 August 1943.

... in order to limit its excesses, at least for the time being, and to ease the intense suffering through active charity.

At your meeting at the grave of the Holy Boniface, beloved sons and venerable brothers, you have given expression with the full force of conviction that the connection which the members have with their head must be at all times all the more heartfelt and steadfast, the more difficult the burdens and miseries of the present are. Because, as you have rightly determined, all the light of truth and the strength and effectiveness of all deliberations and all purposeful undertakings come from your solidly-grounded Holy See; and this applies at all times, especially during difficult and unfavorable times.

It gives our heart great solace that you can write to us about the faithful entrusted to your pastoral care that not only are their numbers not decreasing, but in many places an even greater number of them are celebrating the Mass and approaching the Table of the Lord despite all the difficulties and obstacles of the times, thereby demonstrating their living allegiance to Holy Mother the Church. We want to sincerely praise and acknowledge these proofs of faith and piety; we commend the great ardor with which these loyal believers of yours, as you have reported to us, are being fulfilled more and more, namely by penetrating ever more deeply into the mysteries of faith and allowing themselves to be instructed in piety through spiritual exercises. Where otherwise such a great negligence and ignorance in matters of faith and regarding the Christian lifestyle would prevail, the praiseworthy decision of your believers provides a guarantee and an omen for a more zealous Christian life in the future, and a rich success for the apostolate among those who have distanced themselves from God and the Church.

Meanwhile, there is still much, beloved sons and venerable brothers, which holds you in fear and anxiety. Because due to the duration and terrible nature of this cruel war, faith and hope dwindle among many, marriage and family ties are in great danger, the Christian education of the children and the youth is becoming more difficult and sometimes even quite impossible and vocations for service in the Church are sinking markedly. These apprehensions of yours are also ours and they remain on our mind and

depress us. We therefore can't praise enough the great ardor of bishops and believers to fight the good fight for the preservation of the purity of belief and morals<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, it is about defending the Catholic faith, it is about protecting the indissolubility and holiness of the family and properly educating the coming generation of Christians; it is about finding and training candidates for the priesthood; and finally it is about securing the foundations of the Church and the Christian life.

<sup>1</sup> Compare 2 Tim. 4, 7.

If the legal status of the Church in your dioceses is already in jeopardy<sup>1</sup>, you should concern yourselves about this with all prudence and solidarity as you did before, so that the sacred privileges of the Church are not expropriated or restricted toward the ruination of souls. Your admirable unanimity in counsel and action will also cause the clergy and believers entrusted to you to work together successfully for the general welfare.

Meanwhile, we direct our imploring prayers to God that the fullness of the heavenly light and the gift of grace mercifully stand by your undertakings and your actions. As a pledge of these mercy offerings we grant you, beloved sons and venerable brothers, the clergy, the people of religious orders and the believers of the dioceses which you lead, the apostolic blessing with heartfelt love in the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Reference to the regime's measures against the Church, above all in the territories of Austria, the Warthegau and Alsace-Lorraine.

**• No. 114 Pius XII to Archbishop Jaeger/Paderborn**

Vatican, 24 October 1943

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

The requested apostolic blessing conveyed. The religious situation of the diocese. The fourth year of war. Sympathy for those affected by the air war. Reminiscence of the pope on his visits to the diocese. Loyalty to the faith. On praying the rosary. The courage of the nuns. The liturgical movement and public prayers. The isolation of families. The Holy See's efforts for peace. Accusations against the pope. His words not getting through to Germany. Prayers for peace. Blessings.

To our venerable brother Laurentius Jäger, archbishop of Paderborn:  
Your two letters dated 7 August reached us towards evening on 21 August, and therefore on the day for which the apostolic blessing<sup>2</sup> was requested. We

would have liked to comply with your wish and grant the blessing right away in the wee hours, if only we could have hoped, under the present circumstances, that it could still reach its destination that same day. Your letter regarding the religious and Church situation of the Archdiocese of Paderborn, venerable brother, has given us great comfort, although admittedly not what you report about the hardships of the war, the material, spiritual and moral [condition] of your believers and the ...

2 Nothing is known about the occasion of the request.

... entire people. In the fourth year of war, the German people have also come to know the horrors of the war on their home turf, and the industrial area of your archdiocese is among the districts hardest hit by the air raids. We give you, venerable brother, and those so often intensely afflicted, our most heartfelt sympathy, which we feel all the more deeply, since we saw the land and people of the Paderborn Diocese fully manifesting their strengths in peaceful pursuits during our visits to your cathedral city, as well as at the Catholic conferences in Dortmund and Magdeburg<sup>1</sup>, and were allowed to witness its Catholics' unshakable belief and religious fidelity. We gather great consolation from your letter, in that this belief has proven itself so admirably in the severe trials of the war. We have been greatly moved by reading what you have written<sup>2</sup> about the praying of the rosary during the air raids, about the fearlessness in the face of death of your good nuns, about the Christian patience and endurance of the Catholics and the uplifting, shining example they gave their non-Catholic comrades during the hours of greatest danger. We are with them, thinking of them and praying for them daily and hourly, as well as for everyone this gruesome war has affected.

What you write about the rosary, namely that it has become the common prayer in the air-raid shelters, as well as the prayer of the soldiers out in the field, gives us reason to point out something which must not be overlooked while considering the liturgical question. The war has validated the general experience that during the hours of greatest need the people resort to the simplest forms of prayer with which they are familiar and trust from their homes and during their youth. The devotional life of the faithful must therefore be built in such a way that the simplest personal and family prayers are always and everywhere available for individual as well as common prayer, retaining their value and place and not decreased. The Church life in German lands was and is rich in ...

1 Nuncio Pacelli had been in Paderborn in July 1926. The Catholic conferences in Dortmund and Magdeburg took place in 1927 as well as 1928. The speeches he gave on these occasions are in E. PACELLI, *Speeches*, Pp. 69-71, 113-116 and 137-140.

2 Archbishop Jäger had written: "I know of countless cases wherein the non-Catholic residents have been uplifted by the tranquility and Christian bravery of their Catholic fellow citizens during the heavy air raids and furthermore have asked to pray the rosary, which has become the common prayer in the air-raid shelters, just as it is the prayer of our soldiers out in the field." (A. E. S., CARTE PIO XII).

... such prayers, and your diocesan prayer-books<sup>1</sup> have maintained them in a joyous manner. This treasury of prayer, which the piety of not only the individual and the family, but also the public, therefore provides nourishment to the liturgical Mass in the Church, deserves special regard when considering any possible changes.

With palpable worry, we follow the reports of family hardships which come to us from the German bishops, precisely from those areas most jeopardized by the air war. You yourself, venerable brother, have drawn a very graphic picture of this misery. What hurts the most is the transplantation of the school-age children and their parents into an environment which cannot be conducive to their Catholic upbringing. We praise and thank you and your clergy for so quickly providing the Mass and religious instructions to the school-age children of the archdiocese who have been relocated elsewhere. In two radio messages (in that of 13 May 1942 on the occasion of our bishop's jubilee, as well as in that of last 1 September at the beginning of the fifth year of the war)<sup>2</sup>, we ourselves have named the forcible breakup of the family as among the most urgent reasons why the war must be brought to an end as soon as possible. No one knows better than we how little was attainable through peace negotiations the last four years, and right up til now what obstacles there have been to a tangible success. Nevertheless, we have spoken of and urged peace again and again, so it is incomprehensible how anyone could accuse the pope of provoking and financing the war. It has pleased us to hear from you that even if no right-thinking human being, let alone a good Catholic, believes such accusations, our clear and definite words on the matter on 13 June<sup>3</sup> have benefitted you a great deal. It is to be regretted that the inauspiciousness of the times causes the words of the pope to have little or no value in Germany. Our four Christmas messages since 1939 should have sufficed to make everyone unequivocally aware of the opinions of the Representative of Christ on matters of war and peace<sup>4</sup>.

1 All German dioceses have such individual diocesan prayers and hymnals.

2 Text: AAS 34 (1942) Pp. 153-167 and 35 (1943) Pp. 277-279 (compare GUIDE n. 418 and n. 528).

3 Text: AAS 35 (1943) Pp. 171-179, esp. P. 176f. (GUIDE n. 512).

4 AAS 32 (1940) Pp. 5-13; 33 (1941) Pp. 5-14; 34 (1942) Pp. 10-21; 35 (1943) Pp. 11-24 (compare GUIDE n. 158, n. 282, n. 380 and n. 473).

We pray to God that in His infinite kindness He may bring the war to a merciful and redemptive end as soon as possible. We desire nothing more ardently for the populations of the devastated industrial cities than that the horrors of the air war and the bitterness of family isolation would cease for them. We grant you, venerable brother, your unselfish clergy and all the believers of your archdiocese the requested apostolic blessing from the fullness of our heart as a consolation in their sorrows, to strengthen their belief and as a pledge of a happier future.

From the Vatican, 24 October 1943.