Pastoral Message from Faulhaber to the Clergy, November 23, 1918

Source: L. Volk, ed., *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers, 1917-1945* [Faulhaber Papers] (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1975)

Translation from the original German:

Like a preview of the final judgment, earth-shaking political upheavals have occurred in recent weeks in Central Europe, whose long-term effects for the life of the people and today’s Church cannot yet be comprehended at all. The clerical class cannot and may not think of coming out with aggressive contradictions against the actually existing public powers; it must much more, so far as possible, do everything to shape the transition to a lawful state order in the most peaceful and unbloody manner possible. Without following in the steps of those who can change their disposition from one day to the next like changing hats, the clergy will nevertheless refrain from all expressions and discussions that have any provocative effect of bringing the conflict from the streets into the sanctuary of the Lord or of harming the collective pastoral work of the priesthood. As for a public thanks and farewell to the centuries-long Bavarian-people-rooted House of Wittelsbach and the venerable figure of King Ludwig III, we must hold off until a later time; today, however, we are obligated by conscience, in view of the accomplished facts of the recent events, to cooperate for our part in the preservation of public order, in the promotion of the good of the people and in ensuring the people are fed, in order to prevent greater evils and especially a prolongation of the war against our own fellow countrymen.

The state officials of the new government have signed a binding decree (cf. “Bavarian State Newspaper” 263, 2nd issue), which, coming from the officials, according to universal moral law can be borne with a good conscience, likewise according to the King’s proclamation of November 13th. The new government will also soon present to pastors and administrators, via the district officials, a loyalty oath to be signed, with wording as follows: “We commit, in carrying out governmental services entrusted to us, to place our personnel at the disposal of the People’s State of Bavaria, voluntarily and uprightly in the interest of the common good, while preserving our dispositions and convictions.” The “governmental services” in ths formula encompass the obligations of the parish administrative council in church administration, inspection of schools and care for the poor, for which services there has already been official training in the districts. Reasons of conscience also do not stand in the way of signing this commitment, insofar as the clergy are carrying out one or another of these government services.

A special concern for pastoral care in the upcoming period will be the dignified reception of warriors returning home. Those pastors who recognize the need of the hour will not only cooperate in the preparation of a general reception, they will also devote a hearty word of welcome inside the Church to the warriors, honorably recognize their incalculably great achievements, and call the entire community to a solemn mass of thanksgiving for their safe return home. . . .

Preaching over the coming months must not be political electoral speeches, but must continually address, with education as to principles and in a respectable format, those religious matters that stand in danger from political developments: The ancient faith in a new time; religion as the leaven of public life; the Church above the changes of the times; religious formation and participation of youth; the family and the rights of parents; the freedom of the Church and the freedom of conscience. Precautions are appropriate to lead pastors onto a united foundation for these and similar themes of the time. . . .

I must place on the back burner a series of other church-political issues that have been broached by the Revolution. More than ever we must take up the passage from the canon of the mass, that the Lord might give his servants, who hope in the fullness of his mercy, a share in the spiritual fellowship of his holy apostles and martyrs. Let us keep ourselves composed, venerable fellow brothers, and trust that if the Lord may have assigned to us the afflictions of the era of the catacombs, he also awakens in us the spirit of the martyrs of those days.

Munich, November 23, 1918

/s/ Michael, Archbishop of Munich and Freising