Cardinal Faulhaber to Prince Löwenstein, March 20, 1928

, entry no. 185

Translation from the German original:

<p>Your Highness!

<p>In your highly esteemed letter of March 14th, Your Highness touched on exactly the points that have given me much consternation in the issue of Catholic Action. In my pontifical sermon on February 12th I wanted to say public just once, concerning the great silence in the German woods, that the Holy Father’s repeated orders about introducing Catholic Action are directed also to the residences of the Germans. I make no secret that a three-fold obstacle exists in Germany, and that is certainly the reason why Catholic Action so far has been implemented less in Germany than in Austria, in Poland, in Belgium and even in Portugal:

<p>First, in Germany we have such an array of organizations in apparently all parishes, which really also want what the Holy Father hopes of Catholic Action, namely the gathering together of the powers of the Catholic laity for Catholic deeds under the leadership of the Church. In an Italian parish, where up to now generally no Catholic organization exists, it is easy to start a Catholic Action group and assign it all the purposes and activities that are within the Holy Father’s intent. On the other hand, in German parishes, where a half dozen organizations already exist, it is much more difficult to implement Catholic Action and still allow the pre-existing organizations to exist, and not create a super-organization over them, in order not to have to say to the pre-existing ones: You have not been on the right path! . . .

<p>The second difficulty I see in the German situation is that Catholic Action intends to rely strictly on the parish and in a higher denominator on the diocese, while we Germans always want to found right away state organizations and Reich organizations and summit organizations and world organizations. Fundamentally I recognize in the Holy Father’s idea a healthy call for us to return to those details from which the renewal of the world should proceed, the quiet little way in the individual parishes.

<p>The third and perhaps greatest difficulty for Catholic Action in Germany, I see in the Holy Father’s desire not only to keep the Action free from all politics, but also not to allow those men who are active in political life to participate generally in Catholic Action. . . .

<p>Some thoughts would be:

<p>First, for Catholic Action to keep itself strictly to the direction of the Holy Father and desire to attach itself to the parishes and dioceses as a systematic active society of the powers of the Catholic laity.

<p>Second, for Catholic Action to desire to free up the clergy from excessive association activity, thereby as an active society, which in the final analysis wants to serve souls and the Kingdom of God, remain unreservedly under the direction of the Church.

<p>Third, Catholic Action can be implemented in Germany only through a correct relationship of its activity with the already existing organizations. . . .

<p>Source: L. Volk, <em>*Faulhaber* Papers</em>, vol. 1, pp.425-426.</p><br>