<p>Pastoral Instructions from the Bavarian Bishops, Feb. 10, 1931, about Nazism:

<p>From the ranks of the clergy, in recent months, have arisen repeated inquiries to the highest Bishop’s office, asking how they should respond to a request for a Mass on the part of National Socialist groups. Since the clergy have a right to receive guidelines from their Bishops in all pastoral questions, the Bishops of the eight Bavarian dioceses are issuing the following joint instruction. This instruction issues at a somewhat long remove in time from the electoral campaign [of Sept. 1930], in order to throw into bold relief the unpolitical, purely pastoral character of this instruction.

<p>1. National Socialism contains heresies in its cultural policy program, because it rejects or erroneously conceives essential doctrinal points of the Catholic faith and because, according to statements of its leaders, it wants to erect a new ideology in place of Christian faith. Far be it from us to concern ourselves with the government policy goals of National Socialism; we consider only what position it takes toward Catholic Christianity.

<p>Leading representatives of National Socialism place race higher than religion. They reject the revelation of the Old Testament and even the Ten Commandments of Moses. They do not acknowledge the primacy of the Pope in Rome, because his position is outside Germany, and they toy with the concept of a German national church without dogma. In section 24 of their Program the eternally valid Christian moral law is supposed to be tested against the moral sentiment of the Germanic race. Concepts of a right of revolution, to be accompanied by success, and of the priority of might over right, are in contradiction with Christian social teaching. It can be established from previous proclamations of the Party or Party leaders that: What National Socialism calls Christianity is no longer the Christianity of Christ. Therefore the Bishops, as guardians of the Church’s doctrine on faith and morals, must give warnings about National Socialism for so long and so far as it proclaims culture-policy views that are not compatible with Catholic doctrine.

<p>2. For Catholic priests it is strictly forbidden to cooperate in the National Socialist movement in any manner whatsoever. To Catholic priests, who are capable of distinguishing dogma from heresy on the strength of their theological training, the anti-Christian and anti-Church principles and phenomena of this movement cannot be unknown, such as the rejection of every concordat, the promotion of the inter-denominational school, the radicalism of the nationalist concept, the resistance to protecting embryonic human life. Priests cannot assume that an erring conscience is without guilt. For the same reason, pastors of souls have a duty to explain to the people in a calm objective tone that National Socialism, originally a government-policy movement directed against Marxism, has swung in the course of recent years more and more into the culture-policy realm and thereby has ended up in a culture-war (*Kulturkampf*) posture against the Church and its Bishops. In the leading newspapers of this Party a tone has been struck against Catholic proclamations, even the appeal of the Holy Father for defense against Bolshevism, that is bereft of all expert knowledge in theological questions and bereft of all reverence.

<p>3. The participation of National Socialists at liturgical events in closed ranks with uniforms and flags is and remains forbidden, because such a Church parade would give the people the impression that the Church had come to terms with National Socialism. If an individual National Socialist shows up in church with the insignia of his Party, that can only go uncorrected if there is no prospect of a demonstration or a disturbance of religious observances.

<p>4. As to the question whether a National Socialist can be admitted to the holy sacraments of confession and communion, it is to be judged from case to case whether the person concerned is a fellow traveler of the movement who has not taken account of the religious and culture-policy goals of the movement, or whether he, as a political representative, as a writer, or as an agent has stood behind the entire goals of his Party, thus also for those points that are not in conformity with the nature of Christianity and with the doctrinal teaching of the Church. . . .

<p>Source: L.Volk, <em>Faulhaber Papers</em>, vol. 1, pp. 541ff., reprinted from AB München, annex to No. 4 of Feb. 10, 1931, Pastoral Instruction, directed to the clergy, reproduction forbidden.</p><br>