Cardinal Bertram, Prince-Bishop of Breslau, Germany to German Reich President Paul von Hindenburg, March 10, 1933

Your Excellency!

Illustrious Herr Reich President!

The supreme shepherds of the German dioceses, united in the Fulda Bishops Conference, consider themselves obligated by conscience, mindful of the severe responsibility of the Church before God, to bring before Your Excellency the most earnest concerns that occupy us and the widest circles of our whole people.

The tumultuous events of recent days are arousing fear in the widest circles, no matter from what religious denomination, that the effects of those events are deeply disrupting, in the popular consciousness, the lawful and just security of organizations that are loyally serving the common good, as well as their legally guaranteed freedom. In particular, the question is brought to us Bishops with utmost earnestness, whether the Movement that has come to power will respect the sanctity of the Church and its position in public life. Your Excellency knows from rich life experience and from the two thousand year testimony of history, that the sanctity of the Christian faith, religious practice and conviction, are inviolable values. Just as the Church for its part stands aloof from purely political affairs and does not make common cause with campaigning political organizations, nor allow them to intrude in its sanctuary, so also its interior life and activities are removed from all worldly power.

Your Excellency knows further that the Church, through the richest development of the multifaceted life of religious orders and associations in our Fatherland, has exerted the most blessed influence upon all elements of the people in charitable, cultural and social life, in methodical instruction in loyalty toward the people, the State, and the authorities, and most especially upon the religious and moral education of youth. That all of this will be exposed to the gravest endangerment is the fear of the widest circles of the Catholic people in the midst of onrushing events.

The hour has arrived when we must turn to the highest authority in the Reich with an urgent request for protection of the Church and ecclesiastical life and activities.

May our appeal not go unheard.

In offering my deepest respect I remain Your Excellency’s faithfully obedient,

Adolf Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau

Source: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, reprinted in Stasiewski, Bernhard, ed., *Akten Deutscher Bischöfe über die Lage der Kirche, 1933-1945* [Papers of the German Bishops about Church Matters] (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1968) and Hans Müller, ed., *Katholische Kirche und Nationalsozialismus, Dokumente 1930-1935* [Catholic Church and Nazism, Documents] (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1963), pp. 71-72.