Meeting of Hitler with three German bishops, Bares, Berning and Gröber, June 27, 1934

Notes taken by Bishop Berning

Source: B. Stasiewski, ed., *German Bishops’ Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 731-732

Translation from the original German:

After the Reich Chancellor greeted us, Bishop Berning thanked him for the audience and for the opportunity for an exchange of views with the Reich Government. He pointed out that the Bishops had placed themselves on the footing of the new State and had led the people to it, but were filled with great concern about whether the Concordat would be implemented in all its provisions. Bishop Berning mentioned the issues of freedom for proclamation of Church teaching, legitimate defense against anti-religious attacks, the unbearable pressures on the consciences of Catholics in government-run associations due to anti-religious propaganda, the culture war [*Kulturkampf*] waged by many lower officials, the attacks on the dignity of clergy in meetings and literature, and asked for a clear and open word from the Reich Chancellor to stop this anti-Church propaganda. For the Catholic associations he asked for freedom in their activities and protection against attacks. The Reich Chancellor spoke about the duties of the Party and State, whose goals are only to build a racial community [*Volksgemeinschaft*] and build the State. Any religious propaganda by the State he rejected. State and Party should restrict themselves to their duties. He expected the Church to discontinue all criticism of the State and the Party, and not involve itself in the political realm. He will in all events protect the Church in its proper sphere. As to the Hitler Youth, he admitted that too many Marxists had entered it and were influencing the spirit of the Hitler Youth, which had a shortage of suitable leaders. That would explain many negative aspects; thus one must be patient with the Hitler Youth. Archbishop Gröber expressed his thanks to the Chancellor for his words and for his intervention for the Church. Bishop Berning asked the Chancellor at the end for a specific instruction to the Party and the Government agencies to cease all neo-pagan propaganda. The Chancellor agreed to this. Also Bishop Berning asked for utmost efforts toward a compromise agreement on the question of Catholic associations.