

Encyclic "Mit brennender Sorge" and its historical background

This work describes the relation between Vatican and German Reich in the period between conclusion of Concordat (1933) and issuing of Encyclic of Pius XI. „Mit brennender Sorge“ (1937). It describes social and political situation of the Catholic Church in the German Reich that gave rise to Vatican-German Treaty – Reich Concordat. Constant breaking of this treaty from the part of Nazi Germany was accompanied by lots of deeds of protest by the Pope. Negotiating of Fulda bishop's conference in January 1937 led up to invitation of five German ordinaries to Rome. Those bishops who belonged to radical anti-Nazi part of conference were invited. Invitation and audience before the Pope Pius XI. was organised by the state secretary cardinal Eugenio Pacelli. During the visit of Rome Munich cardinal Michael von Faulhaber made proposal of Pope's pastoral at the request of cardinal Pacelli who enlarged and heightened the text. Pius XI. than signed this text as Encyclic "Mit brennender Sorge" on 14th March 1937. The Encyclic on dogmatic principles contradicts national socialism in its theory and practice. The Encyclic was secretly spread over Germany and read from pulpits on Palm Sunday, 21st March 1937 during the services. The Nazi regime reacted on its publishing by huge amount of repressions against the Church and laymen.

The Encyclic "Mit brennender Sorge" was the first document of the international importance that revealed the substance of Nazi ideology and its threat for human freedom – at the time of negotiation between the world powers and Hitler in absurd and naive hope of maintenance of world peace.

Key terms:

- Eugenio Pacelli
- Michael von Faulhaber
- Pius XI.
- Reich Concordat
- "Mit brennender Sorge"
- Church and National Socialism