

B30, 23

Predigt am Sonntag, den 3. August 1941 in der Lambertikirche zu Münster.

Mitteilungen: 1. Ich muß mitteilen, daß die Geheime Staatspolizei auch in dieser Woche ihren Vernichtungskampf gegen die katholischen Orden fortgesetzt hat. Am Mittwoch, den 30.7. hat die GSTP das Provinzialhaus der Schwestern Unserer Lieben Frau in Mülhausen Kreis Kempen, das früher zum Bistum Münster gehörte, besetzt und für aufgehoben erklärt. Die Schwestern, von denen viele aus dem Bistum Münster stammen, wurden zum größten Teil ausgewiesen, und noch am gleichen Tage mußten sie den Kreis Kempen verlassen. Nach glaubwürdigen Nachrichten ist am Donnerstag, den 31.7. das Kloster der Missionare in Hilstrup bei Hamm ebenfalls von der Gestapo besetzt und beschlagnahmt. Die dort weilenden Patres sind ausgewiesen.

2.- Ich habe bereits am 13. Juli hier in der Lambertikirche, nach der Vertreibung der Jesuiten und Missionsklarissen aus Münster, öffentlich festgestellt: "Keiner der Bewohner dieser Klöster ist eines Vergehens oder eines Verbrechens beschuldigt, vor Gericht angeklagt oder verurteilt." Wie ich höre, werden jetzt in Münster Gerüchte verbreitet, daß diese Ordensleute, insbesondere die Jesuiten, doch wegen gesetzwidriger Verfehlungen, ja sogar wegen Landesverrat angeklagt und sogar überführt worden seien. Ich erkläre: das ist gemeine Verleumdung deutscher Volksgenossen, unserer Brüder und Schwestern, die wir uns nicht gefallen lassen! Gegen einen Burschen, der vor Zeugen es wagte, derartiges zu behaupten, habe ich bereits Strafanzeige beim Herrn Oberstaatsanwalt erstattet. Ich spreche die Erwartung aus, daß der Mann schleunigst zur Verantwortung gezogen wird, und daß unsere Gerichte noch Mut haben, Verleumder, die es wagen, unbescholtene Volksgenossen, nachdem man ihnen ihr Eigentum geraubt hat, ihnen auch noch die Ehre zu rauben, zur Verantwortung zu ziehen und bestrafen.-- Ich fordere alle meine Zuhörer auf, ja alle anständigen Mitbürger, von heute ab, falls in ihrer Gegenwart solche Anschuldigungen gegen die aus Münster ausgewiesenen Ordensleute ausgesprochen werden, sofort den Namen und die Wohnung des Anklägers und der etwa anwesenden Zeugen festzustellen. Ich hoffe, es gibt hier in Münster noch Männer, die den Mut haben, zur gerichtlichen Klarstellung solcher Beschuldigungen, die die Volksgemeinschaft vergiften, durch offenes Auftreten ihrer Person, ihrer Namen, nötigenfalls mit ihrem Eid mitzuwirken. Diese bitte ich, falls vor ihnen solche Beschuldigungen gegen unsere Ordensleute ausgesprochen werden, sobald ihrem Pfarrer oder auch dem bischöflichen Generalvikariat Meldung zu erstatten und das zu Protokoll zu geben.-- Ich bin es der Ehre unserer Ordensleute, der Ehre unserer hlg. katholischen Kirche und auch der Ehre unseres deutschen Volkes und unserer Stadt Münster schuldig, daß ich durch Strafanzeige bei der Staatsanwaltschaft für gerichtliche Klarstellung des Tatbestandes und für die Bestrafung gemeiner Verleumder Sorge trage. -

Verlesung des Evangeliums vom 9. Sonntag nach Pfingsten.....

Predigt: Meine lieben Diözesanen! Eine erschütternde Begebenheit ist es, die das Evangelium berichtet: Jesus weint! Der Sohn Gottes weint!-- Wer weint, der leidet Schmerzen, am Leibe oder am Herzen. Jesus litt damals noch nicht dem Leibe nach, und doch weinte er. Wie groß muß der Seelenschmerz, das Herzweh dieses tapfersten der Männer gewesen sein, daß er weinte! Warum weinte er? Er weinte über Jerusalem, über die ihm so teure Gottesstadt, die Hauptstadt seines Volkes. Er weinte über ihre Bewohner, seine Volksgenossen, weil sie nicht erkannten, was allein die von seiner Allwissenheit vorausgesehenen, von seiner göttlichen Gerechtigkeit vorherbestimmten Straferichte abwenden konnte: "Wenn du doch erkanntest, was dir zum Frieden dient!" Warum erkennen es die Bewohner Jerusalems nicht? Nicht lange vorher hatte Jesus es ausgesprochen: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem... Wie oft wollte ich deine Kinder versammeln wie eine Henne ihre Küchlein unter ihre Flügel sammelt, aber du hast es nicht gewollt!" Du hast nicht gewollt. Ich, dein König, dein Gott, ich wollte; aber du wolltest nicht. Wie geborgen, wie behütet, wie beschützt ist das Küchlein unter den Flügeln der Henne; sie wärmt es, sie nährt es, sie verteidigt es. So wollte ich dich beschützen, behüten, gegen jedes Ungenach dich verteidigen. Ich wollte! Du hast nicht gewollt!- Darum weint Jesus, darum weint dieser starke Mann! Darum weint Gott!

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of their property. I ask all of my listeners, indeed all decent fellow German citizens, from now on, if such accusations against the monks and nuns ejected from Münster are made in their presence, immediately to establish the name and the address of the accuser and any witnesses present. I hope there are still men here in Münster who have the courage to become involved in judicial clarification of such accusations, which poison the people's community, through open use of their person and their name, if necessary under oath. I ask this: If such accusations are made against our monks and nuns, report them immediately to a priest or to the episcopal general vicariate and put them on record. I owe it to the honor of our monks and nuns, the honor of our holy Catholic Church, and also to the honor of our German nation and our city of Münster, that I ensure judicial clarification of the facts of the case and the punishment of common slander by bringing charges to the state prosecution office.

Reading of the Gospel of the 9th Sunday after Pentecost.....

Sermon: My dear members of the diocese! It is a distressing event that the Gospel reports: Jesus weeps! The son of God weeps! - He who weeps suffers pain, in his body or heart. Jesus did not yet feel bodily pain at that point, and yet he wept. How great must the pain in the soul, the woe in the heart of this bravest of men have been, for him to weep! Why did he weep? He wept over Jerusalem, over the city of God he loved so dearly, the capital city of his people. He wept over its inhabitants, his fellow men, because they could not see what only the judgments foreseen by his omniscience, predetermined by his divine righteousness, could prevent: "If thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace!" Why can the inhabitants of Jerusalem not see it? Not long before, Jesus pronounced, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings, and ye would not!" Ye would not. I, your King, your God, I would; but you would not. How secure, how sheltered, how protected is the chick under the hen's wings; she warms it, she nurtures it, she defends it. And so I would have protected, sheltered you, defended you against every adversity. I would have! You would not! That is why Jesus weeps, that is why this strong man weeps! That is why God weeps!

Sermon on Sunday, August 3, 1941, in St. Lambert's Church, Münster.

Announcements: 1. I must announce that the Gestapo has continued its struggle for the destruction of the Catholic orders this week. On Wednesday, 7.30, the Gestapo occupied the provincial house of the Sisters of Our Dear Lady in Mülhausen, Kempen district, which was formerly part of the Diocese of Münster, and declared it disbanded. The sisters, many of whom come from the Diocese of Münster, were expelled from the most part, and had to leave Kempen district that same day. According to credible news sources, on Thursday, 7.31, the Monastery of Missionaries in Hilstrup near Hamm was also occupied and confiscated by the Gestapo. The priests of the order have been expelled.

2. On July 13, here in St. Lambert's church, after the ejection of the Jesuits and Poor Clare nuns from Münster, I stated openly: "None of the inhabitants of these cloisters has been accused of a misdemeanor or crime, nor tried by a court or sentenced." As I hear, rumors are being spread in Münster that these monks and nuns, particularly the Jesuits, had in fact been accused of illegal misconduct, even of treason, and had even been convicted. I declare: This is common slander of fellow Germans, our brothers and sisters, which we shall not tolerate! I have already brought charges to the chief prosecutor against a young man who dared to maintain such a thing before witnesses. I pronounce my expectation that the man will be speedily held liable, and that our courts still have the courage to hold liable and punish slanderers who dare to rob blameless fellow Germans of their honor, after they have been robbed

Over the foolishness, over the injustice, over the crime of not wanting and over the resulting misery, which his omniscience sees coming, which his righteousness must impose if man opposes God's commandments, all warnings of the conscience, all loving invitations of the divine friend, the best Father, with a lack of will: "If thou hadst known! But ye would not!" It is something terrible, something of unprecedented injustice that will bring destruction, when man places his will against God's will! You would not! That is why Jesus weeps over Jerusalem.

Reverent Christians! The pastoral letter read in all of Germany's churches on July 6 says, among other things, "Indeed, according to Catholic moral doctrine there are positive commandments, which are no longer binding if their fulfillment invokes too great difficulties. However, there are also holy obligations of the conscience, from which no one can liberate us, which we must fulfill even if it costs us our lives. Never, under no circumstances, may man kill an innocent person outside of war or justified self-defense."

As early as 7.6.41, I had cause to add the following elucidation to these words of the joint pastoral letter, in Telgte: "For some months we have been hearing reports that patients in mental institutions and convalescent hospitals, who have been sick for a long time and perhaps appear incurable, are being forcibly removed on orders from Berlin. Their relatives are then regularly informed shortly later that the patient has died, the body has been cremated, the ashes may be delivered to them! In general, there is suspicion bordering on certainty that these numerous unexpected deaths of the mentally ill are not occurring of their own accord, but are being brought about deliberately, and that this is being done in accordance with the theory that maintains that one may destroy so-called life not worth living—in other words kill innocent people—if one thinks their lives are no longer worth anything for the nation and the state. A theory that is terrible, that intends to justify the murder of innocent people—that as a basic principle allows the violent killing of those invalids, cripples, incurably sick, and weak elderly persons who no longer can work."

As I have learned from a reliable source, in the mental institutions and convalescent hospitals of the province of Westphalia, lists are now being compiled of such patients, who are to be transported away as so-called "unproductive fellow German citizens" and killed within a short period. The transport from the Marienthal institution near Münster left this week! German men and women! § 211 of the criminal code is still in force, and states: "Anyone who deliberately kills another person shall be punished by death for murder if he carries out the killing with prior consideration."

Presumably to protect those who deliberately kill these poor sick people, members of our families, from this judicial penalty, the patients selected for killing are transported away from their homes to distant institutions. The cause of death is said to be a disease. Because the body is immediately cremated, the relatives and the criminal police can no longer establish whether the disease really did exist and what cause of death prevailed. However, I have been assured that the Reich Ministry of the Interior and the office of the Reich Physicians' Leader Dr. Conti make no secret of the fact that a large number of mentally ill people have in fact been killed in Germany and are to be killed in the future.

The criminal code states, in § 139: "Anyone who receives credible knowledge of the intent to a crime against life, and who fails to inform the authorities or the person under threat in good time, shall be punished." When I learned about the intent to transport sick people away from Marienthal in order to kill them, I brought charges to the state prosecutor, the Regional Court in Münster, and the police president in Münster on July 28, 1941, by registered letter with the following content: "According to information I have received, in the course of this week (there is talk of 7.31) a large number of patients in the Marienthal provincial mental institution near Münster are to be transferred as so-called unproductive fellow German citizens to the Eichberg mental institution, so as to be deliberately killed, as has happened after such transports from other mental institutions, according to general conviction. As such actions not only go against the divine and natural moral code, but also are to be punished by death as murder in accordance with § 211 of the criminal code, I am duty-bound to place charges in accordance with § 139 of the criminal code, and request that the threatened fellow German citizens are immediately protected by the appropriate course of action against the transport and the parties intending their murder and that I should be informed of the proceedings undertaken."

I have not received information of any intervention by the public prosecutor or the police. I had already raised the most earnest written objections on July 26 to Westphalia's provincial administration, which is responsible for the institutions to which the sick are entrusted for their care and cure. It was of no avail! The last transport of innocent people condemned to death has left Marienthal! And, as I hear, 800 patients have already been transported from the Warstein mental institution.

So we must expect that these poor, defenseless sick people will be killed at some point. Why? Not because they have committed a crime worthy of death, not for instance because they have attacked their guards or nurses, so that these had no other option but to oppose their attackers by force in order to protect their own lives in justified self-defense. In these cases, as in the killing of armed national enemies in justified war, the use of violence up to and including killing is allowed, and in many cases necessary.

No, it is not for such reasons that such unfortunate patients must die, but because they have become "unworthy of life" according to a doctor's judgment, according to a commission's assessment, because according to this assessment they are among the "unproductive citizens." In their judgment, they can no longer produce goods; they are like an old machine that no longer works; they are like an old horse that has gone incurably lame; they are like a cow that no longer gives milk. What do we do with an old machine? It is scrapped! What do we do with such an old horse, with such an unproductive piece of livestock? No, I will not take this comparison to its end—as terrible as its justification and its illustrative force is! We are not talking about machines, we are not talking about a horse or a cow, whose only purpose is to serve men, to produce goods for men. We may well smash them, we may well slaughter them as soon as they no longer fulfill this purpose! No, what we are talking about is people, our fellow people, our brothers and sisters! Poor people, unproductive people—perhaps—but does that mean they lose the right to live? Do you, do I, have a right to live only as long as we produce? As long as we are recognized by others as productive?

If one postulates and applies the theory that one is allowed to kill unproductive people, then woe betide us all when we grow weak with age! If one is allowed to kill unproductive people, then woe betide the invalids who have applied, sacrificed, and lost their strength and their healthy bones in the production process! If one is allowed to remove unproductive people by force, then woe betide our brave soldiers who return to the homeland severely injured from the war, as cripples, as invalids!

If it is ever once allowed that people have the right to kill unproductive people—and this first affects poor, defenseless, mentally ill people—then in principle the murder of all unproductive people, that is, the incurably sick, the cripples incapable of working, and the invalids of labor and war, and then the murder of all of us when we grow weak with age and thus unproductive, is approved. Then all it takes is for a secret ruling to order that the procedure tested on the mentally ill is to be applied to other unproductive persons. Then all of us must fear for our lives: A commission can put

us on the list of unproductive fellow German citizens, which have become unworthy of life according to their judgment, and no police force will protect us, no court will avenge our murder and impose the deserved punishment on the murderer.

Who can still trust a doctor then? He might report a sick patient as unproductive and receive instructions to kill him—it is inconceivable what moral decline, what general mutual distrust will make their way even into family life if this terrible theory is tolerated, accepted, and followed!

Woe betide the people, woe betide our German nation, if God's holy commandment "Thou shalt not kill," which the Lord announced amidst thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai, which God our creator inscribed in man's conscience from the very beginning, not only is trespassed against, but this trespassing is even tolerated and practiced without penalty!

Let me give you an example of what is happening now. In Marienthal, there was an 85-year-old man, a farmer from a rural Münsterland parish—I could give you his name—who has been suffering from mental aberrations for several years and who had been entrusted to the provincial mental institution for his care. He was not quite insane; he could receive visitors and was always pleased when his relatives came. Only fourteen days ago, he had a visit from his wife and one of his sons, a frontline soldier on home leave. The son was very fond of his sick father, so parting was difficult. Who knows whether the soldier will return and see his father again, for he might fall in battle on behalf of his fellow Germans! And now it seems the son, the soldier, will surely not see his father again on earth, for his father has been placed on the list of unproductive fellow German citizens since then. A relative who wanted to visit the father this week in Marienthal was turned away after being informed that the patient had been transported elsewhere on the orders of the Council of Ministers for National Defense. To where, they could not say. What will the message be? Will it be the same as in all of the other cases? That the man has died, that his body has been cremated, that the ashes may be delivered on payment of a fee? Then the son staking his life on the battlefield for his fellow Germans will not see his father again on earth—because fellow Germans at home have taken his life! The facts I have spoken are true. I can give the names of the sick man, his wife, his son the soldier, and the place where they live!

"Thou shalt not kill." God inscribed this commandment upon man's conscience long before a criminal code threatened punishment for murder, long before a state prosecutor and a court prosecuted and avenged murder. Cain, who slew his brother Abel, was a murderer long before there were states and courts. And he admitted, beset by his conscience's accusation, "Too great is my misdeed that I might find forgiveness. Everyone who finds me shall kill me, the murderer!"

"Thou shalt not kill." This commandment from God, the only Lord who has the right to decide over life and death, was inscribed into the hearts of men from the very beginning, long before God announced his moral law to the children of Israel on Mount Sinai with those succinct sentences carved in stone, which are written for us in the holy scripture, which we learned by heart from the catechism as children: "I am the Lord, thy God." So begins this immutable law: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The sole, eternal, transcendent, all-powerful, all-knowing creator and later judge! Out of love for us, he inscribed these commandments into our hearts and proclaimed them, for they meet the needs of our nature created by God; they are the indispensable norms of a right-thinking, of a godly, of a salutary and holy life for every individual and for society.

With these commandments, God, our Father, would gather us, his children, like the hen gathers her chicks under her wings. If we follow these orders, these invitations, this call from God, then we are protected, sheltered, shielded from adversities, defended against looming disaster, like the chick under the hen's wings! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings, and ye would not. Is this to come true again in our German fatherland, in our Westphalian homeland, in our city of Münster? What is the situation in Germany, what is the situation here among us when it comes to obedience to the divine commandments?

The eighth commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness." How often is this impertinently violated, even openly!

The seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." Whose property is still safe after the arbitrary and ruthless confiscation of the property of our brothers and sisters in the Catholic orders? Whose property is protected if this illegally confiscated property is not returned?

The sixth commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Think of the instructions and assurances given in the infamous open letter by the now disappeared Rudolf Heß, which was published in all of the newspapers, about free sexual intercourse and motherhood

out of wedlock! And what other shameless and cruel things on this topic, even here in Münster, one can read!—observe! and experience! What shameless attire young people have had to accustom themselves to: preparation for later adultery! Their sense of shame is being destroyed, the protective wall of chastity! And now the fifth commandment too, "Thou shalt not kill," is being laid aside and trespassed under the eyes of those persons obliged to protect the legal system and life, by having the temerity to deliberately kill innocent, albeit sick, people, merely because they are unproductive, can no longer produce goods!

What is the situation with the observance of the fourth commandment, which calls for honor and obedience toward parents and superiors? Parents' position and authority have been widely undermined and are becoming more and more shaken by all of the demands placed on youth against their parents' wishes. Do people believe that genuine respect and conscientious obedience to state authority can be maintained if they continue to trespass against the commandments of the highest authority, God's commandments; if they even seek to combat belief in the only true, transcendent God, the Lord of heaven and earth, indeed to wipe it out?

The observance of the first three commandments has long since been widely abandoned, for the public in Germany and in Münster. How many people violate Sundays and holy days and fail to serve God on them! How the name of God is abused, dishonored, and taken in vain!

And the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Instead of the one, true, eternal God, people are making their own gods as they please, in order to worship their: nature or the state, or the nation or the race. And how many are there whose god in reality, in the words of Saint Paul, is their stomach, their own well-being, to which they sacrifice everything, even honor and conscience; sensual indulgence, the intoxication of money, of power! Then they may well try to arrogate divine authority, to make themselves lords over life and death of their fellow men! "When Jesus was come near Jerusalem, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." With his earthly eye, what he saw then was only the walls and towers of the city of Jerusalem. But his divine omniscience saw deeper, recognized the city's inner situation and that of its inhabitants. "Jerusalem, how often would I

have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings, and ye would not!" That is the greatest pain that oppresses Jesus's heart, that draws tears from his eyes. I wanted the best for you! But you would not!—Jesus sees the sinfulness, the terribleness, the criminality, the destructiveness of this not wanting. Tiny man, that frail creature, places his created will against the will of God!

Jerusalem and its inhabitants, its once chosen and favored people, place their will against the will of God! Foolishly and criminally defy the will of God! That is why Jesus weeps: at the abominable sin—at the inevitable punishment. God will not be mocked!

Christians of Münster! Did the son of God in his omniscience see only Jerusalem and its people then? Did he weep only over Jerusalem? Are the people of Israel the only people that God embraced, protected, and drew to him with fatherly care and motherly love? And that would not accept it? That reject God's truth, cast away God's law, and thus cast themselves into destruction! Did Jesus, the omniscient God, also see our German people then, our Westphalia, Münsterland, Niederrhein? And did he weep over us too? Weep over Münster? For thousands of years he has taught our forefathers with his truth, led them with his law, nurtured them with his mercy, and gathered them like the hen gathers her chicks under her wings. Did the omniscient God see then that he must make the same judgment over us in our times: "Ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!" How terrible that would be!

My Christians! I hope there is still time. But it is high time! For us to see, this very day, the things which belong unto our peace, which alone cansave us and protect us from divine judgment; for us to confess our lives as Catholics unreservedly and without qualification; for us to make the commandments the guiding principles for our lives, and take seriously the words: Rather to die than to sin! For us to beg in prayer and genuine repentance for God's forgiveness and mercy upon us, upon our city, upon our dear German fatherland. Yet those who continue to challenge God's judgment, who blaspheme our belief, who disrespect God's commandments, who make common cause with those who alienate our youth from Christianity, rob and drive out our monks and nuns, with those who deliver innocent people, our brothers and sisters, to their death—with those, we shall avoid all familiar dealings; from their influence we shall remove ourselves and our friends and families, so that we are not infected by their thoughts and actions against God's will, so that we do not become complicit with them and thereby fall prey to the judgment that our just God must pass and will pass over all those who, like the ungrateful city of Jerusalem, did not want what God wants.

Oh God, let us all see today, on this day, before it is too late, the things which belong unto our peace!

Oh most holy Jesus, moved to tears by the blindness and misdeeds of men, help us with your mercy, that we may always strive for what pleases you and forgo what displeases you, so that we may remain in your love and find peace for our souls!

Amen.

Let us pray for the poor sick people threatened with death, for our expelled monks and nuns, for all those in need, for our soldiers, for our people and fatherland and its leaders. Our Father.....