

# Fending off the Wolves? The Roman Catholic Church and the Reichskonkordat

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[ 0 : 00 ] speaking on the Reichskonkordat this morning. Now, a little bit of background information. September 10, 1933, the German government and the Holy See signed a document known as the Reichskonkordat.

Now, this concordat is a deeply troubling document in the history of the Church, because it was seen within international circles and continues to be seen by many today as the Vatican's qualified approval of the Nazi regime.

The reason for this is that although the concordat made sweeping guarantees for the Catholic Church in Germany, this came at the cost of significant concessions on the part of the Roman Catholic Church.

I think it would be most helpful at this point if we spend a few minutes looking at the actual text of the concordat. In English, of course, I don't actually speak German. And I think this will give us a clear understanding of what it is that's at stake in this document.

Most helpful, I think, in these matters is to actually look at the text itself and not just talk around it. So, let me see if this one will work here. Yes, it does. Technology. Love it.

[ 1 : 05 ] So, Article 1. I'm just going to... This might be a little bit of a dry section, but I'm going to go through and read these. You can read along with me on the screen, hopefully. Article 1. The German Reich guarantees freedom of belief and of public worship to the Catholic faith.

It recognizes the right of the Catholic Church within the limits of the law of the land to order and administer its own affairs and to make laws and regulations binding upon its members in matters within its confidence.

Article 2. The Concordats concluded with Bavaria in 1924, Prussia in 1929, and Baden in 1932 remain in force. And this will become significant later.

Article 4. The Holy See enjoys full freedom in its contacts and its correspondence with the bishops, the clergy, and other members of the Catholic Church in Germany. The same holds good for the bishops and other diocesan authorities in their communications with the faithful in all matters concerning their pastoral office.

The clergy enjoy the protection of the state in the exercise of their spiritual office in the same way as state officials. The state will persecute insults to their person.

[ 2 : 15 ] It starts to get a little bit more messy. We start to see the enmeshing of church and state a little bit too much. Article 8. The official income of the clergy is immune from restraint to the same extent as is the official salary of the Reich and state officials.

Again, with the enmeshing of church and state. Clergy cannot be questioned by judicial or other authorities about facts confided to them in the exercise of their spiritual guidance.

And which therefore come under the obligation to pastoral confidentiality. The wearing of clerical dress or of a religious habit by lay people or by members of the clergy or religious orders by whom this use is forbidden is liable to the same penalty by the state as the misuse of a military uniform.

Frightening. Article 14. As a matter of principle, the church has the right to make its own appointments to all church offices and benefices without the cooperation of the state or of the civic communities.

Therefore, there is agreement on the following points. Catholic clerics who hold an ecclesiastical office in Germany or who exercise pastoral or educational functions must be German citizens, have the qualifications to study at a German institute of higher education, and see have studied theology and philosophy at least three years in a German university, a German ecclesiastical academy, or a papal college in Rome.

[ 3 : 53 ] So the government is now regulating, I mean, this is good in some ways for both sides, because they are going to be regulating who can and who cannot be appointed to be a clergy. So it is somewhat of a defense of the Catholic Church because it means that the German government cannot simply appoint somebody to be a priest in the Catholic Church without meeting all these qualifications and approval of Rome.

Two, the bull for the appointment of archbishops, bishops, and co-adjuders will not be issued until the name of the appointee is submitted to the representative of the right government. In the respective province, and until it has been ascertained that no objections of a general political nature exist.

So this is the church, or sorry, the state beginning to push back against the church and saying, you cannot come into our sphere. Article 15.

Religious orders and congregations are not subject to any special restrictions on the part of the state in relation to their foundation, establishment, number, the selection of their members, their pastoral activities in care, education, care of the sick, and charitable work, the management of their own affairs, and the administration of their property.

Article 19. The Catholic theological faculties in the universities will remain in being. Article 21. Instruction in the Catholic faith is a regular part of the curriculum in the elementary, technical, intermediate, and high schools, and is taught in accordance with the principles of the Catholic Church.

[ 5 : 23 ] It will be a special concern of religious instruction, as is the case with all other subjects, to inculcate a sense of patriotic, civic, and social duty in the spirit of Christian faith and morality.

The syllabus and selection of textbooks for religious instruction will be determined with the agreement of the church authorities. I think what we need to focus on in that one is it will be a special concern of religious instruction, as is the case with all other subjects, to inculcate a sense of patriotic, civic, and social duty in the spirit of Christian faith and morality.

What exactly does that mean? Yes. Well, anyway, we start to see the patriotic coming to the fore, and the kind of high emphasis on that. Article 23.

The retention and establishment of Catholic confessional schools is guaranteed. Article 27. Special pastoral provision will be made for the Catholic officers, officials, and men of the German army, together with their families.

31. The property and activities of those Catholic organizations and associations, whose aims are purely religious, cultural, or charitable, and which therefore are under the authority of the hierarchy, will be protected.

[ 6 : 42 ] Catholic organizations which pursue other aims, social or professional, for example, as well as religious, cultural, or charitable, will come under the protection of that first paragraph that we just read.

Article 31. Insofar as they guarantee that their activity is outwith the orbit of any political activity. So it's a state saying, stay out of political affairs.

Article 6. The clergy and members of religious orders are free from any obligation to take public office, and such obligations as according to the dictates of canon law are incompatible with the status of a member of the clergy or religious order respectively.

This applies particularly to the office of lay judge, juror, member of the tax committee, or of the fiscal tribunal. Now, while this may not read on the surface of a concession or a guarantee, I think we'll see later this morning this is in fact a major, major loss for the Catholic Church.

And, this is one of the things that Hitler wants most from the Catholic Church is that article. Article 30. I mean, it's framed in the language of free from any obligation, but that's not what it is.

[ 7 : 54 ] Article 30. On Sundays and recognized holy days, prayer will be made for the well-being of the German Reich and the people. So, these are two concessions the Church has made.

And finally, we get to perhaps the most disturbing of them. Before bishops take possession of their diocese, they are to take an oath of loyalty either to the Reich governor of the state, concerned, or to the president of the Reich, respectively, Heinrich Hitler, according to the following formula.

Before God and on the Holy Gospels, I swear and promise as becomes a bishop, loyalty to the German Reich and to the state of wherever they may be. I swear and promise to honor the legally constituted government and to cause the clergy of my diocese to honor it.

I swear and promise to honor the constitutional government. Oh, I read that. I read it. In the exercise of the spiritual office entrusted to me, I will endeavor with due solicitude for the well-being and the interests of the German state to prevent any harm which might threaten it.

Now, although on the surface the Reichskrieg Coriott makes it appear as though the Catholic Church publicly supported Hitler's regime, and I think that would be very exciting, this would be a rather shallow wing, I think, of what was an incredibly complex situation.

[ 9 : 18 ] I'm going to argue this morning that the Catholic Church's purpose in signing the Reichskrieg Coriott, their goal was not to support the Reich, but rather to secure its own pastoral interests and the protection of German Catholics from Hitler's regime.

And it was a desire for which the Vatican paid a very high price. The Catholic Church's desire for a concordat with the Reichskrieg and stretch back to the end of the First World War.

The Treaty of Versailles created some states that had no formal agreements with the Holy See, and the Church was left with many questions regarding the nature of Church-State relations, such as, would the state contribute anything to the salaries of the clergy or the upkeep of buildings, recognizing the religion a pillar of the social order, or would the Church be cut off to go its own way?

Furthermore, many European nations desire to create secularized states, and thus dissolve confessional schools and terminate state funding for the Church, which very much concerned the Vatican.

Therefore, would the Church be permitted to supervise education as it had in Bavaria, if the law was interpreted to mean that religion had absolutely no place in educational matters, which ought to be the sole purview of the state?

[ 10 : 37 ] So what is going to be the nature of the relationship between the Church and the State in matters of education? Conversely, prior to 1918, the state had some rights in the nomination of bishops.

What influenced the Church asked, would a democratic and oftentimes non-religious administration try to obtain an Episcopal appointment, and would it be in the best interest of the Church to have socialists and free thinkers advising these elections?

Until 1918, these matters had been regulated by a papal bull in Prussia and a concordat in Bavaria, and both parties had been relatively satisfied with the situation.

However, in 1919, the uncertainty of exactly what rights the Church did have made the Holy See want to renegotiate the entire question of Church-state relations.

The Holy See, therefore, sought to sign a concordat. It sought to strengthen its own position and secure the rights of its followers, and it did this by trying to extend support to Germany, which it felt had been treated unfairly at the Treaty of Versailles.

[ 11 : 45 ] In return for mediating and supporting Germany in the areas of border revision and German unity, the Church hoped for, and perhaps reasonably expected, something in return, namely the assurance of a prominent place in the new bimoral republic.

Negotiations for a concordat took place between 1919 and 1922, but ultimately failed because the Reichstag, the elected body of the people, and the Reichsrat, essentially the upper house of the government, were dominated by non-Catholic majorities.

So they couldn't get a concordat because it's non-Catholic. Probably. They won't agree to it. Nevertheless, the Holy See was not desperate for a concordat because the Catholic center party, which in 1919 had become a pillar of the new Weimar Republic, was able to advocate for Catholic rights and advantages.

The Vatican hoped that the center party would be able to capitalize on the change situation and work out a new set of ground rules by which the Church and the State could coexist.

The party endorsed a policy that called for freedom for the Roman Catholic Church, state support for confessional schools, as well as the regularization of Church-State relations. In addition, the Holy See was able to sign concordats with several of the individual provinces.

[ 13 : 03 ] These are known as the Lander Concordat. They signed one with Bavaria in 1924, Prussia in 1929, and Baden in 1932. While the center party and the provincial concordats did much to secure Catholic interests on the right, the Holy See continued to seek a concordat with the central government in order to secure interests that could not be guaranteed by the individual states.

So there were some things that just needed to be done with the central government and could not simply be done with the individual states. One such charity was the regulation of pastoral care in the armed forces.

The central government wanted military chaplains to be subject only to their own army bishop and not to the local Catholic bishop. But without the permission of the local Catholic bishops, Catholic military chaplains could not perform sacraments of baptism or marriage.

So negotiations of this matter began in 1921 and dragged on for many years. Yes, 1921 to 19...

In 1929, Reichsfaier Minister General Brunner forced the foreign ministry to pursue a resolution on these matters with the Vatican. The Holy See now tried to use the German government's urgent desire for a concordat.

[ 14 : 18 ] It's the government that wants something now. They're going to try to use this as a bargaining chip. Since the Catholic Church was in a favorable bargaining position, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, here you see him, yes, he is the papal nuncio to Germany, which is essentially the ambassador to Germany, and he's later Pope Pius VII.

Okay, so this guy's named Pope during the war years. He insisted on a list of demands before agreeing to point a military mission. These demands consisted of the same guarantees that the Church had been insisting upon since 1919, continuing financial subsidies from the government as well as the rights of Catholics in religious and educational matters.

However, the German government insisted on the separation of these issues, and negotiations came to a stalemate two years later in 1931. Nevertheless, negotiations were taken up again a year later when the German government threatened to begin liquidating the military chaplaincy if the issue was not resolved.

On 25 October 1932, Picelli reopened negotiations. However, he still insisted that his previous demands in terms of regulation in educational matters, except for the German government, he still insisted that these be met by the German government.

In addition to the condition that if any constitutional changes took place, and you can kind of see this coming, Hitler's rise soon on the horizon, that the Lander Concordat would remain in effect.

[ 15 : 53 ] Those three Concordats that were signed with the very pressure of Adam. The irony of the situation, sorry, yes, in 1931, however, the Reichstag was still dominated by a non-Catholic majority, so they were not able to get this document signed.

So the irony of the situation is that although the Reichstag allowed the Catholic Center Party to voice Catholic interests, it was the fact that they were a non-majority that actually prevented the signing of this Concordat.

Nevertheless, with the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the NSDAP, the Nazi Party, on the rise, the situation was about to change dramatically. Now, I would argue that the Catholic Church's desire to sign a Concordat as early as 1919 and throughout the 1920s is strong evidence that the Reichstag was not an act of complicity in the Nazi regime.

The Catholic Church's attempt to sign a Concordat had from the beginning been a desire to further and secure Catholic interests, and this did not change with Hitler's assembly.

However, with the meteoric rise of the Nazi Party, the Concordat shifted from being merely desirable as a means of garnering a better situation for Catholics in Germany to an absolute necessity in order to protect its own interests from the Nazi Party.

[ 17 : 12 ] Now, I think further evidence that the Concordat was not an act of complicity was the German bishops' initial stance towards the Nazi Party. Now, while the German Catholics and National Socialists did share an equally negative evaluation of Weimar society and cultural Bolshevism, the majority of German bishops were opposed to National Socialism.

In fact, unlike the majority of Protestant churches in Germany, the Catholic Church committed itself to a policy of official opposition to the Nazi Party. At the Fulda conference in August 1932, the German bishops issued a statement articulating their position.

This is fascinating. General principles, pardon bishops, all the bishoprics have forbidden membership in the Nazi Party because parts of its official program contain false teachings, b. hostility to the faith is evident in statements by countless leading figures and publicists of the party, in particular a hostile attitude to fundamental doctrines and claims of the Catholic Church.

C. It is the unanimous conclusion of the Catholic clergy and of those genuinely concerned to further the interests of the Church in the public sphere that if the party were to gain a monopoly of power in Germany, which it is so hotly pursuing, the prospects for the Church interests of the Catholics would be gloomy indeed.

So you see in here the Catholic Church's recognition of what is at stake in this party. Now, attitudes to particular cases, the individual pastor must exercise his discretion as to whether in a particular case paid-up membership in the party can be excused provided it does not involve any specific promotion of its cultural aims or any participation in it.

[ 19 : 02 ] again. So it's left to the purview of the bishop as to whether they will allow membership in that party, even though they are quite firmly against it. Now, such a firm stance makes the signing of the Concordat with the Nazi party, the Nazi-led government, even more extraordinary, because this happens only a year later, after this statement is issued.

So what is it that happens in that year that makes the German bishops move from a position of hostility to the National Socialist Party to a position where they're signing a Concordat with a square allegiance to the German government?

Now, understanding the events of the early months of 1933, I think, are critical in explaining the German bishops' sudden about face. On January 30th, Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany, and then on February 27th, the Reichstag caught fire.

Hitler blamed the fire on the communists, and he used this propaganda to have them banned from the Reichstag. On March 23rd, Hitler's government brought the enabling act to a vote.

This act would allow Hitler to enact laws without the participation of the Reichstag for four years. Since Hitler did not have a majority in the Reichstag, his government was not a majority by vote, this vote had just taken place, the Catholic Center Party's vote turned out to be the decisive one in the Reichstag as to whether or not this act would be passed.

[ 20 : 25 ] Now, after assurance that President Hindenburg would retain his right of veto in any laws that would be passed, the Center Party agreed to support Hitler in this enabling act that was to be passed.

And the vote passed with a 441 to 84 majority, hugely in favor of this vote. This, in essence, transformed Hitler's government into a de facto legal dictatorship.

So that's March 23rd. So with this bill, the Catholic Center Party, as well as all other parties, for that matter, it rendered them essentially powerless to effect any change in Germany, because Hitler could now pass laws without Parliament.

So Parliament is essentially just sitting there and they can't do anything. Now, on March 23rd, Hitler made a public policy statement regarding the Church.

One scholar argues that although he had far more pressing concerns at this point, such as unemployment, internal pacification, and foreign policy, Hitler could not neglect the vast reservoir of support that the churches could muster on his behalf.

[ 21 : 32 ] Now, in this broadcast, he publicly guaranteed the rights of the churches. This is happening on the same day as the Enabling Act was passed. So, let's read it. The national government regards the two Christian confessions as the most important factors for the preservation of our national culture.

It will honor the treaties between them and the provincial governments. Their rights will not be infringed. It does, however, hope and trust that the work for the national and moral renewal of our nation, which the government has taken upon it, will for its part be given like approval.

Its attitude to all other confessions will be that of objective justice. The national government will guarantee the Christian confessions they do influence in schools, in educational matters.

It is concerned to foster a frank and harmonious relationship between church and state. The fight against the materialistic view of the world and for the creation of genuine national community is as much in the interests of the German nation as for those of the Christian faith.

Likewise, the government of the right, which regards Christianity as the unshakable foundation of our national life and morality, regards the fostering and extension of friendly relations to the Holy See as a matter of the greatest importance.

[ 22 : 50 ] The rights of the churches will not be restricted, nor will their relationships to the state be changed. John Conlon, who is a professor emeritus at UBC and who wrote pioneering the classic work *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, states that Hitler fully realized the risk he was taking by such conservative utterances, the very success of which might prove to be a hindrance to his later freedom of action.

He goes even further to state that had the churches been able to insist that these promises be kept, the whole Nazi claim to total power would have been challenged, if not prevented.

Nevertheless, Hitler calculated, quite correctly, that he would be able to outflank the Church's leadership and in his own time rescind all of these promises which he appeared to offer the Church so generously.

The result of these assurances and solemn guarantees cannot be overlooked. Not only did the Catholic masses accept these implicitly, but his pledge made a profoundly reassuring impact throughout the world.

Given the German bishops' stance towards the Nazi party, this placed them in a precarious position. They have stated a stance of official opposition. Now, it appeared likely that the mass appeal of the Nazi campaign might succeed in swaying thousands, perhaps even millions, to leave the Church and lose themselves in Nazi fervor.

[ 24 : 24 ] Faced with such a promise from Hitler, the German bishops deduced that continued opposition would only ghettoize the Church and result in a sort of *kulturkampf*.

Now, this term, *kulturkampf*, is deeply significant. So I think we should spend a few minutes just kind of discussing what *kulturkampf* means, and this is in relation to the 19th century.

So we're going to have to rewind a little bit and talk a bit about the 19th century. So, change of pace. In the second half of the 19th century, Catholicism was experiencing a revival all throughout Europe.

And this revival came in a form known as ultramontanism. This term simply means support from those dwelling over the mountains, *ultramontane*, meaning the Pope and the Vatican in Rome.

It was a philosophy which placed strong emphasis on the prerogatives and powers of the Pope, and asserting those over against local temporal and spiritual rules.

[ 25 : 22 ] So, Catholics are placing more allegiance to the Pope, whose open mountains, than they are to their own national governments, and even their own spiritual power, their own bishops. It's about the Pope. It was a sort of grassroots revival in the devotional lives of Catholics, and as a result, what happens is that the idea of Catholic gets linked with the idea of foreign.

foreign in the sense that to be Catholic meant to owe your allegiance to the powers that reside over the mountains. And if I owe my ultimate allegiance to the powers that reside over the mountains, i.e. the Pope, that makes my nationalism suspect.

Catholicism is thus seen as dangerously anti-national. See kind of that look? So in Germany, this ultramontanist brand of Catholicism came into sharp conflict with Otto von Bismarck.

Now in Germany, this ultramontanist brand, oh sorry, the Prussian prime, this guy, Otto von Bismarck, was the Prussian prime minister and the German chancellor.

Bismarck's determined aim was to unite all of Germany under Prussian leadership. To achieve this goal, national unity was absolutely essential, and Catholicism, with its ultramontanist loyalties and condemnation of liberal nationalism, stood in Bismarck's way.

[ 26 : 40 ] He and other national liberals introduced measures throughout Germany to deal with these divisions. This policy was known as Kutterkamm, which denotes Bismarck's struggle with the churches.

It is a difficult word to translate, exactly, but it carries the connotation of a struggle for the control of the minds of Germans, or a battle of civilizations.

His goal was to subdue all people to the triumphant power of the state. Is this sounding familiar at all? Yeah? Okay. Yeah. Very significant as we start to talk about the rise of the Nazis.

So his goal was to subdue all people to the triumphant power of the state. And this goal had a rather urgent edge to it, because the newly united Germany had a large Catholic population, about a third of the population, 8 out of 24 million were Catholic.

So during the time of unification, the Catholics had established the Catholic Center Party, which was designed to defend the rights of German Catholics. And we were talking about the Catholic Center Party in relation to the Nazi regime as well.

[ 27 : 46 ] So they wanted to defend the rights of German Catholics so that they could order their own affairs without the interference of the state. That's the goal of this party. But in the process, it had actually become the second largest party in Germany.

Because it cut across state and class lines, there was no holding it back. Bismarck regarded the center party as the most dangerous rival. His fears only grew when this party won 58 seats in the newly formed Reichstag.

Bismarck acted swiftly to back the National Liberal Party in a campaign against the Pope and against the Catholic Center Party. They attempted to draw together the Protestant middle and working classes against the common enemy of the Catholics.

And the Kulturkampf became the arm of the political campaign. Catholicism, with its ultimate allegiance to the Pope, could not be tolerated because it took allegiance of the German people away from the nation and put them instead on the Pope.

So, in 1872, the school inspection law was passed, allowing Prussian authorities power to inspect all schools instead of the Catholic Church, which they had done prior to the 1872 law.

[ 29 : 05 ] Bismarck also ordered Guggenstadt to bring a law against the Jesuits, who previously had been crucial to education in Germany. Jesuits were expelled from their institutions and even from Germany itself.

In 1873, the May laws were passed, which were intended to remove all priests from the state, and thus remove all Catholic influence over marriage, over education, and to make the inclusion of any political propaganda in a sermon illegal.

As a result, two archbishops were imprisoned, and 1,300 parishes were left without priests. Such action withdrew the voice of Catholics for being heard in the newly emerging state of Germany.

So for older Catholics, especially in Prussia, to hear the term Kulturkampf being used again brought back memories of repression and parishes without clergy.

For younger Catholics, it elicited memories of a kind of religious apartheid in which their grandparents had been victims. As a result, only five days after Hitler's conciliatory broadcast on March 23rd, the Catholic bishops dramatically reversed their previous policy of outright opposition to National Socialism.

[ 30 : 24 ] On the 1st of April, Cardinal Bertram issued a statement to the German archbishops explaining his reversal. In solemn public pronouncements by the Supreme Head of the Reich Government, Martin Hitler, account was taken of the inviability of Catholic doctrine and of the immutable obligations and rights of the Church.

Moreover, the Reich Government expressly recognized the complete validity of the concordance made between the Church and the individual German provinces. Individual German, yes? Without therefore departing through the condemnation of certain moral and religious errors voiced in our earlier measure, the Episcopate believes it has grounds for confidence that the general prohibitions and admonitions mentioned above need no longer be regarded as necessary.

This sudden reversal left the German bishops open to public scrutiny. There were varying interpretations of their actions, but the most convincing appears to be that they were simply pragmatically responding to the reality of a new government and trying to make the best of a challenging situation.

Now, that's one argument. Kevin Spicer argues that since the Church had not gone underground during the Third Reich, it had to operate in the public arena. And this was merely another ratification of that challenging decision.

Whatever their reasoning might have been in reversing their previous policy, Hitler seized upon it their willingness to make concessions in order to cut off the Catholic Church's political arm.

[ 32 : 00 ] On April 5th, Councillor Fritz Menschhausen of the Foreign Ministry's Vatican desk prepared a memorandum surveying the Concordat negotiations since 1920.

Menschhausen summarized the recent change in circumstance with these words. The situation has been completely altered by the new composition of the Reichstag and especially the passing of the Enabling Act.

There now exists the possibility to fully comply with the wishes of the Holy See without also involving the Reichstag. Above all, it is now possible to conclude a Reichstag, the realization of which, until now, has always failed because of the objection of the Reichstag.

So this is one of Hitler's counselors advising Hitler that now is a good time to make this Reichstag important. Because they no longer need the Reichstag.

They don't need the support of the majority of the non-Catholic. They support it. Now, it was in this vein that Hitler's Vice-Chancellor and former head of the Central Party, Franz von Papen.

[ 33 : 09 ] Do you have a picture of him in there? That's quite a startling. Now, it was in this vein that Franz approached the Holy See to begin the Concordat negotiations again.

While the concessions which the government could make to the Church were vague, Papen was very specific in his demands that the clergy should be prohibited from intervening in political affairs.

So what the German government is willing to give, that's a little bit vague. But what they're demanding is that Catholics are no longer involved in politics. Since the Enabling Act had made the Center Party's effort to promote Catholic interests futile, Monsignor Ludwig Kass and Cardinal Pacelli, later quote Christ's name, the two key negotiators for the Holy See, knew that a Concordat was the only way of ensuring Catholic interests in Germany.

So, the Enabling Act has been passed. Reichstag has no power anymore. They think the only way to have any kind of protection for German Catholics is assigning importance. They were hence willing to negotiate the dissolution of the Central Party, as long as Papen could ensure that the NSDAP would protect the cultural and religious interests of the Church.

What they're interested about is the cultural and religious interests of the Church, above all else. Not political, it doesn't matter anymore. You can't do anything about it. So, let's just protect the faithful.

[ 34 : 33 ] John Conway, again, contends that the prospect of substantially improving conditions for the Church in the non-political field encouraged the Church to accept what it considered a loss of lesser importance, that is, the Catholic Center Party.

In order to maintain the pretense of benevolent interests in the renewal of Church life, Hitler issued instructions that nothing must be done to jeopardize the possible conclusion of a Concordat with the Vatican.

Hitler is deeply vested in having this thing signed. He believed that the reversal of the German bishops on their position of hostility towards the Nazi Party had to be affirmed with, I quote, fair words and promises.

As a result, Hitler granted an interview with Bishop Berning of Osnabrück. Nothing's happened yet. April 26, 1933. So you can just see how close these events are happening to one another, what a month at a time into one of these things.

So, he grants this interview with Bishop Berning. And Hitler told the bishop that he was most hurt to hear accusations that he was opposed to Christianity.

[ 35 : 45 ] For he was convinced that without Christianity, neither personal life nor a state could be built up. And the German state without the Christian Church was unimaginable. Unimaginable. He stated further, I am convinced of the great power and deep significance of Christianity, and I won't allow any other religion to be promoted.

Can you imagine how he's received these words? Now, Hitler also answered questions from the bishops, from the bishop on the Jewish question, stating, as for the Jews, I am just carrying on with the same policy with which the Catholic Church, with which the Catholic Church has adopted for 1,500 years.

When it has regarded the Jews as dangerous, dangerous, and pushed them into ghettos, etc. Because it knew that the Jews, it knew what the Jews were like.

He continued, I don't put race above religion, but I do see the dangers in the representatives of this race for church and state, that is the Jews, the danger of the Jews for church and state.

And perhaps I am doing Christianity a great service. The bishop's answer is not reported. I do not know how you respond. Okay, but. Another significant factor in the Catholic attitude towards the signing of the Concordat was the alarming progress of events in the evangelical churches.

[ 37 : 08 ] The German government's efforts to promote a new Reich Church that would combine various Lutheran and Reformed groups might be a stepping stone to the proclamation of a single established Reich Church.

And this would have the consequences of the extinction of other churches. Or at a minimum, the reduction of their position to an inferior legal status.

So the Catholics are thinking, if this Reich Church, and we see a picture of the inside of one of these churches. This is the altar. Who's behind the altar? Hitler. Hitler. So the Catholic Church thinks, if this happens, if the establishment of one unified Reich Church happens, what's going to happen to the Catholic Church?

Because this would be the only official religion of the German government. So the Catholic Church will be pushed to margins. They're hearing Kuterkamp, again, ghettoize the Church. So many of the more extreme German Christians were already calling for this, kind of the ghettoization of the Catholic Church.

And it brought back memories of those slogans from Bismarck's days. The Catholics thought that in order to counteract such dreams of Protestant supremacy, the Catholics must hasten the signing of a Concordat, in the hope that it would give them recognized national status.

[ 38 : 29 ] In June of 1933, at the height of negotiations for the terms of the Reich's Concordat, the SA and the Bavarian political police, under the direction of Heinrich Himmler and his assistant, Reinhard Heydrich, began to heighten their persecution of German Catholics.

Unlike Hitler, they were not so convinced that the Catholic clergy would follow the example of so many Protestant clergy in becoming the willing mouthpieces of Nazi policy.

So they're not convinced that Catholics are going to be swayed and pushed as easily as these Protestants who have joined the Reich Church have been. They determined that more decisive action against the Catholic Church was needed.

So when Kappen arrived in the Vatican on June 29, he found Cardinal Pacelli visibly shaken over the news he was receiving from Germany. He had been informed that on June 8-10, an all-German meeting of Catholic journeymen held in Munich had been broken up by force.

In the second half of June, the Nazi regime opened a systematic campaign of terror against the Center Party and its counterpart in Bavaria, accompanied by a new wave of arrests and dismissals from public office.

[ 39 : 51 ] On June 24, the Congress of Christian Trade Unions was dissolved, and on June 28, Joseph Goebbels threatening force publicly demanded the dissolution of the Catholic Central Party.

Günther Louis, another scholar who writes in this area, notes that in Bavaria in particular, a large number of priests had been mistreated. The premises of Catholic organizations searched, and their possessions confiscated.

Furthermore, on July 5, Cardinal Falheber complained that nearly 100 priests had been arrested in the last few weeks. While it's uncertain whether Himmler acted independently, the reality is that Hitler did nothing to stop him.

In fact, Conway argues that the persecutions were actually a targeted move, a calculated move by Hitler to put pressure on the Vatican to bring about a rapid conclusion to these Concordat negotiations.

Whatever the motivation may have been, that was certainly the end result. This threat to the spiritual and physical well-being of 20 million German Catholics moved Cardinal Pacelli to sign the Reich's Concordat on July 20, 1933.

[ 41 : 10 ] We wrote a photo of that. Same photo we began with. So this is then all sitting at the table in the Vatican signing this document.

They had been promised that in return, Hitler would effect a complete reconciliation between Church and State. The Catholic Church, that is, and the Third Reich. While it is unlikely that either side actually believed that such a promise would be kept, it secured for Hitler his desired goal of eliminating the Catholic Center Party from politics with the dissolution of the Catholic Center Party prior to the signing on July 6.

So the Center Party is dissolved July 6, the Concordat gets signed July 30, July 20, sorry. Furthermore, the signing of this gave the Church at least the hope of safeguarding its own interests.

In view of the increasing harassment of Catholic organizations, the question of whether the Concordat should in fact be ratified was more than a mere formality. Pacelli was still very concerned about the disquieting reports he was receiving from various parts of the German Reich concerning the continuing harassment of the Catholic clergy, the Catholic press, and Catholic organizations.

So Pacelli, Nuncio, Vatican Nuncio, contacted the German episcopacy to determine if ratification should indeed be postponed, pending the satisfactory resolution of these difficulties.

[ 42 : 41 ] So Pacelli writes to the German bishops and says, you know what, should we actually go ahead with ratification? Or should we wait until we can stop all this persecution that's taking place against the Catholic Church?

Kind of use it as a bargaining chip. But Cardinal Bertram responded to Pacelli with a letter on September 2, 1933. In this letter, he detailed the current situation in the Reich and expressed the German episcopal hierarchy's desire that the Concordat be ratified as quickly as possible.

He argued that this was the only way to secure an effective legal basis for their protests against the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Reich. He reported that many in Germany thought that the government had gone too far in its concessions, and that a move in the opposite direction would be desirable.

So the Catholic Church are actually worried that the German government is going to rescind those things that they've granted to the Catholic Church in the signing of the Concordat. If they don't ratify it immediately, these things are going to be lost.

So Bertram urged Pacelli to ratify the Concordat, fearing that such voices, these voices saying it had gone too far, it had to rescind these guarantees to the Church, would only get louder. However, he also asked Pacelli to demand an end to the grievances against the government at the same time as ratification was effected.

[ 44 : 05 ] It's kind of a, you give me this, I'll give you this. So if you end these grievances we have against the government, through persecution, then we'll ratify this Concordat. This is what he writes.

This is Bertram. It is immediately impossible, it is admittedly impossible to dissipate all doubts about the meaning and scope of all the clauses of the Concordat. That must be left to the future.

Let's just sign this thing and we'll figure out what exactly that's going to mean later. Reference, however, can be made here to the following grievances. So Bertram then goes on in the letter to articulate numerous grievances against the right, reporting that all over Germany there were innumerable assaults on the property, premises, and equipment of Catholic organizations, and that their funds have even been confiscated.

He also wrote that Catholic associations were being publicly slandered and denounced for hindering the unitary drive of a totalitarian state. Furthermore, he reported that all members of such organizations were discriminated against in all areas of economic life.

He even explained that parents no longer wanted their children to belong to Catholic organizations because membership appeared to threaten the future of their children. Perhaps most haunting, however, is the fourth section of his letter when he's articulating these grievances.

[ 45 : 30 ] Will it be possible for the Holy See to put in a warm-hearted word for those who have been converted from Judaism to the Christian religion, since either they themselves or their children or grandchildren are now facing a wretched fate because of their lack of arient sin?

I think that's just chilling. They see it coming. He says, can you demand an end to this? Can you put in, he doesn't actually say that, he doesn't say, can you demand an end? Will it be possible for the Holy See to put in a warm-hearted word?

However, the German Episcopate's desire for a rapid ratification led Pacelli to look past all of these concerns.

The Reich's Concordat became final in the afternoon of September 10th, when documents of ratification were exchanged between Cardinal Pacelli and Councillor Klee.

In a letter dated that same evening to Cardinal Vettra, the one who had just asked that all of these grievances be dealt with, Pacelli informed him of the day's events, and he told him that the Holy See had agreed to prompt ratification without first insisting on the removal of its grievances because of the German bishop's insistence on it.

[ 46 : 48 ] While at first glance, Pacelli's willingness to overlook such a significant aspect of the Concordat, i.e. all of these grievances against the state, this might look, initially, and construed as, complicity in the Third Reich.

But I would argue he had little choice. The German bishops, who were most intimately acquainted with the happenings in the Reich, insisted upon ratification as their sole means of recourse to continue persecution.

They thought this was the only leg they had to stand on. So, Reich's Concordat was not fundamentally a means of supporting the Nazi regime. The fact that the Holy See began negotiations immediately following the establishment of the Weimar Republic in 1919 indicates that this was, from the beginning, merely intended to further Catholic interests.

Furthermore, the German bishop's stance on NSDAP membership, as well as the conditions, immediately preceding the signing and ratification of the Concordat, clearly demonstrated that the Holy See was not acting to support the Nazi party.

Hitler's ascendancy, his conciliatory statements to the Church, and his calculated persecutions made a Concordat seem to be the only way for the Church to protect German Catholics.

[ 48 : 09 ] In essence, the Church thought that it would provide a permanent legal basis for the protection of Catholics and the position of the Catholic Church in the newly emerging Nazi state.

Hitler, however, saw the concordat as a short-term political expedient to neutralize the German Central Party and legitimize the Nazi Party abroad. Having the Vatican sign, this looks good internationally.

As a result, Sarah Williams, the professor of history at Regent, argues that Catholic organizational strength and political power was sacrificed for the illusion of a legal guarantee.

Let me read that again. Catholic organizational strength and political power was sacrificed for the illusion of a legal guarantee. And this proved true.

Hitler went on to break nearly every clause of the Concordat. I argued in the beginning that the Catholic Church's purpose in signing this was not to support the Reich, but rather to secure its own pastoral interests, and the protection of German Catholics from Hitler's regime.

[ 49 : 20 ] The signing of the Concordat was an effort to fend off the wolves, as it were. I do believe this to be true. But it came at a very, very high price.

When Hitler did eventually turn on the Church, and especially on those who had converted to Catholicism from Judaism, there was nothing the Church could do about it legally. The existence of the Concordat, the document that was supposed to guard the interests of the Church, became the very thing that compromised official Catholic resistance to the regime.

After all, the Catholic Church agreed that they would no longer be involved in the political arena, are freed from any obligation to take public office, and such obligations, as according to the dictates of canon law, are incompatible with the status.

Catholics cannot be involved in politics anymore. They signed it. And Article 30. On Sundays, in recognized holidays, prayer will be made for the well-being of the German Reich and people.

31. Property and activities of those Catholic interests and associations whose aims are purely religious will be protected. And finally, Article 16.

[ 50 : 40 ] The four bishops take possession of their diocese, they are to take an oath of loyalty either to the Reich, Governor of the State, concerned, or to the President of the Reich, respectively, according to that.

So they've potentially shot themselves in the field. So the questions we're left with, and coming out of this, are many.

The foremost among them are these. Were the gains that they made in signing the Concordat worth the cost? And what, as a pastor, would I be willing to sacrifice in order to protect the flock?

I really don't know how to answer those questions. So I shall leave them to you. As we close. Thank you.