

Lernen aus der Geschichte e.V.

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Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

Excerpts from a sermon against the "euthanasia" program delivered by Bishop Clemens August von Galen, Roman Catholic bishop of Münster, at St. Lambert's Church in Münster on August 3, 1941. The text was immediately reproduced and distributed throughout Germany. Bishop Clemens August von Galen actually delivered three such sermons in July and August 1941, although this was not typical of the behavior of the German Catholic church. Despite the stopping of "euthanasia" on August 24, 1941, even more of the disabled were killed in a second, more decentralized phase of the "euthanasia" killings. Galen's sermon is found in Johann Neuhäusler, *"Kreuz und Hakenkreuz: Der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus"* ["Cross and Swastika: The Anti-Nazi Resistance"], 2 vols., Munich, 1946, vol. 2, pp. 365-67; excerpted in Ute Hoffmann, *"Todesursache 'Angina' "* ["Cause of Death: 'Angina' "], Magdeburg 1996, pp. 45-46; and also in Ernst Klee, ed., *"Dokumente zur 'Euthanasie' "* ["Documents on 'Euthanasia' "], Frankfurt, 1985, p. 193f.

"... Devout Christians! The collective pastoral letter dated June 26, 1941, read in all German Catholic churches on July 6, 1941, states among other things: In Catholic morality, there are certainly positive commandments which are not binding if their fulfillment entails unreasonable difficulties.

However, there are also sacred duties of conscience from which no one can release us, which we must perform even at the cost of our lives. Never, under any circumstances, can a person kill an innocent person except in war or justifiable self-defense. I have already had cause to add these words to the general pastoral letter on July 6: We have heard reports for several months that, under orders from Berlin, patients in psychiatric state hospitals and nursing homes who have been ill for some time and perhaps appear to be incurable have been involuntarily taken away. Shortly thereafter, their families have then routinely received notification that their corpses had been cremated but that the ashes could be sent home. A general suspicion bordering on certainty has prevailed that these many unexpected deaths of

institutionalized psychiatric patients did not happen on their own, but were brought about intentionally, according to the precept that 'unworthy beings' may be destroyed. In other words, innocent people may be killed if it is believed their lives are no longer of value to the people or the state. It is a terrible message that attempts to justify the murder of innocents, that tolerates as principle the killing of invalids no longer able to work, cripples, mortally ill, and those suffering the debilities of old age.

As I am reliably informed, lists are being made up in the hospitals and nursing homes of Westphalia of those patients, who, as so-called unproductive citizens, are to be taken away and soon thereafter killed. The first such transport left the institution of Marienthal near Münster this past week.

German men and women! Paragraph 211 of the German criminal legal code still has the force of law. It states that 'an individual who, acting with premeditation, kills another person shall be punished by death for murder.' "