

Stepinac's Interventions with Pavelic

Summary

Serbian Patriarch Irinej Gavrilovic addressed Pope Francis on April 30, 2014, asking him to reject the canonization of the martyr Blessed Aloysius Stepinac, the Archbishop of Zagreb (a coadjutor from 1934, an ordinary from 1937 to 1960, sede impedita from 1946 - in jail until 1952 and in detention until his death). The Patriarch's cause against canonization: Archbishop Stepinac was "mostly silent" about everything that was happening in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH). And, silence is consent. Such a church representative cannot be a Christian model. The author of this paper, based on the evidence published before the Patriarch's letter, has shown that Archbishop Stepinac, during the period of four years of NDH from April 10, 1941 to May 8, 1945, i.e. for 48 months, intervened more than 360 times in personal meetings with Croatian authorities in Zagreb either by mail to some Croatian ministers, or through public sermons, persuasions and lectures. In particular, the author has focused on the contacts between archbishop Stepinac and Ante Pavelic, the head of NDH. He summarized and chronologically presented 21 letters of Stepinac to Pavelic and 11 meetings of Stepinac with Pavelic, with brief comments attached. Pavelic neither returned a single visit nor personally responded to Stepinac's letters. Nevertheless, the Archbishop was persistent and resolute and intervened whenever he considered it necessary to do so, no matter how political authorities felt about his letters, inquiries and requests. Therefore, Archbishop Stepinac was not silent, he was speaking, writing, and mediating as much as he could, regardless of the results of his interventions. At least, it cannot be said that Archbishop Stepinac was "mostly silent" about all that was happening at the time of NDH. When Pavelic saw that everything went wrong and had to flee from Croatia, he invited Archbishop Stepinac and offered him to take control over Croatia. Stepinac rejected the offered political power remaining at his archbishop's position.

Keywords: Pope Francis; Patriarch Irinej; Blessed Aloysius Stepinac, Archbishop; poglavnik (leader) Ante Pavelic; Independent State of Croatia; Croatian Bishops' Conference.