

CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE HOLY SEE DURING WORLD WAR II AND IN THE EARLY POST-WAR ERA

A Stony Path to the Resumption of Diplomatic Relations

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The present paper is devoted to the relations between Czechoslovakia and the Holy See during WW II and in the first three years after hostilities had ended. Diplomatic relations between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Holy See had been severed in March 1939, when the Czechoslovak legate to the Holy See ceded his office to the Germans, following an order given by Foreign Minister František Chvalkovský. The Czechoslovak exile government in London tried hard to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican. While these efforts proved fruitless, the Holy See did entertain relations with the Slovak state. After the war, a whole lot of problematic questions had to be resolved before diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and the Holy See could be fully reestablished. Among these were the validity of the *Modus Vivendi* accord of 1928, the borders of the dioceses, the set of orders which the Czechoslovak legate, Karel Sidora, had to follow, and how bishops for the various dioceses would be appointed. In Czechoslovakia, democratic forces expected from the resumption of diplomatic relations to the Holy See a boost in international prestige, and, moreover, a calming effect on a society radicalized as a consequence of the war. In Rome, the Holy See hoped for a societal stabilization as well and counted on contacts to Czechoslovak believers becoming easier to establish.