

# **Eichmann's Diary Tells True Story Of the Vigorous Opposition to Nazism by Pope Pius XII and the Catholic Church**

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*My Father's House*

March 1st, 2000 will go down in history as the day the Israeli government made Adolph Eichmann's diaries public after 40 years.

Eichmann wrote these diaries during the months following his death sentence. They are especially chilling in their description of the way the Nazi regime came to the "Final Solution" and the way the extermination was implemented.

They are also a strong vindication of Pope Pius XII and the Catholic Church. Pius XII, it must be remembered, wrote a stinging encyclical against Hitler and Nazism in 1937 while he was Secretary of State to Pius XI. As representative to Germany, he openly attacked the evils of Nazism. Hitler protested his election as Pope. As even Eichmann testified, the Vatican "vigorously protested the arrest of Jews" calling for an interruption of such action, and "the Pope would denounce it publicly."

Be mindful that Eichmann wrote his diaries before 1963 when the German play, "The Deputy" first intimated that Pope Pius XII was "silent" in face of Jewish atrocities. Be mindful, furthermore, that for 40 years, the Israeli government has "sat" upon definite proof that all the modern accusations against Pius XII were utterly false. Be mindful also that of all the non-Jews honored at Yad Va Shem, from Schindler to the Prince of Holland, none did more to save Jews than this holy and courageous friend who is credited with saving more than one million Jews from extermination.

Eichmann writes, for example, in his chapter dedicated to Italy that on October 6, 1943, Ambassador Moelhausen sent a telegraphic message to Foreign Minister Ribbentrop in which he said that General Keppler, SS commander in Rome, had received a special order from Berlin: he had to arrest 8,000 Jews who were living in Rome to deport them to northern Italy, where they would be exterminated. General Stahel, commander of the German forces in Rome, explained to Ambassador Moelhausen that, from his point of view, it would be better to use the Jews for fortification works. On October 9, however, Ribbentrop answered that the 8,000 Jews of Rome had to be deported to the Mathausen concentration camp. He emphasized that, in giving evidence under oath in the military prison of Gaeta on June 27, 1961, Kappler said that it was with that order that for the first time he heard the term 'final solution.'

Eichmann wrote in his diary: "At that time, my office received the copy of a letter, that I immediately gave to my direct superiors, sent by the Catholic Church in Rome, in the person of Bishop Hudal, to the commander of the German forces in Rome, General Stahel. The Church was vigorously protesting the arrest of Jews of Italian citizenship, requesting that such actions be interrupted throughout Rome and its surroundings. To the contrary, the Pope would denounce it publicly. The Curia was especially angry because these incidents were taking place

practically under Vatican windows. But, precisely at that time, without paying any attention to the Church's position, the Italian Fascist government passed a law ordering the deportation of all Italian Jews to concentration camps.

"The objective given and the excessive delay in the steps necessary to complete the implementation of the operation, resulted in a great part of Italian Jews being able to hide and escape capture," Eichmann wrote. A good number of them hid in convents or were helped by men and women of the Church.

### **Important Facts to be Remembered**

1. Pope Pius XII did more than any other person to save Jewish lives during the Holocaust, saving more than one million of them.
2. At the risk of losing his neutrality and the risk of his own life, he ordered all Catholic convents, seminaries, monasteries, orphanages, and hospitals to be open to hide our Jewish brothers and sisters.
3. In Rome occupied by Nazi troops, he harbored Jews within the Vatican itself to the extent that the Nazi's did in fact have a plan to invade and kill the pope and others.
4. When the head rabbi of Rome had arranged significant funds as a ransom for Italian Jews, it was Pope Pius XII who raised most of the ransom. The head rabbi, in fact, became a Catholic right after the war, taking the pope's own name.
5. Right after the war, the B'nai Brith Society named Pope Pius XII man of the year, and he was praised by every prominent Jewish leader from Golda Meir to the head rabbi of the United States.
6. Hitler hated Pope Pius XII and stated that any public statement of protest would be met with the loss of more Jewish and Catholic lives, as did in fact happen in Holland when the local Catholic hierarchy did protest.
7. As Schlinder, the American Red Cross, Jews in Europe, and all prudent people came to realize, protest meant retaliation and death.
8. The largest monument for non-Jews who helped the Jews during the Holocaust should now be erected at Yad Va Shem.

### **Pope Pius XII and The Holocaust**

**(Excerpts taken from "The Pope and the Holocaust" by Rader and Fedorka)**

The Holocaust, which involved the murder of 6 million Jews, is truly one of the greatest crimes in mankind's often tragic history. To blame Pope Pius XII for any of it is also criminal.

Until 1963, the commitment and accomplishment of Pius XII in the cause of peace was universally recognized and acclaimed. Dr. Raphael Cantoni, the Head of the Italian Jewish Assistance Committee, stated, "The Church and the papacy have saved Jews as much and in as

far as they could save Christians...6 million of my co-religionists have been murdered by the Nazis, but there could have been many more victims, had it not been for the intervention of Pius XII." No one who listened to the broadcasts of Vatican Radio, read the articles and editorials of *L'Osservatore Romano* (the official Vatican newspaper), listened to Pius' wartime pronouncements and Christmas messages during that time, could not believe that the Pope did not speak out. Even the *New York Times* in 1942 elaborated on the significance of the Pope's words when it ran an editorial on Pius' Christmas message.

Did anyone in the world at that time do enough? The Pope who did more than any other individual becomes one who did nothing at all. Let us look at some of his wartime record.

As the head of a country with no military, economic or political power, he stood in the center of hostile territory during most of the war. According to the Lateran Treaty, the Vatican was forced to neutrality in their statements and actions. When it was perceived that the Vatican breached neutrality, the Nazi reprisals were more than verbal. The Catholic clergy of Holland protested the most loudly and frequently against Jewish persecutions than any other country. Subsequently, more Jews than any other Western country were deported from Holland to death camps (110,000). Hitler made it clear that public condemnation of his extermination policy would not be tolerated. The International Red Cross also struggled with this reality. For the duration of the war, they did not lodge a single protest with Hitler against his anti-Jewish measures in an effort to continue their wartime effort.

"Only the Catholic Church protested against the Hitlerian onslaught on liberty. Up till then I had not been interested in the Church, but today I felt great admiration for the Church, which alone has had the courage to struggle for spiritual truth and moral liberty" (Albert Einstein, 1940).

The local clergy, at the directive of the pope, organized rescue and relief initiatives, hiding Jews, and helping them cross borders to safety. The Vatican issued safe conduct and Vatican protection letters. Baptismal certificates gave 80,000 Jews the added safeguard of convert status. Jews were concealed in cathedrals, churches, convents and monasteries. The nuncios of the various countries established a network of escape routes funneling Jews into neutral countries and Palestine. The individuals saved by these measures were 200,000 in Hungary, 50,000 in Poland, 360,000 in Bulgaria, 250,000 in Romania, 22,000 in Slovakia, and 120,000 in Italy.

As refugees flooded Rome, 200,000 sets of rations and 50,000 hot meals were distributed daily in the soup kitchens. Pope Pius proclaimed a worldwide "Crusade of Charity" to finance the \$7,000/day endeavor. Vatican emissaries also distributed food, clothing and medication at the prisoner of war camps, and tried to help families of missing soldiers and war victims learn the fate of their lost relatives.

It should not be forgotten that hundreds of thousands of Catholics, including over 3,000 priests, perished alongside their Jewish brethren in the Holocaust. This common bond of suffering should forge a lasting bond of friendship between Catholics and Jews.