

A CROSS TOO HEAVY

POPE PIUS XII AND THE JEWS OF EUROPE

PAUL O'SHEA



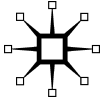
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Paul O'Shea

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For Chris

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

This revised book grew out of research work undertaken for my doctoral dissertation, but quickly assumed a life of its own as more material came to light. Chief among the lessons I learned in writing this work is that I stand on the shoulders of giants, men, and women who have written in the field long before me and whose work has influenced, shaped, and critiqued my own.

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Writing is often a solitary and idiosyncratic pursuit and I must offer my gratitude and love to those closest to me who have endured more than their share of solitude. To Chris and the rest of the family, my love and thanks.

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

- AAS Acta Apostolicae Sedis: Commentarium Officiale
ADB Akten Deutscher Bischöfe über die Lage der Kirche
1933–1945
ADSS Actes et Documents du Saint-Siège relatifs à la Seconde
Guerre mondiale
ASV AES Archivio Segreta Vaticano, Affari Ecclesiastici
Straordinari 1922–1939; followed by:
 ANB Archivio Nunziatura Berlino
 ANM Archivio Nunziatura Monaco
 Baviera
 Germania
 Stati Ecclesiastici
AKF Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhaber 1917–1945
Albrecht Der Notenwechsel zwischen dem Heiligen Stuhl und der
Deutschen Reichsregierung
Arad Documents on the Holocaust
CC *Civiltà Cattolica*
CM *Catholic Mind*
DBFP Documents on British Foreign Policy
DGFP Documents on German Foreign Policy
FRUS Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States
NARA National Archives and Records Administration
(Washington DC)
NYT *The New York Times*
Times *The Times (London)*

Introduction

Pius XII, Catholics, Myths, and Realities

At what point does an experience precipitate a change in consciousness?

Professor David Bankier, Yad Vashem (March 8, 2009)

The Battles over Pius XII

On December 19, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI signed the Decree of Heroic Virtue for Pope Pius XII. The now “venerable” Pius XII was deemed to have lived an exemplary Christian life—not a faultless one, but one that was indicative of a close communion with God in his vocation as priest, bishop, and pope. Responses varied from the triumphant to the tragic. Most focused on the papal actions and reactions during the Second World War in general, and on the Holocaust in particular. I suggest that the quality of many responses were indicative of deeper issues that lie beneath the surface of contemporary Catholicism. And as is so often the case when one peers beneath the surface, what is found is often unpleasant, challenging, and upsetting.

Benedict’s signature on the Decree of Heroic Virtue was, for many, the latest in a series of Vatican public relations blunders that have stretched the credibility factor to the limit. In 2007 the pope gave unrestricted permission for the use of the pre-Vatican II Latin Mass, which included the Good Friday prayer for the conversion of the Jews. The ensuing “kerfuffle” led to Benedict composing a new prayer that left no one happy. Lifting the excommunication of the anti-Vatican II Lefebvrist bishops in January 2009 unleashed a storm of criticism over the splinter faction of extreme conservatives, who reject, among other Vatican II reforms, the idea of religious liberty, ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, especially with Jews. The storm worsened when it was revealed that one of the Lefebvrist bishops, Richard Williamson, was a known Holocaust denier. An unprecedented papal letter of apology to the world’s Catholic bishops did little to calm fears that a major “reform of the reform” was under way. And then in November 2010 Benedict made a series of very public

“private” statements declaring that Pius XII was a righteous man who saved more Jews than anyone else. The familiar cycle of outrage, qualification, rebuttal, and exasperation followed.¹

At the heart of the nonhistorical argument about Pius XII is a battle over authority and how it is exercised in contemporary Catholicism. I believe that the case of Pius XII, for many fundamentalist Catholics and their supporters, derives from a cultural shift within Western society over authority and institutional religion that has been in process since the 1950s. Institutional Catholicism has not been immune from this. It was felt quite keenly at Vatican II when Pope Paul VI made two unprecedented interventions. The first, in 1964, forbade discussion of contraception; the second, in 1965, forbade discussion of priestly celibacy. This was followed by two encyclical letters of the same pope addressing both issues—*Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (on priestly celibacy) on celibacy in 1967, and *Humanae vitae* (on the regulation of birth) on birth control in 1968.² The letter on celibacy did not arouse much debate outside clerical circles, but *Humanae vitae* unleashed a violent storm of protest across the whole Catholic world. The pope was so stunned by the negative reaction that he never wrote another encyclical.

For conservative, traditionalist Catholics, there arose a fear that if the Church admitted or accepted that a pastoral measure or moral teaching was no longer entirely positive and needed changing, other aspects of Church teaching would also be challenged. Paul VI was often branded as a “weak” pope by many of his critics in contrast to Pius XII, a “strong” pre-Vatican II pope, and John Paul II, a “strong” post-Vatican II pope. Fidelity to orthodox Catholic teaching as pronounced by the Roman Magisterium was a hallmark of the long pontificate of John Paul. That Church teaching has been challenged, often vigorously, in the wake of the decade of clerical sex abuse scandals is an accepted fact. The Vatican’s stubborn unwillingness to go beyond recognition of individual acts to an examination of the institution that allowed such criminal activity to fester remains a matter of serious concern.³

Is it too far fetched to suggest that questioning the responses of Pius XII during the Second World War falls into the paradigm outlined above? If it is admitted that the pope failed to speak and act clearly when he had undeniable proof of the murder of European Jews, would this seriously damage papal authority today? Would it not, in fact, bring a more irenic spirit to the study of the man because it was accepted that he made mistakes, sometimes serious omissions, and so allow a measure of “closure” for that period and, at the same time, show the Church as willing to admit its past and learn from it? Unfortunately, such thinking remains purely personal and hypothetical.

It is no surprise that the heated exchanges among various neoconservative Catholic groups can usually be reduced to black-and-white questions about “loyalty to the Holy Father.” Acceptance of Pius XII as the veritable savior of Europe’s Jews is proof of fidelity to the Church, the *pope*, and

the Tradition (deposit of faith). Alternatively, suggestions that Pius made mistakes, or worse, is regarded as proof of dissent and even apostasy. The “good guys” are “devout Catholics who have studied [Pius XII’s] life, the Vatican and John Paul II,” and the “bad guys” are “the media, liberal Catholics, academicians, and editorial commentators.”⁴ Significantly, over the last ten years there have been a growing number of Jewish voices allied with the Catholic Far Right on the question of Pacelli’s role during the Holocaust. They are often well-funded, media-savvy, and enjoy significant favor with a number of like-minded Vatican officials. However, close examination of their claims always ends with a “debunking” of shallow and poorly formatted polemics.⁵ Their commitment is always to a willingness to substitute rigorous and open research with the inflexible certainty of ideological devotion. The ideologues that fight what they call “The Pius Wars” are as dangerous as Holocaust deniers.

It may appear somewhat simplistic, but the only way forward is through the speedy opening of the Vatican archives of the 1939–1945 war. No serious historian suggests there are black-and-white answers, but until the archives are opened, questions about what Pius XII did or did not do will remain within a permanent twilight zone. If Rome wishes to engage seriously with historians on the role of the wartime pope, dalliances with the polemicists and apologists must be replaced by engagement with credible and qualified historians. The current favor shown by elements of the Roman curia to groups that support an uncritical evaluation of Pope Pius XII has led more than a few mainstream scholars withdrawing from engagement with what has become more of a war of attrition than historical inquiry.

Stating the Case

Let me begin with a statement that summarizes what I believe to be the historically verifiable conclusion about Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust. During the years 1939–1945, this man, believed by millions to be the visible representative of Christ on earth, made a series of moral and deliberate decisions regarding the Jews of Europe. He acted in response to situations, rarely taking the initiative, and always with an eye to the context of what he perceived as the larger struggle between Christianity and atheistic Bolshevism. These decisions were in two parts. First, Pius’s activities in his public role as pope, bishop of Rome, and head of the Vatican State in contact with other heads of state were guided by his conscious and deliberate choices to do all within his limited political and economic power, *as he perceived it*, to help European Jewry while keeping the fiction of papal neutrality, and not endangering the position of the Catholic Church in Germany or Occupied Europe. There is sufficient evidence to show that Pius was willing to help anti-Hitler factions within the German army. As the war dragged on, he realized the danger of speaking out on specifics

while remaining neutral. The “silence” was therefore the strategy to protect Vatican interests, including rescue activities. However, careful reading of papal statements within the context of the time reveals Pacelli’s skilful use of language to condemn atrocities. Goebbels was under no illusions as to the pope’s anti-Nazi feeling.

Second, Pius’ activities in his private role as an intelligent and highly educated conservative Tridentine Catholic were guided by his conscious and deliberate choices to allow others to engage in rescue of Jews *in his name*, as long as the greater battle against Soviet Communism was not endangered or the situation of the Church compromised. This distinction, between public neutrality and “silence” and private action, has been largely neglected by scholars.

Jews were the primary victims of the murderous policies of Hitler’s New Order. However, they were not the only people singled out for *Sonderbehandlung* (special handling). The Nazi categories of *Untermenschen* (subhumans) ran long. Like the Jews, they too suffered and died, although for different reasons according to Nazi ideology. Unlike Jews, the vast majority of these victims were Christians, and many of them Catholics. They had a direct claim on the pastoral protection of the *pastor pastorum*—the shepherd of the shepherds—the pope. Pius XII did speak out in language understood by the principal perpetrators as unequivocal condemnation of the other mass murders committed prior to the systematic killing of the Jews. But most of the pope’s public statements were never heard by the victims. This created a sense that “silence” was a deliberate ignorance of, and refusal to comment on, the slaughters occurring throughout Europe. It was the German refusal to publish the pope’s messages that was responsible for the creation of the “silence.” It is in this context that the “silence” during the murder of Polish Catholics and Orthodox Serbs needs to be understood. The justifiable, and verifiable, criticism that can be made is that Pius XII did not give as full a leadership as was possible through *public* proclamation of the type employed by other leaders from both sides of the war. He never once spoke of Jews as a distinct victim group. This becomes a serious problem when discussing the moral leadership of the pope.

Within Catholic culture until the late 1960s, there had been a remarkable public uniformity about how the Church was presented to the outside world. Even the phrase “outside world” betrayed the feeling among many Catholics, especially in the English-speaking world, where Catholics have tended to be a minority, that the Church’s internal matters were not for public, or more specifically, non-Catholic, consumption. Historians who wrote about the Church in the first half of the twentieth century tended to fall into one of two camps: church-approved, whose writing tended to be favorable to the institution, or “others” who wrote without the mandate of church authority and who tended to be more critical.⁶

For the first group of historians, loyalty to the institution was important. There was, therefore, a pattern of writing that followed the thinking

that the Church was incapable of sinning because of the promises made to it by Christ, as opposed to members of the Church who sinned. According to this logic, the divinely founded institution was above the censure of the world for the failings of some of its members. How then did the actions of popes fit this paradigm? Clearly, there had been bad popes, and even good popes who made bad choices. Surely as the Visible Head of Christ's Church on Earth, the pope shouldered responsibility for his actions, just as everyone else did? The answer to this reflected the convoluted thinking typical of the Catholic Church prior to Vatican II (1962–1965). When the pope qua pope taught and acted as leader of the Church, he was believed to teach and act according to “the mind of Christ.” His actions were the actions of the Church, and therefore not the personal acts of the man. However, when the pope taught and acted as a member of the Church, in other words, as “an ordinary Catholic,” he was responsible for his actions in the same way as everyone else. The difficulty lies in making the distinction between the pope and the Catholic. I believe it is nigh impossible to do so.

This distinction did not pose a problem for the second group of historians, the vast majority of whom were not Catholics. Their concern was for the accurate rendering of the historical record. However, they were hampered by a number of problems. Many did not have an accurate understanding of the workings of the Catholic Church; and since the Church was not in the habit of volunteering information about less savory aspects of its history, many people simply did not know what was available, or even what questions to ask. Many were Holocaust or war historians for whom the role of the pope and the Church was secondary. Consequently, for these scholars, the actions or nonactions of Pius were of no great importance in the global picture. Another problem lay in the nonunderstanding or misunderstanding of the power of Catholic culture, theology, and religious practice, and how this shaped the lives of believers.

When Catholic historians and theologians debated the pontificate of Pius XII, they often did so with the abovementioned distinction in mind. I argue that this distinction was so much a part of the manner of educated Catholic thinking up to the 1970s that it most likely did not cross their minds that the distinction could be questioned. When one added the cultural loyalties that marked so much of nonclerical Catholic culture, there is an atmosphere that encouraged the growth of what I call “Catholic denialism.”

Denialism

Denialism and denialists are more commonly associated with the “work” of Holocaust revisionists such as David Irving and the spurious Institute for Historical Review. Put simply, “denialism” is the refusal to accept an

empirically verifiable reality. It is an essentially irrational action that withholds validation of a historical experience or event. At the most basic level, denialism accuses the person who underwent the experience of being a liar or fraud, operating from base and dishonest motives. Denialists seek to rewrite history according to the logic of their perverted worldview in order to validate their claims, which are at odds with the received history. The denialists' subject matter is of secondary importance when viewed against the methods employed to plant doubt and exploit prejudice. Posing as "reasonable" and "open minded" scholars, denialists attempt to engage an audience with carefully constructed arguments, often masquerading with a veneer of technical scientific language in order to prove the veracity of their arguments. Of primary concern is the need to re-present historical data according to their own ideological interpretation of reality. For this to occur, the denialist must destroy the position of either the accepted history, or, as is the usual case with Holocaust denial, denigrate the victims and portray them as unreliable liars and hoaxers.⁷

Catholic denialism, a variant of broader denialism, is the reluctance and refusal on the part of some Catholic historians and their sympathizers to accept the veracity of the Catholic historical record. It parts company with the denialism of Irving and the institute in its *modus operandi*. Catholic denialism is a complex mixture of theological, political, and historical strands that have operated over centuries. When one claims a monopoly on access to the truth, as the Church has done for two millennia, it is not difficult to see how clichés such as "the mind of the Church" can be used as a not-so-subtle form of thought control. The clerical caste educated in the "mind of the Church" and with sole access to power within it, has the ability to create the truth, quite literally. It does not take long to find patterns of denialist behavior over the centuries. Refusal to accept the truth of Galileo's discoveries in the seventeenth century was a form of denialism. The discoveries challenged the orthodox Catholic vision of the cosmos and were seen as a threat to the exercise of ecclesiastical authority. It did not matter whether Galileo was right or wrong; what mattered was the presence of another school of thought—a school outside church control. Galileo was stopped by the use of the Roman Inquisition. He was ordered to recant or risk the eternal damnation of his soul. In the same way, suspicion of Protestant biblical studies and the development of critical source evaluation in the nineteenth century denied Catholic scholars the opportunity of shared learning for over six decades.⁸

Part of my interest lies in what I call "denialism" over Catholic anti-Judaism and antisemitism and its effect on Pope Pius XII. John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope* (1999) reopened the historical debate over the wartime pope. For the first time, Catholic historians entered the argument as major players. Gone was the polite reticence over asking difficult questions about the papacy of Pacelli. In place was a more rigorous and intellectually satisfying historical process that looked to the sources and records to supply answers. Even so, the process has been fraught with lively "counterattack"

from Pacelli apologists and defenders. The most famous defender of Pius XII was Pope John Paul II, whose stated public hope was to see Pius declared a saint. What is sorely needed is a detailed scholarly work that will bring the various strands together within a historical framework that builds upon documentary evidence and is free from much of the hysteria that has surrounded Pius XII.

John Paul II made reconciliation between Judaism and Catholicism a priority from the beginning of his pontificate. Visits to places of great Jewish historical and spiritual significance, such as Auschwitz in 1979, the Rome Synagogue in 1986, and, in 2000, to Israel, pointed to the pope's very public, uncompromising determination to build bridges between the two faiths. No other pope had done so much to heal the wounds of Christian anti-Judaism and antisemitism.

Benedict XVI has continued what is now a well-established practice. Although he does not have the public charismatic presence of his predecessor and has fallen foul with some significant and unfortunate missteps, Benedict has made it clear that Catholic-Jewish relations will continue to move forward. His visit to Rome's synagogue in January 2010 was positive. However, the Jewish community in Rome, while showing hospitality to the pope, was also robustly honest and frank. The head of the Rome community, Riccardo Pacifici, said: "The silence of pope Pius XII on the Shoah still hurts as an undelivered gesture . . . A sign from the pope might not have stopped the trains of death, but it would have sent a signal, a word of consolation and human solidarity towards our brothers transported to the chimneys of Auschwitz." This was followed by the comments of the chief rabbi, Riccardo Di Segni, who recalled the substantial change in relations between Christians and Jews in Rome. From a history often marked by violence,

we are meeting today on a basis of equality . . . If our relationship is a pathway of brotherhood . . . we should sincerely ask ourselves how far we are from authentic brotherhood and comprehension of one another, and what we should do to get there.

In a pointed reference to the unresolved questions surrounding the papacy of Pius XII, Rabbi Di Segni said: "The silence of God before a tragedy is impenetrable, but man's silence haunts us."⁹ Benedict did not make a direct response to either Pacifici or Di Segni, but made a very general comment that the Holy See often acted in secret and hidden ways in response to persecution of the Jews in Rome. He was uncompromising in his repeated condemnation of antisemitism, his affirmation for dialogue, and his sorrow for the Shoah.¹⁰

Elements of Benedict's speech unintentionally drew attention to the question of ecclesial authority. Traditional Catholic theology does not have a mechanism for admitting error in aspects of Church teaching even if it was Church teaching that created a worldview where Jews

were regarded as less than fully human. By recognizing the sinfulness of individual Catholics but not the sinful structures within the Church that allowed the sinful activity to happen, Catholic responses still fall short of a full “ownership” of responsibility for the precursors to the Holocaust.

When Hochhuth’s play *The Deputy* opened in 1963, it ignited a war among historians that has continued with varying degrees of intensity ever since. The most famous respondent to Hochhuth was Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, later Paul VI. Montini accused the young playwright of vilifying a saintly man and not understanding the situation in which Pius XII found himself.

It is not true to say that Pope Pius XII’s conduct was inspired by a calculating political opportunism... As for his omitting to take up a position of violent opposition to Hitler in order to save the lives of those millions of Jews slaughtered by the Nazis... An attitude of protest and condemnation... would have been not only futile but harmful: that is the long and the short of the matter.¹¹

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the intensity is at a new peak. Debate over Pius within the Catholic Church has also peaked and appears to be moving into a more scholarly phase despite some well-orchestrated exercises in polemic and apologetics from Catholic and, oddly enough, some Jewish neoconservative individuals and groups. The demand for the truth about Pius is too great and too compelling to ignore, and the moral argument from within and without the Catholic Church adds another dimension that also refuses to be ignored.

The Good Samaritan

A familiar story known to Christians is the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.29–37). It was a story well known to Eugenio Pacelli. The author of Luke’s gospel has Jesus telling the story in response to a lawyer eager to make a point about who was a member of God’s people. Most scholars regard the passage as reflecting an argument within the Lucan community. Who belonged to God’s people—those who observed the Mosaic Law (Jews and non-Jews alike), or those who observed the moral and ethical behavior incumbent on the Christian community (regardless of Jewishness)? Luke crafted the story on two hinges. First, there was the obligation to love God exclusively with all one’s strength. Second, love of God must be visible in one’s love of neighbor.

Throughout Christian history, this parable has been regarded as one of the hallmarks of ethical and moral behavior. Questions of religious adherence, ethnicity, cultural acceptability, and political membership were irrelevant when someone was in need. What was important was providing help and comfort to the person in distress. All matters of religious

observance or theological nicety were of no consequence when confronted with a human being in need. The Christian's moral obligation was to help without question—this was the surest sign of the genuineness of the believer's faith. And if this paradigm of unselfish love for a stranger was not sufficient, Luke had Jesus say clearly to the lawyer, "Go, and do the same yourself." The gospel makes it impossible to justify indifference in the face of evil.

It is not unreasonable to judge the pontificate of Pope Pius XII during 1939–1945 by the criterion presented above. Catholic tradition held him to be the final arbiter of authentic interpretation of the scriptures. However, not even the Pope could escape the fact that the years of mass killing across Europe made a demand on Christian leadership unparalleled in recorded history. The battered people lying on the roadsides were not characters from a story, but human beings in the greatest need imaginable—the need to be rescued from those who would kill them. While priest and Levite studiously avoided sullyng themselves, an outsider heard the cry for help and went out of his way to rescue and care for the victim. A few voices were raised in defense of the Jews—those of Lutheran bishops in Denmark and Norway, Orthodox bishops in Greece and Serbia, Catholic bishops in France, Holland, and Belgium, in Croatia and Ukraine—and a brave few put their Christian faith into action and rescued the damned. Some went to their deaths alongside those they believed to be their neighbors in the sense of the parable. The terrible tragedy of Pius was his inability to speak clearly in defense of the Jews as the principal victims of the Nazis and his sincere belief that he had said all that he could.

Pius XII was in a unique position throughout the years of the Second World War. He was in a position to offer help and direct others to do the same. He was in a position to speak out unequivocally against the slaughter of European Jewry, Polish Catholics, and Orthodox Serbs, and direct others to do the same. He was in a position to exercise moral leadership through unequivocal and uncompromising direction to the nuncios and bishops across the Continent. More, Pius was *perceived* as having the ability to do or say something. Perpetrators, victims, rescuers, and bystanders shared this perception. The account of the *aktion* (action) in Rome in October 1943 demonstrated this. Many people, including some virulently anti-Christian Nazis, believed the pope would act. They were astounded that he refused to be used as a political pawn by either side, but held to his moral authority and moral autonomy, a decision that cost him a great deal of misunderstanding later. At the end of the war, Pius declared to the world that he had done all he could to the best of his ability.

Pius chose to get involved, *although not in the way many who appealed to him wanted him to be involved*. I believe the reasons for his involvement were tied up in the conundrum expressed by the lawyer: "Who is my neighbor?" Pacelli's answer was clear: all who sought help were neighbors. In that case, Pius XII's moral response to the Holocaust was one of reaching out, even if many of his efforts were without effect. Compassion expressed

in explicit action took priority over all else. Other issues could follow, but in all instances Christian moral teaching asserted the obligation to care for the immediate need first. Yet the nagging question remains: Why did he not speak clearly in defense of the Jews? The answer that emerges from careful reading of the historical record is simple. Jews would always be a “lesser victim” group to all others. Throughout the course of the war, Pius named almost every victim group except one—Jews. Centuries of Christian Judeophobia and antisemitism found their culmination, not in papal protest, but in a sad papal neglect. Communists were named more often, and point the historian toward the fear that refused to vanish; namely, the Pope’s dread of a communist sweep across what he still regarded as “Christian Europe.”

Why did Pius choose to act the way he did? The only way to find a satisfactory and plausible answer is to look into the man’s past. Many scholars barely mention Pacelli’s time prior to 1939. Yet it was his years as a Vatican diplomat, nuncio, and secretary of state that shaped and formed his vision of the world, the Church, and the Jews. This neglected part of the man’s life must be examined in order to make sense of the war years.

In this study, the main question is: “How do we understand the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust?” And from that central question comes others: What was the role of Catholic anti-Judaism and antisemitism in contributing to the *Shoah*? How did Eugenio Pacelli respond to the rise in antisemitism in Europe throughout the interwar years? What evidence is there for the accusation of “silence”? In the light of the evidence, what were the options available? If Pius was active in rescuing Jews, where has the myth of his inaction come from? A judgment has to be made. Historical evidence from a wide field of sources, along with recent documentary and archival access, allow us to make a more informed answer than twenty or even five years ago. It is no mean feat to study in order to judge a man who was a pope. But it would be more remiss and cowardly to shy from such a task because the pope could not be seen as a man.

Structure of the Book

This book is written in an historical framework with attention given to several major thematic issues that are integral to any understanding of Pius XII. [Chapter 1](#) looks at the background issues relevant to Pacelli and opens with some comments about some of the problems any historian will encounter when researching Pius XII. An overview of Christian anti-Judaism and antisemitism is essential in understanding the immediate antecedents of the Holocaust. [Chapter 2](#) is, of necessity, long. Without a clear appreciation of the centuries of Christian anti-Judaism and the power it held within Catholic culture until recent times, the tremendum that was the Holocaust will be diminished. This is followed in [chapter 3](#) by an

examination of late Tridentine Catholic ecclesiology in the nineteenth century, with a particular focus on Italy.

A biographical sketch of Pacelli follows in [chapter 4](#). In [chapters 5](#) through [7](#), I write about Pacelli's rise within the Vatican bureaucracies, the Munich/Berlin nunciature, the office of secretary of state, and his role in the Church's relationships with Nazism and fascism. These need to be reviewed in order to locate "footsteps" that help me understand the war years.

The heart of the book is [chapter 8](#), which concentrates on the pontificate of Pius XII between 1939 and 1943 and on the moral and ethical questions that surround the papal response to the Holocaust. It is not my intention to reexamine every aspect of Pacelli's response during this period, but I look at several instances where I believe the issues are perhaps clearer and where the historian can make equally clearer judgments. I have limited my study up to the *grande razzia* of 1943 because I believe Pius' actions and words are understandable and defensible up to that point. The pope's reaction and response to the Roman roundup was utterly inadequate in terms of his capacity to do and say something in defense of the Jews, incarcerated "beneath his very windows." Facing him was not a theoretical situation, but something so far off the scale that it demanded, cried out for, a word of response and action. Jews were being murdered for being Jews. Catholic canon law stated clearly: "The supreme law of the Church is the salvation of souls." Where Jewish souls less worthy than Christians? The specter of "lesser victims" hovers ominously.

In [chapter 9](#), I examine some questions surrounding the growth of the myths around Pius as well as his proposed beatification. This involves a treatment of the reality of the leadership—moral, ethical, and legal—he exercised during the Holocaust. At the heart of this chapter is the issue of the moral accountability of the pope as an active agent in the years of the *Shoah*.

The question of access to archives is fundamental in a study such as this. Documents and archive material give the researcher access to the written expression of a series of recorded verbal communications, but not the equally important nonverbal communications. Not all decisions are written. Not all decisions are directed toward acts of commission. We know from the Nazi bureaucracy that many decisions are spoken, or conveyed through body language such as shrugs, grimaces, glances, and signs of omission. We also know that decisions not to include items on formal agendas are decisions of import. While archives may well tell us what was agreed should be recorded, they cannot tell us what was not recorded, what was willfully omitted or hidden. In that sense, archives can only be half the story, if at all. A book that depended entirely on what the Vatican archives contained would produce a well-documented analysis of some aspects of the role of Pacelli the Nuncio, cardinal, and pope, but would be no closer to answering some of the pressing questions I examine here.

In *Pius XII and the Holocaust*, Sánchez observes that most of the documentary record about Pacelli is contained in published collections of the Vatican, and in the diplomatic papers of the various countries which had diplomatic ties with the Holy See. Other sources he mentions are the published recollections of Vatican curial officials and former ambassadors and ministers accredited to the Vatican.¹² Access to the recently opened archives in Rome has been very helpful. However, nothing has emerged or “discovered” that changes the overall direction of understanding Eugenio Pacelli. Nuances have been highlighted and some dark corners illuminated, but the “big” picture remains, in essence, the same.

So, within the limitations I have mentioned, this is my contribution to the debate on a foreign man in a foreign place, in a world foreign to my own.

CHAPTER ONE

Problems with Pacelli

As faithful, practicing Catholics, consecrated and lay, we urgently write to you concerning the cause of Pope Pius XII. We are educators who have conducted research and are currently carrying into effect more research on Catholicism under National Socialism and the Holocaust. The movement to press forward at this time the process of beatification of Pius XII greatly troubles us. Needless to say, the controversy over Pius XII's actions during the Second World War and the Holocaust is long-standing.

Letter to Pope Benedict XVI from Catholic historians
(February 16, 2010)

A Conundrum

Christopher Dawson, the English Catholic historian, wrote an article entitled “The Sword of the Spirit” in the January 1941 edition of the *Dublin Review*. He condemned neutrality as an untenable position in the (then) current war. The scale of death and destruction was beyond anything previously imagined. To remain neutral in the face of such evil was immoral. Dawson cited Pope Pius XII in support of his argument:

Nevertheless, there is already a general realization that social and political issues have become spiritual issues—that the Church cannot abstain from intervention without betraying its mission... therefore the Church must take up her prophetic office and bear witness to the Word even if it means the judgment of the nations and an open war with the powers of the world... the principle of such action has been stated perfectly clearly by the present Pope in his address to the Lithuanian Minister a year ago...¹

In October 1939, two days before the release of his first encyclical letter, Pius received the Lithuanian minister to the Holy See.² After Vladimir Girdvainis had presented his credentials, the pope “emphasized the

importance of defending Christianity against the attacks of its enemies in Europe.”³ And although Pius was referring to the specter of Bolshevism, Dawson adroitly commented that communism was by “no means the only representative of the spiritual evils of totalitarianism, although it avows its anti-religious and anti-Christian attitude more openly and directly than the totalitarian state in Germany has done.”⁴ What is significant is that this sentiment of principle is not some hidden secret Vatican document, but a public expression found in the London *Times* and the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* of the Vatican. I am unaware of any historian who cites these documents.

We have a conundrum, especially in the context of those who argue that the pope had to remain neutral for the sake of ensuring the safety of the Church and others throughout the war. Neutrality was, it has been argued, the best way to save lives and reduce risks to other lives. The conundrum lies in the bald fact that, in October 1939, Pacelli declared it the duty of the Church to resist evil and defend Christianity. In effect, the pope condemned a neutral, “fence-sitting” position. Since 1958, scholars and apologists have trawled over the life and work of Pius XII and, for the most part, have ended up in opposing trenches lobbing academic bombs at each other. It is my intention to revisit the evidence and attempt to make some breakthrough. It should be done, or else Pacelli will remain in an historical limbo, either sanctified or vilified, with not much in between.

There have been few problems within contemporary Catholicism that arouse such passions as the subject of Eugenio Pacelli, known to history as Pope Pius XII. The man who exercised the office of supreme pontiff during the years of the Second World War and the Holocaust has been the center of a storm since 1963. In that year Rolf Hochhuth’s play *The Deputy* (*Der Stellvertreter*) opened in Germany. His scathing summation of Pacelli opened the way for a reevaluation of the role of the man who had been widely credited with the saving of thousands of Jewish lives.

He was not a “criminal for reasons of state”; he was a fence-sitter, an over-ambitious careerist who, having attained his goal wasted his time on inconsequential trifles while the tormented world, as Bernard Wall writes, waited in vain for a word of spiritual leadership from him.⁵

The playwright’s scorn was condemned as outrageous by many and stirred supporters of the dead pope to write about Pacelli’s virtues. Hochhuth had done the unthinkable: he had effectively accused the pope of criminal negligence and moral culpability in the face of the Nazi destruction of European Jewry. Indeed, there grew rumors and hints of a Soviet-inspired “black propaganda” conspiracy designed to defame Pius and paint him as pro-German and pro-Nazi.⁶ The genie had escaped and there was no way it could be recaptured.

What had prompted such a radical rewriting of contemporary history? The generally accepted argument held Pius XII to be a veritable savior of the Jews of Europe. The comments of Rome's chief Rabbi, Elio Toaff, were indicative of the sentiments expressed by many Jewish leaders at the time of Pius' death. "Jews will always remember what the Catholic Church did for them by order of the Pope during the Second World War. When the war was raging, Pius XII spoke out very often to condemn the false race theory."⁷ Hadn't the pope personally ordered the convents and monasteries of Italy and Occupied Europe open to shelter Jews? Wasn't this the man who stood like a beacon in the night of the war years? Indeed, within the space of a few years, the cause for his beatification had opened. For many, a close examination of the man and the sources about the Vatican was too risky a venture. Shrouded in secrecy, as much imagined as real, the mysterious Vatican archives added luster to the "saintly" pontiff.

The position of the successor of the Prince of the Apostles held, and for many Catholic Christians still holds, a place of great veneration. During the final years of the reign of Pius XII, that veneration came alarmingly close to a personality cult. In his 1954 biography of Pius, Prince Constantine of Bavaria described the entrance of the pope at a private audience:

The silence which encompassed me in room after room became more and more concentrated, and intensified the sensation of being separated from the everyday life of Rome . . . Then through an opposite door, I saw him coming towards me, his white raiment standing out in sharp contrast to the red background—the Pope himself. In that moment . . . time stood still . . . the Pope's eyes seemed to hold the promise of absolution for all mankind.⁸

Other authors bordered on hagiography.⁹ Pius was above other mortals; criticism in Catholic circles was never contemplated. Popular affection for the papacy, coupled with the growing aura of mysticism surrounding this isolated figure, stopped any serious analysis of the pontificate. Here was the last absolute monarch—a man who held complete executive authority and power over the lives of hundreds of millions of believers. Outside of ecclesiastical arenas, Western politicians saw Pius as the greatest anticommunist crusader of the day. He could say what they could only often dream of saying; he was, after all, answerable only to God. Herein lay one of the first moral questions. If the pope could say what others could not, why did he not speak out clearly during the Holocaust? It would appear that even to think of asking probing questions of Pius was akin to blasphemy.

Within five years of his death, the critical study of the man began in academic circles. It coincided with the first major studies of the Holocaust. Questions were raised over the role of the pope and inconsistencies emerged between the received and popular histories and evidence discovered in archives, document centers, and libraries. For the majority of these historians, the pope was treated as a figure of secondary importance in the

course of the war, or as the central figure in the stage of Catholic history for the period 1939–1958. Most have reached conclusions that ask pointed and necessary questions about the wartime role of the pontiff. Few scholars, including Vatican historians, have researched the whole picture of the life of Eugenio Pacelli and, until recently, few have taken into account the formative years before his appointment as Nuncio to Munich. This does not mean that any “awkward” behaviors or attitudes can be explained by looking at a whole life portrait of the man, but insights can be gained through a fuller picture of the man and his times.

The focus on the war years remained central in the official Church replies to critics of Pius. However, growing academic unrest over the pope did have a discernible effect on the Vatican. Alarmed at the increasing negativity directed toward the Church’s role during the war, Rome felt it had to seize the initiative. In an unprecedented act in Vatican history, Paul VI ordered a team of Vatican-approved scholars—Pierre Blet, Robert Graham, Angelo Martini, and Burkhart Schnieder—to collect and edit all relevant documents pertaining to the Secretariat of State of the Holy See during the Second World War. The 12 volumes of *Actes et Documents du Saint-Siege relatifs à la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Acts and Documents of the Holy See relative to the Second World War) were published between 1965 and 1981 as a direct result of Hochhuth’s play *The Deputy* and the growth of academic and religious unrest over the role of Pius XII during the Holocaust. It is an impressive work and does much to lift “veils of secrecy” about what the Vatican and the pope did during the war years.

From the Vatican side, *Actes et Documents* held a picture of a very active Pius XII, doing all he could through the network of Vatican diplomats, nuncios, and legates to save lives—Jewish and non-Jewish. There is much to be gained from close reading of the volumes, something Pius’ defenders claim his critics do not do.¹⁰ However, this work does not and cannot address the question of the “silences,” nor does it help us get any closer to understanding the mind or heart of Pius. Documents written among heads of state rarely reveal the inner workings of a person’s conscience, but can provide the careful reader with clues about motives. The *Actes et Documents* are valuable alongside other sources—not as a stand-alone collection of texts.

The Post-Cornwell Years

The pattern that emerged over the years between 1958 and the publication of John Cornwell’s *Hitler’s Pope* in 1999 was an almost monofocus on the war years and the action or the perceived inaction of Pius during the Holocaust. Cornwell was the first writer to delve significantly into the pre-1939 years, within the setting of general biography. In so doing, he used material, much of it generally available, to help create a more complete picture of the pope. Cornwell’s work is disappointing because of its

many inaccuracies, selective use of sources, and claims that do not bear close scrutiny. However, he has rendered a service by insisting that Pacelli be reexamined thoroughly and be placed firmly within the context of his times.

There are thousands of articles on the relations between the Catholic Church and Nazi Germany. Many of them contain references to the work of Eugenio Pacelli—either as Nuncio between 1917 and 1929 or as secretary of state to Pius XI from 1930 to his election as pope in 1939. Since the 2003 and 2006 openings of the Vatican Secret Archives for the papacy of Pope Pius XI (1922–1939), a greater number of articles and books on Pacelli as Nuncio have appeared. Major works on Pacelli's nunciature lie within Stewart Stehlin's *Weimar and the Vatican 1919–1933*, Gerhard Besier's *The Holy See and Hitler's Germany*, and Hubert Wolf's *Pope and Devil*. Of great interest is *Germania e Santa Sede* by the Italian academic Emma Fattorini. Although her work only covers the period 1917–1924, she gives a valuable insight into Pacelli's relations with the powerbrokers of the Republic.

Two major joint projects went online in March 2010. Hubert Wolf from the University of Münster, Westphalia, with the German Research Foundation, the German Historical Institute in Rome (GHI), and the Vatican Secret Archives (ASV), initiated the online edition of Eugenio Pacelli's nunciature reports from 1917 to 1929. At the time of writing, the files for 1917 had been made available. Thomas Brechenmacher from Potsdam University, Berlin, in conjunction with the GHI, the Commission for Contemporary History in Bonn, and ASV, launched the first part of a critical edition of the nunciature reports of Cesare Orsenigo (1930–1939). A third project was initiated by the ASV in August 2010 with the publication of the first volume of Pacelli's notes taken during his audiences with Pius XI in 1930. The venture intends to publish the Cardinal's notes up to 1939.¹¹ These projects are welcome steps for scholars and students and have already done much to help clarify aspects of the Vatican's relationship with Germany.

What they demonstrate is what Sanchez and others have asserted over the years, namely, the published record contains the broad strokes of the Vatican's activities with regard to Germany, National Socialism, and the Jews. The archives have revealed considerable nuances and details, both of which are necessary for the historian to gain as complete a picture as possible. The recent scholarship gives no comfort to conspiracy theorists either—there are no “smoking guns.”

I believe that research focused on the formative years of Pacelli, seen from within the *worlds* in which he lived, will help answer some of the vexed questions about his “silence” during the Holocaust, as well as clarify elements of Pius' attitude toward Jews and Judaism.

I am also of the view that the best current works on the subject are Michael Phayer's *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust 1930–1965* (2000) and *Pius XII, the Holocaust and the Cold War* (2007). Phayer places Pacelli

within a broader context than any other writer. He argues that close examination of the postwar years (Pacelli was pope for 13 years after the war) reveals much about the *modus vivendi* of the man that helps make sense of the war years. Phayer does not make excuses for Pius' action or inaction. His assessment of the pope is highly critical. He believes Pius was a man trapped within a religious-diplomatic worldview of his own making. His refusal to "think outside the box" led him to make decisions that were based on politics and Church's self-interest over and above Christian and human compassion—damnable charges, but in my view excessively negative. Phayer points out that there were two genocidal experiences in the war prior to the Holocaust. Both Catholic Poles and Orthodox Serbs were murdered in thousands before the implementation of the systematic extermination of the Jews. And in both cases, Pius followed a political path that was "silent," despite the desperate entreaty of Catholic leaders in both Poland and Croatia. If he would not speak out in defense of his own and for other Christians, is it surprising that he would not speak out in defense of Jews? The charges are certainly damning.

The Challenges of Contexts

I see here the problem of a "neutral" head of state, who was also the most prominent religious figure in the world, expected to do the "right thing" by his coreligionists as well as governments. The problem lies in determining what the "right thing" was. Here I believe the historian is duty-bound to search meticulously from as many angles as possible. The Nazis demonized the pope as the agent of international Jewry; the Americans and British were continually frustrated because he would not condemn Nazi aggression; and the Russians accused him of being an agent of fascism and the Nazis. To understand the man, I must understand the global picture of his times, and above all other things, I must understand the Church, the organization to which Pius devoted his energy.

At the heart of any examination of the life of Eugenio Pacelli must be a study of the institution to which he gave his life from an early age. If the man was passionate about anything in his life, it was the Roman Church—and he gave it total obedience and loyalty. By temperament and training, Pacelli was austere and reclusive. He had been educated during the 1890s. Then, seminary education in Italy was experiencing something of a *rinascimento* (rebirth), caused by the Thomistic revival sponsored by Leo XIII.¹² On one level, the revival of Thomism pointed to a renewed intellectual rigor within Catholicism. At another, Thomism represented a return to a medieval interpretation of reality that viewed human life *sub specie aeternitatis* (under the aspect of eternity) and "so eluded historical questions."¹³

It was here that a fierce battle was to be fought—between those who believed reconciliation with the modern world was possible, on Catholic Christian terms, and those who believed no reconciliation was possible, or even desirable. Even Umberto Benigni, a respected Church historian (and later “heretic hunter”) was reported to have said: “Do you believe men are capable of any good in this world? History is one long and desperate spewing up, and the only thing for this humanity is the Inquisition.”¹⁴ Theology, both moral and pastoral, liturgy, canon law, and scripture were all taught from a fixed intellectual center that operated as though the only difference between the time of St. Thomas in the late thirteenth century and that of Leo XIII was the desperate state of the world.

Only the safe haven of the Barque of Peter gave assurance that amid “the world’s despair and turmoil one firm anchor holdeth fast.” By the end of the nineteenth century, the Petrine Office was vigorously promoted in Catholicism as the custodian of truth and lonely guardian of the “deposit of faith.” The person of the pope became as important, if not more so, as the office itself. Catholic pilgrims came to Rome to kiss the pope’s foot. He was the visible sign of unity and his isolation as the “Prisoner of the Vatican” enhanced his spiritual and moral authority in a world so darkly painted as evil and lost to the powers of liberalism, secularism, democracy, freemasonry, and socialism.

Mother Church was under attack from all sides: Christ’s Vicar was assailed and the faithful sought protection under the wise and abiding counsel of Rome. At the end, truth would triumph and the Church would be victorious over all the powers of the world:

Hers the Kingdom, hers the scepter, Fall ye nations at her feet;
Hers that truth whose fruit is freedom, Light her yoke, her burden
sweet.¹⁵

For Eugenio Pacelli, these words may have been somewhat romantic for his Spartan tastes, but the sentiment would have found a sure echo within him. “The Church is very properly called the ‘Mother of Christians’, because she gives to men the true life of the soul . . . teaches the doctrine of Christ . . . and is a guide and shepherd to the faithful.”¹⁶

Pacelli’s diplomatic role was primarily directed toward Catholics—not an unusual fact, but one that needs to be kept within context. The history of Catholic diplomacy between the wars and the role of papal diplomacy during the Second World War must be examined from the perspective of the total worldview of the Vatican and the Catholic world. The evidence points to a system that reflected all too well the secular governments with which it did business. The most disturbing feature was a proclivity toward self-preservation and centralization of power into the office of the pope. I am convinced that these areas, which Besier, Phayer, and Wolf discuss at length, are difficult for Pacelli’s more strident defenders.

John Paul II and “We Remember”

In 1998, Pope John Paul II authorized the publication of *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, the first Vatican statement to address the Holocaust by name. The pope’s intention was to “help to heal the wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices.”¹⁷ No other pope in Catholic history has done as much as John Paul to build bridges between Catholicism and Judaism. His visit to Auschwitz in 1979 was as much an act of homage to the Jews who died there as it was a commemoration of the Christians who also perished. In 1986, he made a very public visit to the Rome Synagogue. He was the first pope ever to visit the oldest *schule* (synagogue) in western Europe, describing the Jews as the “beloved elder brothers” of Christians. What drove the Polish-born pontiff to order *We Remember* came directly from his own wartime experiences of Nazism and the Final Solution. The document did not resolve the questions surrounding Pius XII. In fact, the questions appeared to have been made more complex.

The chief points of contention lay in the distinction made between Christian anti-Judaism and antisemitism, and the comments on the wartime role of Pius XII. While the document recognized the failure of individual Christians, it did not acknowledge or suggest a failure on the part of the teaching authority of the Church. “Despite the Christian preaching of love for all, even for one’s enemies, the prevailing mentality down the centuries penalized minorities and those who were in any way ‘different’.”¹⁸ The blame for antisemitism was pushed away from the Magisterium. In fact, the language of this part of the document was dangerously close to echoing the bald and historically unsupportable generalized claim made by one of Pacelli’s earlier biographers: “The Church has always come to the defense of the Jews in the past when they were persecuted.”¹⁹

Of greater concern was the assertion that followed the distinction made above. Not only were anti-Judaism and antisemitism two different ideologies, but the latter did not draw from the former. “The Shoah was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its antisemitism had its roots outside Christianity and, in pursuing its aims, it did not hesitate to oppose the Church and persecute her members also.”²⁰ On this point, there has been loud and vigorous argument.²¹ It is a statement that does not bear the weight of historical evidence and weakens the tenor of the whole document. In fact, this statement is what I call a type of “Catholic denialism,” an unwillingness to “own” the truth about the Church’s role during the Holocaust. The historical data proves beyond reasonable doubt that such a distinction is as impossible as it is false. Much of Nazism grew in the fertile soil of traditional Christian antisemitism and anti-Judaism, a point affirmed by Cardinal Kaspar in May 2010.²²

On the wartime activity of Pius XII, the document was brief: it made only passing mention of rescue activities ascribed to him. It was not an explanation of the “silence,” nor was it a reflection that more might have been done both before and during the war. While the sincerity of John

Paul was genuine, historians have to wonder how prepared he was to tackle the difficult questions over anti-Judaism and antisemitism from within the Catholic Church.

Partly out of response to the criticism launched by *We Remember*, in late 1999, the Vatican asked the International Catholic Jewish Historical Commission (ICJHC) to reexamine the *Actes et Documents*. The new commission was made up equally of Catholic and Jewish historians.²³ In October 2000, the commission presented a preliminary report. The commission raised forty-seven questions concerning Pius, drawn from a study of *Actes et Documents*. Cardinal Walter Kasper, secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, commented in June 2001 that the commission had not achieved what it set out to do, and that a second attempt needed to be made. A month later, the commission suspended its work indefinitely. To this day, the report remains unanswered. Rather than bring an air of academic harmony over Pius, the exact opposite happened.

After *We Remember*, John Paul II issued another statement in the form of an apology from the institution of the Catholic Church to all Catholics and all peoples of the world. Proclaimed on the first Sunday of Lent 2000, the traditional penitential season before Easter, the pope asked forgiveness “for the sins and faults committed or condoned by the Church in the past 2000 years.”²⁴ Among the petitions asking God’s mercy was a prayer acknowledging Christian anti-Judaism and the sins against the Jews across the centuries. This same prayer was placed by the pope in the Western Wall in Jerusalem during his visit to Israel.²⁵ Shortly after the visit to the Wall, John Paul made an historic visit to Yad Vashem. There he again reasserted that antisemitism was a sin and an affront to the dignity of Jews. Despite mixed reception from Jewish and some Christian groups, his action was generally acknowledged as a major step forward in Christian–Jewish relations. The words of Ehud Barak, then Israeli prime minister, attempted to capture the significance of the pope’s visit and all that it symbolized: “Here, right now, time itself has come to a standstill. This very moment holds within it 2000 years of history.”²⁶ The stumbling block that haunted John Paul at every turn was Pius XII. The situation had not changed much when Benedict XVI visited Israel in 2009.

Allocutio: June 2, 1945

At the first consistory held after the war on June 2, 1945, Pius XII addressed the assembled cardinals. Speaking of his role during the war, the pope said in his customary style:

Continuing the work of Our Predecessor, We never ceased throughout the war, especially in Our Messages, to constantly set forth the demands and eternal laws of humanity and the Christian faith, to

refute the ruinous and relentless demands of National Socialist doctrine, which use refined scientific methods in order to torture or liquidate people who were often innocent. . . . And Our solicitude was not without effect. We know in fact, that Our messages, especially that of Christmas 1942 despite all the prohibitions and obstacles, were studied in Diocesan Clergy conferences in Germany and then taught and explained to the Catholic people. . . .²⁷

Pius evidently believed that his actions throughout the war had been sufficient to alert the world to the evils of Nazism and encourage individuals to act in defense of the persecuted. He further believed that his work had been appreciated even by those “in the belly of the beast.” He referred to the 1942 Christmas message that contained the sum total of his “condemnation” of the exterminatory policies of the Nazis. The paucity of words—seven out of 7,000—has been the source of much commentary, usually negative. It points, yet again, to the need for context. Only then can the historian judge whether the Allocution reflects a seriously flawed appreciation of the impact of this particular statement.²⁸

The pope’s statement illustrated the ongoing unwillingness to speak openly and plainly about the enormity of human loss.²⁹ It was couched in Catholic terms: the victims named were primarily Catholics. The people emerging from the concentration camps were classed as *detenuti politici* (political prisoners) and crowds of people *il cui unico delitto era stato la fedeltà a Cristo e alla fede dei Padri* (whose only crime was their faith in Christ and fidelity to the faith of their Fathers).³⁰ There was no mention of Jews or any other group who suffered under the Nazis.

To understand Eugenio Pacelli in the context of his time, we must place the entire discourse firmly within a foundation study of Christian anti-Judaism and its intrinsically related mutation, antisemitism. The roots of the Holocaust lay deep in the soft underbelly of Christian culture, a point firmly denied in *We Remember*. Auschwitz would not have been possible without the centuries of Christian cultural antithesis toward Judaism. The pseudoscience of racism grew out of the fractured Christian commonwealth. And while “scientific” biological racism openly repudiated revealed religion in its theory, many of its practitioners remained within the *household of the faith*, apparently experiencing little difficulty in reconciling love of the Jewish Jesus with loathing of Jews.

The Shortcomings of Diplomacy

Further, the relationship between the Vatican and the sociopolitical movement of modernism must be explored again. There also needs to be an appreciation of the Catholic worldview, which was radically altered after the 1917 Russian Revolution. During the 1914–1918 World War, three Portuguese shepherd children claimed to have seen visions of a “beautiful

lady” who told them of God’s sorrow at the sinfulness of the world. Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, the “beautiful lady” prophesied terrible evils emerging from Russia, of great trials for the Holy Father and the bishops, and the loss of millions of souls in the torments of Hell. Relief from war and disaster would only come from a return to orthodox religious practice and the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Rome remained cautious in its assessment of the visions but regarded them as worthy of *private* devotion.³¹ The Fatima visions lent support to the growing centralization of the Church and to the popular image of the pope as the beleaguered Vicar of Christ.

From the corridors of the Vatican between 1917 and the mid-1920s, there were more than a few attempts to reach some rapprochement with the Bolshevik regime in Russia. Pius XI repeatedly asked Lenin for permission to send priests into Russia to minister Latin and Eastern rite Catholics. Lenin just repeatedly denied the requests and quickly included Catholics among the religious believers subjected to state-sponsored persecution.³² Both Pius XI and Pius XII had seen Bolshevik activities. Pacelli was in Munich in 1919 during the short-lived Bavarian Soviet. What he witnessed there left him with an indelible hatred and fear of communism. The politics of the Right may well have been reprehensible in many respects, but the politics of the Left were diabolical. Achille Ratti was Nuncio to Poland during the siege of Warsaw in the summer of 1920. He stayed at his post while most of the diplomatic corps left the capital.³³ There is little doubt that Ratti attributed the lifting of the siege and the rout of the Red Army to divine intervention. Like Pacelli, Ratti developed a lifelong distrust of atheistic communism that evolved into veritable paranoia in the later life of both men—and, in the case of Pacelli, rendered him insensible, for the only time, to diplomacy.

The test of Pius XII’s vision of the Church came during the war years. He had shown himself to be an able and highly skilled diplomat who steered the Church through several decades of difficult territory as Nuncio in Germany and then as secretary of state. An ever-growing gulf yawned between the theology of the Church and the practical application of political realities. For Pacelli, the interests of the Church could never be compromised: that could be construed as a betrayal of his office and a surrender to the enemies of God and religion.

Nimble diplomacy, however, was no match for the brutalities of the Nazi regime and the implementation of the New Order across Europe. I believe Pius XII was confounded by the sheer scale of Hitler’s capacity for evil and was often wracked with such mental anguish, crying to heaven for answers, that he appeared unable to make clear decisions. To use the cliché, he had helped construct a system where the “buck stopped there”—with him. Faced with a bloodletting unwitnessed in human history, many Catholics and others called for a new *modus vivendi*. It was the Holocaust that revealed the terrible weakness within the Hierarchy of the Roman Church. The horrors of the extermination of the Jews

were terrible, but the Nazi regime would fall. An even greater horror, if such irksome comparisons can be used, was that Bolshevism would spread across Christian Europe. But rather than address the concerns he had outlined in his first encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*, Pius tried to see out the storm by relying on the old methods—methods daily shown to be utterly inadequate in the *public* domain.³⁴

Of all the events that took place between 1939 and the end of the war, it was the Rome *aktion* of October 1943 that demonstrates most clearly the dreadful predicament of Pius XII and the Holocaust. Owen Chadwick's 1977 essay *Weizsäcker, the Vatican and the Jews of Rome*, Robert Katz's *Fatal Silence*, and Susan Zuccotti's *Under His Very Windows* detail the tragedy that befell Roman Jewry. After Italy's capitulation, the familiar pattern of extortion, exclusion, and evacuation and transport all happened virtually under Pius' window. There is no way he could not have known what was happening. In fact, there is ample evidence to show that he knew exactly what was happening. There is also good amount of evidence that points to the Pope being actively aware of, and actively involved in, encouraging and supporting rescue.³⁵ At the end of the war, 85 percent of Italian Jews were alive.

His attempts to act in defense of the Jews of his own city was a small-scale picture of his attempts to act in defense of the suffering Jews and others of Europe. The pope's defenders claim that had he spoken out more precisely than he did, he would have caused greater suffering to the Jews and to Catholics. Decades of selective use of sources and historical self-willed amnesia supported the myth that Pius did nothing at all. Pacelli's defenders weaken the pope's actions by making next to no mention of ecclesiastical protests made by the Lutheran bishops of Denmark and Norway. Nor do they mention the handful of French Catholic bishops who preached publicly against anti-Jewish actions. In the same way, they gloss over the atrocities supported by Catholic regimes in Croatia and Slovakia.³⁶ The pope's critics retort by saying that the fate of the Jews of Europe was more than well known by October 1943—transported Jews never returned. As for worse treatment of Catholics, Pius knew from the reports of German bishops that there were few German Catholics prepared to die for their faith, let alone stand up and die for the Jews.³⁷ Catholics in the rest of Occupied Europe gave no indication of a willingness to die for the faith. The majority of Europe's Jews could not rely on Europe's Catholics for rescue or help, and Pius knew this and suffered because of it. But was this sufficient reason for him to refrain from direct comment on the greatest killing in human history? The answer, as far as I can judge, is "no."

The Church Above All

The truth is stark. Pius did not speak out because most probably, and in all sincerity, he felt he had done all he could do. The reality of the man gives

us a picture of someone who found it difficult, though not impossible, to empathize with the sufferings of others. Intellectually, he sympathized with those who suffered, recognizing that they were not the cause of their predicament and thus were in a *genuine* or *licet* distress. Emotionally, he sympathized with fellow Catholics maltreated for their faith—a faith he shared along with a worldview in common. But on an emotional level with Jews, and others such as communist partisans, Gypsies, German gay men, and Jehovah’s Witnesses, I believe he felt distressed (sometimes to the point of tears) but he felt compelled to remain publicly neutral and discrete—not because he did not care about them, but because they could not be allowed to distract him and the official Church from the strategies of Catholic preservation, which included supporting the rescue of Jews, and international politics. He was a tragic man within a tragic system. He saw and ministered to those who fitted into the vertically structured Catholic world of late Tridentine ecclesiology. Did this excuse him from the Christian moral duty to help his Jewish neighbor? The answer, again, must be “no.”

Pacelli’s world was seen through the matrix of belief that held that “nobody outside of the Catholic Church can be saved.”³⁸ Through family, seminary, and life in the Vatican, he was surrounded by the living out of a theology that taught him that the truth of Catholicism was self-evident. Denial of that truth was a denial of reason and rationality. “Whoever through his own fault remains outside the Church will not be saved.”³⁹ Binding the Church together in its visible unity was the office of the pope entrusted with a sacred duty to teach and preserve the faith against all enemies of God. “The Church would fail if it were not for its head, who is the centre of its unity . . . the enemies of the Church direct their attacks against its Head in the hope that deprived of his guidance it may be shipwrecked.”⁴⁰ Similarly, the Church claimed as her own all who lived a good life, whether formally initiated into the Church or not, and in any time or place. To this number were included “Abraham and Elias among the Jews.”⁴¹ Pacelli, like nearly all late Tridentine Catholics, was incapable of seeing beyond that until the horrors of the killing processes became known.

Jews were outside Pacelli’s vision of the Church. They had a place in the Christian dispensation, but a marginal one that hovered between contempt and conversion. When faced with the flesh-and-blood reality of the Holocaust, the academic Pius XII was forced to make choices. Until the escalation of anti-Jewish measures throughout Germany and Austria after 1938, Pacelli had been involved in a series of initiatives to help Jews leave Europe, focused naturally enough on converted Jews. This was not a case of putting the self-preservation of the institutional Church before the lives of those who had been traditionally depicted as the eternal enemies of Christ, but a pragmatic set of actions dictated by the realities and limits of refugee work. After 1938, he showed a significant *volte face*. Jews in danger, baptized or not, needed the help of Catholics—it was a moral

imperative, but always a muted one.⁴² Hovering alongside the massive destabilization caused by Hitler's antisemitism was the greater long-term fear of communism.

The Vatican had decided as early as 1924 that Soviet Russia posed the greatest threat to Christianity. All other regimes were open to at least some form of negotiation with Rome. Atheist Russia had made it clear there would be no dialogue. Rome's highly qualified toleration of one evil, Nazism, to fight Bolshevism was for the sake of the Catholic Church in Germany. Pacelli's decisions as pope, made in order to keep the Catholic Church as intact as possible within Germany and Occupied Europe until liberation by an allied coalition, would come at a price: Rome would not do or say anything that would create a crisis of conscience for German Catholics, many of whom were active in their support of the Reich and the war, and, at least, passive toward the elimination of the Jews. I believe that Pius had hoped that the Western Allies would sweep eastward before the Eastern Ally swept too far west, a thesis supported by Peter Kent in *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*.

It is this deliberate ignorance of the complex network of multiple contexts—military objectives, Vatican power politics of whatever hue, the legacy of centuries of anti-Judaism and Christian antisemitism, the battle against modernity, and the all-too comfortable alliances with shades of fascism—that leave Pius XII's defenders without credibility. What this points to is an urgent need for truthfulness and a willingness to “own” the truth, unpalatable as it may be. And only then can the pope be placed within the context of the official church as a leader who managed to overcome the inertia of the Catholic system and move to act in an attempt to save lives—Christian and Jewish. Only then can genuine reconciliation between Judaism and Catholicism continue fruitfully.

I have deliberately conducted the above discussion in this way in order to stress the point that I believe is studiously ignored by both Pacelli's fiercest critics and most determined defenders, namely that the historical record is closed or final. Quite the contrary. Every point named above from the Allocution of June 1945 has been the subject of intense examination and reexamination for more than half a century through a host of political and social matrices. The examination will continue long after the war year archives are opened in 2014. No credible scholar would suggest that every piece of data has been located, analyzed, and recorded. The study of Pope Pius XII has been difficult for all the reasons outlined above, as well as others that will be explored through this book.

CHAPTER TWO

Contempt as “Virtue”

*My people, my people, what have I done to you?
Or in what have I offended you? Answer me! . . .
I led you out of Egypt, but you led me to Pilate’s court . . .
I gave you a royal scepter, but you gave me a crown of thorns . . .*

From *The Reproaches*, Roman Liturgy of Good Friday

The Origins of Christian anti-Judaism

Eugenio Pacelli was a student of both church history and canon law. By training, he was a man who by learning had acquired an appreciation of European religious thought and practice. It is inconceivable that he was not familiar with the long history of Jewish–Christian interaction from the Gospels, the Fathers, Aquinas, and even Luther. To stand against the weight of centuries of anti-Judaism and theologies of contempt and supersessionism was never required during his formative years. His priestly studies were undertaken at a time when the Church was still reeling from the aftershocks of the French Revolution and the perceived onslaught of secularism—both manifestations of the power of liberals, Freemasons, socialists, and Jews. Catholic teaching regarding the Jews remained consistent for fifteen centuries from Augustine. The commentaries of Aquinas and others served only to reinforce points and general practicalities. Pacelli would have had no cause to question what for him would have been an immutable tenet of Catholic theology and self-understanding.

The End of Perfidy

During the solemn Liturgy of Good Friday, Catholics kneel and pray for the Jews. Until 1958, the petition was styled *Pro Conversione Iudaeorum* (for the conversion of the Jews). The prayer asked believers to pray *pro perfidis Iudaeis*—for the faithless Jews—that God would turn their hearts to accept

and believe in Jesus. The celebrant concluded with a prayer that reminded the people that God's mercy toward this people was not revoked despite their blindness and refusal to believe. Catholics who had never met Jews were shaped in an unavoidable anti-Jewish mindset. And since it was in the liturgy that most Catholics heard of Jews, the effect of centuries of effective subliminal antisemitism cannot be discounted.

Whoever these people were, they were worthy of suspicion because of their part in the death of Jesus. For this and similar reasons, Pope John XXIII ordered the phrase *Pro perfidis Iudaeis* (for the unbelieving/blind Jews) deleted before use on Good Friday, March 27, 1959.¹ Following the reforms of Vatican II, the Good Friday liturgy was further revised and the petition was completely rewritten. The new text speaks of the Jews as the first to hear God's Word and remain faithful to the Covenant. The tense of the statement is present—a small and largely unnoticed fact, but a recognition and validation of Judaism as a faith in its own right—the first such validation in Catholic history. The promises made to “Abraham and his descendants” are not revoked. Concluding, the celebrant asks God to “listen to your Church as we pray for the people you first made your own” that they may “arrive at the fullness of redemption.”²

Pope John's reforms marked a watershed in Christian–Jewish relations. Rapprochement between church and synagogue went further during the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) with the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* on October 28, 1965. After nearly two millennia, the Church formally renounced the charge of deicide against the Jewish people.³ The action constituted the first major reform of a teaching of the official Church—the Magisterium—in Catholic history. It was nothing short of revolutionary. Reaching this point became possible after the cataclysmic events of the Holocaust along with the gradual developments in Catholic biblical studies, the liturgical renewal movement and changes in systematic theology.⁴ In order to appreciate just how significant was this turnaround in Catholic thinking, it is essential to review the development of Christian anti-Judaism from the Apostolic Age through to the Reformation. This development informed the theological thinking of the Catholic Church for centuries and was part of the worldview of Pius XII, something we need for an understanding of the man's behavior.

Pacelli was a theologian who lived within the theological and religious world of Roman Catholicism. He was informed by a long tradition and school of thought that believed Jews to be the inferiors of Christians. While Pope Pius XII was not an antisemite or biopolitical racist, he upheld and maintained a religious anti-Judaism that placed the ancient theology of “supersessionism”—that the Christian dispensation superseded the Jewish one and so rendered it invalid—firmly on the shoulders of flesh-and-blood Jews living in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most Catholics did not and, more importantly, could not make a distinction between an anti-Jewish theology and the lived reality

of Jewish men, women, and children who were the objects of religious suspicion. The cry of the crowd before Pilate, “Let his blood be on us and on our children” (Mat 27.25), still rang loud centuries after it was penned. All Jews shared the responsibility for the death of Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul of Tarsus

Christianity began as a group of Jews who were convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-awaited Messiah. Claiming that he had been raised to life after the humiliation of the crucifixion, Jesus’s followers made no attempt to break away from contemporary first-century Judaism.⁵ Indeed, the internal evidence of the Gospels and Letters show that the early Christians saw themselves as the fulfillment of Judaism (Mat 5.17–20; Rom 3.31).

Emerging Christian self-identity was an evolution that took at least 400 years from the time of Jesus to the era of the great ecumenical councils. This process, reflected in the diverse texts of the four gospels and the letters, took several generations. Crucial in these years was the resolution of how the followers of Jesus related to the parent faith, and especially how the new community understood itself as distinct from Judaism.⁶

For the early Jewish-Christians, the religious, ethical, moral, and liturgical life of Israel, *Halakah*, posed no problems. Jesus and his disciples were observant Jews. Following the example of Jesus, the early believers continued the practice of Judaism (Acts 2.46; 3.1).

It was Paul of Tarsus, the most energetic of the apostles, who made the move away from the synagogue. His conversion from being a devout Pharisaic Jew and an active persecutor of the early Christian community to a committed follower of Jesus became the prototype of Christian discipleship. Paul’s conversion experience had convinced him of the inadequacy of *Halakah* and Torah as vehicles of salvation. The death and resurrection of Jesus not only overshadowed the Law, but rendered the Law superfluous. Paul’s conflict with Judaism stemmed from his unwavering assertion of salvation and justification through faith without the necessity of observing the “works” of the Law. Believing in a universal interpretation of the message of Jesus, Paul took the Gospel to the Gentiles. He was adamant that Gentiles who accepted baptism should not have to observe the Mosaic Law. Peter and James, who remained with the Judean community, felt that all believers were meant to observe at least some parts of the Torah. The conflict reached its climax in the so-called Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). Here, according to the author of Acts, the apostles argued their positions until a resolution was reached. Gentiles who accepted baptism were not required to undergo circumcision, nor required to observe the dietary laws. The first significant break with Judaism had been made. Paul’s mission to the Gentiles was confirmed and the growth of the Church in the West assured.

There is a sense of urgency in Paul's writings. It was commonly believed that Jesus would return soon to bring to completion the work of human salvation. This return was known as the *Parousia* ("the appearance") and Paul exhorted believers to be ready (1 Thess 5.1–8; 2 Thess 2). The letters to the Thessalonians were written by Paul circa 50–51 CE and are the earliest extant Christian texts. The *Parousia* forms a major theme in both letters. Persecution is to be expected as the faithful await the return of Jesus, but for those who inflicted the persecution, a dreadful wrath waited (1 Thess 2.14–16).⁷

Several years later, around 57–58 CE, Paul wrote the letter to the Romans, his most mature theological work. Paul's thinking on Israel demonstrated a serious attempt on the part of the Christian apostle, who still identified himself as a Jew, to reconcile the dilemma that confronted him. Contemporary Christian scripture study has done much to illuminate Paul's angst, and by researching the Jewish Paul and his connections with the parent faith, has helped historians gain a new perspective. It is a Christian perspective, but one that does explain the seeming contradictions in the Jewish–Christian life of Paul. For the most part, Paul's interpreters did not until recently see any value in examining the apostle's much proclaimed affection for Judaism.

"Racked with pain,"⁸ while reflecting on the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, Paul wrote that the long history of Israel's rejection of the prophets is continued in her rejection of the Christ. It is only by appreciating Paul's lifetime of fidelity to the Torah before his conversion that we can understand his inner anguish at the rejection of Christ by his own people. His belief that Jesus was the Messiah meant that a new epoch in world history had opened. The "world as we know it is passing away," so this was the "acceptable time, now is the day of salvation" (1 Cor 7.31; 2 Cor 6.2) Jesus would return to judge the world, but already the fruits of the *Parousia* were available to those with faith (Rom 2.16; 8.23). The old Law of Israel had condemned Jesus in a way that exposed him to the curse declared in Deuteronomy 21.23, but God had not cursed him. On the contrary, God raised Jesus from death, thereby ratifying his messianic claims.

Searching the Hebrew Bible for a way of explaining Israel's rejection of Christ, Paul used the techniques of *midrash*⁹ to show that Abraham was declared righteous by God because of his faith, thus prefiguring those who had come to believe in Jesus. Continuing in this fashion, Paul redefined the concept of the Israelite. Mere physical origins do not determine status as the children of Abraham. In the story of Jacob and Esau, God acted with complete freedom, loving one and discarding the other. In the divine plan, the Gentiles have become children of God alongside the faithful remnant of Israel (Rom 9.6–7; 25–26). Therefore Esau, the first-born of Isaac, and the figure of the Jewish people, was supplanted by Jacob, the second child and figure of the Christian Church, the New Israel.

All of this was for the benefit of the Gentiles, who were saved through Israel’s fall. At last, Israel will be saved; but for the present, “in respect to the gospel, the Jews are the enemies of God for your sake; in respect to the election, they are beloved by him because of the patriarchs. God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable” (Rom 11.28–29). Even though the Jews are rejected, it is not a final cutting off. The Jews, in other words, will be saved in exactly the same way as Paul was. Salvation was always at hand through conversion to the Christian Gospel. Paul believed that Judaism was fulfilled, made complete, and perfected through conversion to Christ. Paul’s hope lay in the general expectation of the imminent return of Christ in the *Parousia* that would precipitate Israel’s conversion.

The Loss of Historical Memory

Polemic quickly replaced dialogue between the Jewish followers of Jesus and the early non-Jewish Christians. The fact of Jesus’s Jewishness was never denied but was more and more interpreted and recast as the vehicle through which God had proclaimed the “Good News” of salvation. Paul’s teaching on justification through faith rests on the premise that although Jesus was born into Israel, the proclamation of salvation rests on belief in Christ, something beyond the observance of the Law. The purpose of the Law has been fulfilled in Jesus, so “there does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or freeman, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3.28).

From this point in the formation of the Christian New Testament, the role of Jesus the Jew was increasingly covered over with Jesus the divinely revealed Christ who offered salvation to all, but who stood against those who would not believe. This culminated in the gospels of Matthew and John, where the Jews were clearly portrayed as an entire people in opposition to Jesus, not just named individuals or groups within Judaism. Matthew was written between the years 85 and 90 CE and John toward the end of the century, probably in the late 90s CE. Both texts were composed after the fall of Jerusalem, and throughout there are references both to the fundamental themes that form Christian anti-Judaism and later antisemitism.

The most famous anti-Judaic passage in Matthew came at the trial of Jesus, where Pilate dissociated himself from Jesus’s impending death. Matthew placed the responsibility for the death of Jesus onto the Jerusalem Temple establishment, a fact that Pilate realized. Indeed, Pilate believed the motive of the high priest to be jealousy and the removal of an intruder. In order to dissociate himself from the situation, Pilate washed his hands and said to the people (not only the religious powerbrokers), “I am innocent of the blood of this just man. The responsibility is yours.” In dramatic form, “the whole people” joined in shouting: “Let his blood be on us and our children” (Matthew 27.24–5).¹⁰ Scholars argue that the passage reflected the growing hostility among the nascent Christian community and the

equal hostility shown toward the *minim* or heretics by the synagogues.¹¹ Nonetheless, the passage quickly assumed a purpose that Matthew most likely did not intend. Here was the proof text that the Jews as a collective entity had willed the death of the Messiah. The price for such a crime finds echoes in another Matthean passage where Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple and lamented the failure of Jerusalem to recognize God's salvation (Matt 23.37–24.2).

It is in the gospel of John that we find the most vitriolic anti-Jewish statements in the New Testament. Recent Christian Scripture scholarship has moved more and more to placing John within a first-century Jewish context. Historically, John appears the most accurate of all the gospels and while this makes the interpretation of Jesus as an historical figure somewhat easier, it must be remembered that the gospel is primarily a theological statement, not a biography. Fredriksen argues that centuries of Christian polemic and hindsight interpretations have obscured the meaning of passages that have traditionally been cited as proof texts of the blindness of the Jews. This, in turn, has led to the creation of models of Jesus that have suited political and theological purposes of particular times and places without reference to the intended meaning of the gospel.¹² That said, John's gospel presents a picture of the Jews that is neither positive nor endearing.

In John "we no longer find Jesus' opponents named 'Pharisees', 'priests', 'Sadducees', 'Herodians', or 'people', but simply as 'Jews', so that this most influential of the Gospels—known as 'the Gospel of the Church' because of its total embodiment of emphases important in later Christianity—has the most powerful antisemitic impact of all."¹³

"The Jews" in John's gospel were seen to reject Jesus and his message so that every Jew, regardless of position, status or belief, would feel the effects of this. Baptism was the only remedy. This is perhaps the most vivid example of what Fredriksen calls "historical anachronism." Removed from the events of the gospel by centuries and cultures, the Christian in Antioch in the time of Chrysostom read John with no effective understanding of the history of the first century as experienced by the Johannine community. The same is true for Christians in Rome in 500, in the Rhine Valley in 1000, in Moscow in 1500, and in Sydney in 2000. The events recounted by John were accepted as literal and true. The Jews were not an attractive group.

Uncritical acceptance of the Johannine corpus has too often been used as justification for violence against Jews. John described "the Jews" as those who did not receive Jesus when he came among them. They doubted Jesus's word and actions. They were Teachers of the Law who did not understand the spiritual realities contained within the Torah. They were legalistic pedants, blind and jealous because of Jesus's work as well as religious bullies who became potential and actual murderers of Jesus.¹⁴

Of all the descriptions, the accusation from John 8 that "the Jews" are the children of the devil was the most venomous. This made possible their

murder of the Son of God, and has held great power in Christian religious imagination since ancient times.

John 8 is a series of passages where Jesus is teaching in Jerusalem during the festival of *Sukkot* (festival of booths). At several points, “the Jews” interrupted and criticized Jesus. At verse 31, Jesus declared: “If you live according to my teaching you are truly my disciples; then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” In reply, “the Jews” answered that Abraham was their father and they had never been the slaves of anyone. Jesus expanded his original statement by saying that the freedom he spoke of was freedom from sin. And if “the Jews” understood this, they would not be trying to kill him. Therefore “the Jews” were acting not like sons of Abraham but sons of the devil (John 8.44, 47).

Those who heard Jesus’s word, and believed, were the true children of God. Through their communion with God, they would overcome the hatred of the world and come to the fullness of the truth. It becomes clear that “the Jews” are not among the true children of God. The implication of this association with the devil created the context for marking the Jews as a pariah people, the earthly representatives of “evil supernatural powers earlier held responsible for the death of Jesus.”¹⁵

This assertion became more powerful after it was incorporated into the liturgy of the Catholic Church. Throughout the last weeks of the penitential season of Lent, the gospel readings focused on the escalating tension between Jesus and “the Jews.” As Jesus’s passion drew near, the tension reached a breaking point when Judas agreed to betray Christ for 30 pieces of silver. This combination of anti-Jewish imagery and the Christian theology of the redemptive death of Jesus were thoroughly entrenched in Catholic theology when the young Pacelli began his seminary studies some eighteen centuries later.

Early Christianity

What remains incontrovertible is that by the end of the first century of the common era, there was a distinctly new religious group emerging from Judaism. It was a tiny minority that developed in a myriad of directions throughout the first centuries of its life. Whoever the Christians were discovering themselves to be, they were not going to observe the entirety of the Law, while at the same time they were not abandoning what they saw as their patrimony. What had been the blessings given by God to Israel were now transferred to the New Israel, the Church. For its part, the Old Israel was seen as rejected by God. The destruction of the Temple and the sack of Jerusalem in 70 CE fast became the proof of Jesus’s warning and the wrath of God on an unbelieving people. At the same time, many Christians felt an attraction to Judaism precisely because of the antiquity of the religion, the Hebrew Bible, and the irrefutable fact of Jesus’s own Jewishness. This muddle of contradictions was to characterize

Christian pro- and anti-Jewish dialogue and diatribe for the best part of a millennium.

With the development of a specifically Christian corpus of sacred texts, the Hebrew Bible was usually used as a source book of proof texts to validate the claims made about Jesus. Christians quickly moved into a tradition of exegesis that applied Christocentric interpretations to the Hebrew Bible. This consisted of a general accusation that the Jews had misunderstood the scriptures—even to the point where Justin Martyr (c. 100–167) makes the bold assertion that the scriptures no longer belong to the Jews, who have neither understood nor obeyed them.¹⁶ Langmuir summarizes the essence of the classic Christian “hijack” argument of the Hebrew Bible: “That Jews understood only the literal meaning of their Scripture, not its spiritual meaning. . . . Since nothing in revelation could be absurd, Christians could argue that the literal-minded Jews had misunderstood the passage, that it could only be understood spiritually or metaphorically, and that, when so understood, it supported Christian beliefs.”¹⁷

Pius XII continued this tradition in his September 1943 encyclical, *Divino afflante spiritu*. All that was good in the Hebrew Bible was set forth for the benefit of Christians. The Old Testament had no inherent value of its own. “For what was said and done in the Old Testament was ordained and disposed by God with such consummate wisdom, that things past prefigured in a spiritual way those that were to come under the new dispensation of grace.”¹⁸ The argument remained unchanged until Vatican II promulgated *Dei Verbum* (the word of God), which encouraged Catholics to turn to the scriptures as the *living* and organic Word of God, valid and authentic in both testaments for Jews and Christians.

In September 1943, the Jews of Rome were about to be subjected to the full force of Nazi persecution. It is further evidence of the otherworldly view of the pope that he wrote an encyclical reinforcing traditional supersessionism at a moment when the most vulnerable people in Europe needed to hear from the bishop of Rome words of uncompromising moral leadership as demanded by the very scriptures of which he wrote.

For the Sacred Books were not given by God to men to satisfy their curiosity or to provide them with material for study and research, but, as the Apostle observes, in order that these Divine Oracles might “instruct us to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus” and “that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work.”¹⁹

Reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity was unlikely. The opening of the Christian *ekklesia* (assembly or to gather together) to non-Jews meant that the early familiarity with Judaism was fast fading, although the contact remained for several centuries on a variety of levels. Critical at this time was the gradual loss of historical memory. In cultures that

relied more on oral traditions than written, and where the divine was perceived as mixing in human affairs as a matter of course, the texts of the gospels assumed a sacral aura. Succeeding councils confirmed the divinely revealed authorship of scripture, so that by the end of the third century, it was accepted belief that the texts were accurate *historical* pictures of Jesus and the early Christians, even if they employed metaphor and required “spiritual” interpretation. Needing to position itself as an entity valid in its own right, the Church claimed for itself the religious language, theology, liturgy, and ethics of Judaism, reinterpreting them through Christian matrices. Not only was Christianity the self-appointed heir to Judaism, but it now claimed to replace the parent faith altogether. Judaism was null and void.

All the elements of Christian anti-Judaism were in place in the sacred texts by the end of the first century. It remained to the writers of the Patristic Age to expand and make coherent a body of theological writing that would be translated into law and practice within and without the Church. For Christianity to succeed, Judaism must be seen to have failed.

“Despised and Rejected”

Christian anti-Judaism grew ever stronger as the infant *ekklesia* merged into the surrounding Hellenic and Roman cultures. The exclusivity that marked Judaism was not a part of the Christian *modus operandi*. Consequently, as the Church sought to distance itself from Judaism and provide an apologia for its doctrinal positions as well as to attract proselytes, the nature of anti-Jewish writing changed. The chief points of what eventually became a clearly defined teaching consisted of several premises that worked toward the conclusion that God had chosen the Church over the Synagogue, Christianity over Judaism, and the redeemed over the damned.

I examine this teaching. I use the word “teaching” deliberately since at no time did the Church explicitly condemn Judaism or make a doctrinal statement to the effect that Jews were now damned for eternity. Popular anti-Judaism certainly made extravagant claims, but while the hierarchies often tolerated these, they never received the stamp of orthodox Christian teaching. Anti-Judaism remained in a perpetual twilight as far as theology and praxis were concerned.

The first claim the new church made over Judaism was the simple one of rejection. Because the Jews had handed Jesus over to Pilate to be crucified, they were guilty of killing the one sent by God. It did not matter even if it was the Romans who carried out the killing; the Jews were guilty—as evidenced in the gospels.²⁰ Further, the Jews’ guilt was compounded because they rejected Christ, despite having seen the wonders he worked. This showed they were heathens at heart.²¹ Rejection of Christ

developed into the more odious crime attributed to the whole Jewish people—deicide—the killing of God.

He who hung the earth is hanging; He who fixed the heavens has been fixed; He who fastened the universe has been fastened to a tree;

The Sovereign has been insulted; The God has been murdered;

The King of Israel has been put to death by an Israelite right hand.²²

For this unprecedented crime, ungrateful, murderous Israel was cast off and was like one dead while Christ lived.²³

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (d. 258), made a succinct and logical paradigm to explain why Israel had been cast off. In *Three Books of Testimonies against the Jews*, Cyprian stated the Jews did not believe because they did not understand their scriptures, and they would not understand them until they came to believe in Christ. Therefore, they lost Jerusalem and the favor of God, who gave the blessings of eternal life to Christianity, which now superseded Judaism. The Jews perished because they “preferred to envy Christ rather than believe.” Driven by jealousy, they disparaged the things Jesus did, so they remained blind to the truth, blaspheming the name of God among the Gentiles.²⁴ In *Treatise 5*, Cyprian wrote that calamity and disasters were not because of the Christians, but rather were signs of the continuing disobedience of the unbelieving Jews. This outburst was preceded by Cyprian’s declaring that Christians now had exclusive right to address God as “Our Father” “because he has begun to be ours and has ceased to be the Father of the Jews, who have forsaken him.” The Jews were swept into the outer darkness and the kingdom that had been given them was now given to the Christians.²⁵

Indeed, the same scriptures were used to show how stubborn this “stiff-necked” people were, and also that the Jews were destined to kill Christ. And so their fate was a result of God’s plan. The only way for Israel to be redeemed was to accept the truth of Christ. In a twisted and almost indecipherable logic, many of the fathers concluded that God created the Jews for this shameful existence.²⁶

Through their rejection and killing of Christ, the Jews made the Covenant null and void. The blessings given to Israel in the Torah are now given to the New Israel, the Christian Church.²⁷ Speaking of the Church as the “New Israel” was a common patristic theme that followed logically from the theme of rejection.²⁸ Irenaeus (c. 130–200) described the Church as now receiving the adoption and inheritance promised to Abraham.²⁹ Using the metaphor of Abel and Cain, Irenaeus described the Church as offering the pure oblation, “but the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood.”³⁰

In the course of its development, by the end of its third century, the Christian church had proved itself tenacious and stubborn in its survival.

Christian communities dotted the Roman Empire in both east and west. Although still outnumbered by Jews and officially proscribed by the imperium, Christians were making significant inroads into Roman society at all levels. Constantine’s “conversion” and the Edict of Milan in 313 brought about the establishment of the Christian Church. Armed with a theology that would brook no opposition and the prospect of increasing secular power alongside its spiritual authority, the Church boded ill for all non-Christian groups. Theology was now applied to the Church’s new relationship with the political powers. It was not long before the newly enfranchised bishops and theologians turned their attention to those who did not share the faith.

Ekklesia Triumphant

Ambrose of Milan (c. 339–397), a powerful bishop and teacher, gave an indication of the new relationship between church and imperium in 388. Throughout the third and fourth centuries, a marked increase in hostility toward Jews was manifested in synagogue burnings. Many incidents appear to have taken place with the tacit approval of the local bishops and imperial authorities.³¹ However, the destruction of the synagogue in Callinicum sparked a row that spread from Mesopotamia to Milan. The Christian population, incited by their bishop, destroyed the synagogue. Civil authorities complained to the emperor, Theodosius II, who promptly ordered the Christians to pay restitution to the Jews—all of which was governed by law. Theodosius further ordered that those responsible for the fire be punished by caning.³² The matter would have ended there had not Ambrose been told of it and decided the emperor was stepping beyond the bounds of Christian charity. He described Theodosius’s action as “sacrilegious.”

Ambrose fumed at the emperor—as a Christian monarch he had to uphold the law of God first. If the Christians of Callinicum broke a law by burning the synagogue, it was the law that was at fault, not the Christians. And if the law remained unchanged, Christians had a moral obligation to disobey it, as it was contrary to God’s law. Forcing Christians to rebuild a synagogue was wrong, plain and simple: “Shall a place be provided out of the spoils of the Church for the disbelief of the Jews, and shall this patrimony, given to Christians by the favor of Christ, be transferred to the treasuries of unbelievers?”³³ In fact, what the Christians of Callinicum had done was good. Punishing them made no sense; after all, “a synagogue has been burned, an abode of unbelief, a house of impiety, a shelter of madness under the damnation of God himself.”³⁴ After resisting Ambrose for a while, Theodosius withdrew the demand for restitution. Christian rulers had to rule according to Christian law, and if the law was deemed contrary to Christianity, it was to be annulled. The Church had assumed another role—that of interpreter of imperial law. A precedent

had been set. It was now possible for Christians to destroy Jewish property without fear of prosecution, a pattern that was to be repeated often in the centuries to come.

John of the Golden Mouth

From Milan, we turn to Antioch and the presbyter John Chrysostom (c. 349–407 CE). In 386, Chrysostom preached a series of eight anti-Jewish sermons at the time of the High Holy Days. Antioch was home to a large Jewish community, which for many years had lived peacefully alongside Christian neighbors. So friendly were relations that it seems the synagogues of Antioch were in the habit of offering religious hospitality to the many Christians who attended the festival liturgies. Chrysostom was sufficiently disturbed by this trend to direct these sermons toward the orthodox, and potentially anti-Jewish, members of the Christian community in an attempt to halt what he saw as “quasi-apostasy.” In order to arouse the passions of his congregation with zeal for the truth and to stop the slide into heresy, Chrysostom launched the most purulent and violent tirades against the Jews and Judaism ever recorded in patristic literature.

Judaizing had been a threat to Christianity since the beginning of the Church. Many potential converts, and even some who had accepted baptism, could not reconcile the claims of the New Israel when the Old Israel still existed in substantial form. True, the Temple and Jerusalem had gone, but Judaism survived. Did this not prove God’s promises were still valid? If this were true, then why stop at a Christian “half-way” house? Would it not be better to become Jews and be more fully like Jesus and the early disciples?

How did Chrysostom attack the Judaizers? The simple answer was by throwing at the Jews and Judaism every insult and injury possible. The truth made no entrance here; the object was to separate Christians and Jews and the means were irrelevant. Jews were described as little more than animals who indulged in all the vices, especially gluttony and drunkenness.³⁵ These degenerate people gathered in synagogues, places of unimaginable vileness and filth. “But the synagogue is not only a brothel and a theatre, it is also a den of robbers and a lodging for wild beasts . . . when God forsakes a place, that place becomes the dwelling of demons.”³⁶

Chrysostom raged against the synagogue in order to dissuade Christians from attending Jewish liturgies and festivals. Rather than finding people immersed in the things of God, these wayward Christians discovered that the Jews “live for their bellies, they gape for the things of this world, their condition is no better than that of pigs or goats because of their wanton ways and excessive gluttony.”³⁷ Such was the godlessness of the Jews that they surpassed even the pagans in working deceit, and those who sought spiritual fulfillment from the Jews would find that their rites were lies.³⁸ A final word on the fate of the Jews appeared in a homily on I

Thessalonians. The rejection of the Jews by God was permanent. “There is here no return back, because they know what they did when they killed Christ.”³⁹

Augustine deplored any form of Judaizing, making it akin to the violation of a tomb, “digging up dead ashes.”⁴⁰ Indeed, the attraction of Judaism exercised a powerful force even into the ninth century.⁴¹ It is in this context that we can understand the ferocious tone of the preacher. We need also to recall that four centuries had passed since the time of Christ and that memories of first-century Judaism were dim. The stereotypes created in the composition of the gospels to address particular issues pertinent to its day were now accepted as universal motifs applicable for all time. Therefore, for example, the words of Matthew “His blood be upon us and upon our children” had a literal force as powerful in Chrysostom’s day as in the decades following the destruction of the Temple.

Religio licito

In 325, the first ecumenical council of the Church was held at Nicaea, under imperial patronage. The bishops defined a symbol of faith, the Nicene Creed, which outlined in pithy statements the core beliefs of Christians. Councils at Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451) followed Nicaea. This process refined Christian doctrine and liturgical practice as well as establishing canon laws for the governing of the Church. Each council further cemented the Church as an integral part of society in both parts of the Roman Empire and set the basis for its continued operation well after the collapse of the empire. Concurrently, the codification of Roman law was taking place.

After 313, belief now had the status of law. To be an unbeliever increasingly put one at odds with Roman law, despite a long and still prevalent history of tolerance.⁴² The Church accrued more and more privilege, as well as secular power. Bishops became powerful local leaders who enjoyed a voice in both sacred and secular arenas.⁴³ Attention to Jews was secondary until the later part of the process when the Church was secure in its place as the guardian of the spiritual well-being of the empire. Internal threats had to be quashed first, followed by the remnants of paganism. Only then was the Church in a position to direct its energies toward establishing a lasting *modus vivendi* with the synagogue.⁴⁴

Augustine of Hippo

It was in the West that the final Christian formulation of anti-Judaism was created. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) bestrode Christian theology of all traditions like a colossus. His writings permeated Christian thinking for centuries and were a major platform for the thinking of the

Anglican and Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century as well as the Catholic reformers of Trent. On every subject pertinent to Christian life, Augustine had an opinion. The popular appeal of the sinner-turned-saint found a permanent place in Christian piety in the *Confessions*. It was Augustine who gave the final form to Christian anti-Judaism. Such was the force of his thinking that the Augustinian interpretation of the Jewish place in the Christian schema of salvation remained intact until the revisions of Vatican II in the 1960s.

Augustine's anti-Jewish theology found echoes in the teaching and preaching of Pius XII. The ancient teaching was so entrenched in Catholic thinking, religious practice, and canon law, and its tenacity so great, that it would be arguing against reason to suggest the pope was not influenced by it or that his reaction to the persecution of the Jews was not, in part, shaped by it.

Augustine's teaching was quite simple. Using the by now customary interpretations of Jewish involvement in the death of Christ, Augustine developed his thesis. First, there was the unavoidable fact that there were Jews among the Christian people. The Christian was quite right in asking, "Why are these people here? Have they not been abandoned and rejected by God for the killing of Christ?" And it would be wrong of the Christian teacher to say anything other than: "Yes, the Jews did not believe in Christ and their unbelief led them to kill him."⁴⁵ Augustine went further in explaining that the Hebrew Bible bore witness to Christ, but the Jews were blinded: "That is why when they refuse to believe in our scriptures and read their own like blind men, they are fulfilling what their own prophets foretold."⁴⁶ Jesus was the fulfillment of the Hebrew Bible, and to ensure that people did not think this a Christian fabrication, the Jews served as witnesses of biblical authenticity, therefore demonstrating the veracity of Christian claims. This was evidence that it was part of God's plan that the Jews remained.

Augustine's second reason is that Jews were living proof of Christian truth. Through their rejection of Christ and defiance of God, they were punished with the destruction of the Temple and loss of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Defeat, exile, and subjugation were their eternal lot. Even so, all this was foretold in their own scriptures, which, because of their blindness and worship of alien gods, they could not understand.⁴⁷ Christians beware and take note! The same fate may well befall Christians who reject Christ. If the Jews disappeared, Christians could forget this lesson and so fall into heresy or apostasy. The existence of the Jews was a vivid reminder of Paul's "wages of sin" teaching in Romans 6.23.

It was in Augustine's *Commentary on Psalm 59* that we have the most comprehensive treatment of the accursed people. Verse 11 reads: "Slay them not lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield."⁴⁸ Commenting on this verse, which he placed on the lips of Jesus, Augustine asked, "Why of the Jews 'slay them not, lest they forget thy law?'" The Jews who lost Jerusalem and the land of

Israel were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, yet were recognizable wherever they are. “For all the provinces by the Romans have been subjugated. Who now can distinguish the nations in the Roman empire the one from the other in as much as all have become Romans and all are called Romans?”⁴⁹ However, the Jews were an exception. Using the method of typology, whereby a character from the Hebrew Bible foreshadowed a figure from Christian scripture, Augustine casts the Jews as Cain. They bore upon their bodies the mark, that of circumcision, “in order that no one should slay him . . . for they are necessary to believing nations.”⁵⁰ In the style that shows Augustine’s training as a rhetorician, he explained why the Jews were necessary for Christians. Their plight was testimony of the mercy of God toward his enemies. “He showeth his mercy to the wild olive grafted on branches that have been cut off because of pride, behold where thou hast been grafted, that didst lie: and be not proud, lest thou shouldst deserve to be cut off.”⁵¹ Augustine warned again that should Christians fail to heed the warning and example that God made of Israel, the same fate would befall them.

It was in this semitolerated state that Jews now lived within Christian society. Augustine’s anti-Judaism was matched in the array of restrictive laws that became more common from the fifth century onward. The irony was that despite their precarious existence on the margins of Christian Europe, Jews had at least some legal and theological protection—more than was accorded to Christian heretics.⁵² For while heretics had abandoned the truth, the Jews had not embraced it to start with. Still, the Church held it a duty to pray for the conversion of the Jews since it was from them that the Savior came and even though their blindness made them unable to see the truth of Christianity, they still possessed a modicum of goodness. Favorable comments about the Jews were few enough in the patristic writings but enough emerges to suggest that the vitriolic anti-Judaism was meant as exhortation for Christian congregations and not directed toward Jews as people. Even the acerbic Jerome, from his cave in Bethlehem, admitted the Jews did have virtues.⁵³

While it is important to point out that the violence of the language employed by the Fathers was more often than not used for rhetorical effect, the long-term impact on the minds and hearts of illiterate and superstitious Christians cannot be underestimated. The violence of words often became the violence of deeds directed not against abstract “Jews” but flesh-and-blood people. And while there was nothing overt that directed Christians to inflict harm upon Jews, it is not difficult to see how fine the line was between officially sanctioned anti-Judaism, which found its strength in theological argument and liturgy, and the actions of the mob, which inflicted real and murderous harm on the “Christ-killers.” There is a murderous, possibly a genocidal, intent buried within the language that was to provide rationale and reason for later generations. What gave anti-Judaism its power was, as Simon points out, the continued “religious vitality of Judaism.”⁵⁴

Fifteen centuries after Augustine's death, Pius XII wrote *Mystici corporis Christi*. In outlining his teaching on the relationship of the Christian Church to the death of Christ on the cross, the Pope wrote:

And first of all, by the death of our Redeemer, the New Testament took the place of the Old Law which had been abolished... For, while our Divine Savior was preaching in a restricted area... on the gibbet of His death Jesus made void the Law with its decrees, fastened the handwriting of the Old Testament to the Cross, establishing the New Testament in His blood shed for the whole human race. "To such an extent, then," says St. Leo the Great, speaking of the Cross of our Lord, "was there effected a transfer from the Law to the Gospel, from the Synagogue to the Church, from the many sacrifices to one Victim, that, as Our Lord expired, that mystical veil which shut off the innermost part of the temple and its sacred secret was rent violently from top to bottom." On the Cross then the Old Law died, soon to be buried and to be a bearer of death, in order to give way to the New Testament of which Christ had chosen the Apostles as qualified ministers...⁵⁵

The passage of the centuries had not dimmed the power of Augustine's supersessionist theology. The pope's teaching was in accord with Augustine's thought. Jews were brought low, defamed, and reduced to a state of discriminated exclusion from the Christian commonwealth. But the final barrier—"slay them not"—was being ignored across Europe. The Vicar of Christ spoke out against the murder of innocents, but did not speak unequivocally against the murder of the largest victim group—the Jews. As Pius wrote these words in June 1943, the trains to Auschwitz were delivering their Jewish victims to death in the gas chambers.

Feudal Christendom

Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome between 590 and 604, set the standard for papal responses to Jewish matters. Bearing in mind that the authority of the pope was more of *primus inter pares* (first among equals) than authoritarian at this time, that Gregory's advice was heeded suggests something of the respect given the holder of the office. The pope followed a tolerant path respecting the sanctity of synagogues and forbidding forced baptisms, thus mitigating some of the more anti-Jewish edicts of local synods.⁵⁶ At the same time, Gregory also enforced more restrictive aspects of the local laws, such as upholding the ban on Jews owning Christian slaves and warning Christians against marking *Shabbat*.⁵⁷

The high point of papal legislation came during the pontificate of Calixtus II (1119–1124), who issued the Bull *Sicut Iudaeis*.⁵⁸ Although lost, the bull is known to us through its many renewals—almost de rigueur in

every papacy. Mark Cohen believes the document most likely originated in response to a Jewish petition asking for papal protection in the face of violence that followed the call to the First Crusade.⁵⁹

Sicut Iudaeis combined the Augustinian position on Judaism and offered the power of law to ensure the “rights” of the Jews were not abrogated. Cohen comments: “It specifies what the twelfth century church deemed to be the Jews’ rights, including freedom from forced baptism, protection of persons and property from unwarranted assault, the unimpeded right to practise Judaism, and the inviolability of Jewish cemeteries. These guarantees are backed up with a commitment to punish Christians who trespass them.”⁶⁰ Between 1124 and 1348, the bull was reissued at least 16 times. At times, the popes added clauses reflecting concerns over particular problems. In 1247, Innocent IV added a special clause condemning the accusation that Jews killed Christians in order to take their blood and use it in their rites. This is the first recorded papal refutation of the blood libel.⁶¹

At the same time, popes were quick to enforce the restrictive laws if they believed the occasion warranted it. By far the most common rescript from Rome was concerned with usury. Christian soldiers going on Crusade were promised remission of all debts to Jewish moneylenders.⁶² When issues relating to money were concerned, there appears from the documents to be a considerable effort either to make sure the Jews paid what was demanded, such as tithes to local bishops, or absolve Christians from having to pay their debt to Jews.⁶³

Papal decrees were issued in response to events that affected Jews across Christian Europe. They provide us with a window into the slowly changing nature of feudal society. Between 1010 and 1012, rumors of Jews killing Christians in the Holy Land prompted an outbreak of violence in France and the Rhineland. Millennial fever erupted across Europe toward the end of the tenth century. Various accounts predicted and allegedly reported fantastic tales of great destruction. And while Christian attention was distracted, the Jews supposedly seized the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem unleashing violent reactions across Europe.

Then as quickly, as it had appeared, the violence abated.⁶⁴ Life resumed, and in several places local bishops gave special charters to the Jewish community to ensure they were protected against such attacks.⁶⁵ At the close of the eleventh century, Europe was in the process of change. Economic and political forces were forcing the first cracks in monolithic Christendom. Local identity was being subsumed into more regional and national creations. The process was slow but its pace soon quickened.

An Inimical Race

On November 27, 1095, Urban II preached the first Crusade at Clermont and the demons were unleashed. Urging the people of Christian Europe

to go and free the Holy Land from the infidels, the pope aroused dormant energies that quickly went out of control. From across the Continent, thousands flocked to the cross. At the same time, Guibert de Nogent announced that the Crusade was a noble deed, but while there were enemies of the Lord in the East, here in the midst of Christian Europe were the Jews, “a race more inimical to God than any other.”⁶⁶ The bloodbath that engulfed the Jews of western Europe demonstrates how the anti-Jewish theology had lost its contact with the mass of European Christians.

A twelfth-century account, written by Solomon bar Samson, recounted the slaughter of the Jews of Mainz in May 1096. It told in explicit language of the horror of the massacre. The Jewish community had sought shelter in the palace of the bishop of Mainz. Archbishop Ruthard had promised to defend them, but upon seeing the numbers of crusaders, accompanied by the mob of the city, he appears to have panicked and fled, along with his men. When it was clear that the crusaders were determined to kill them, the Jews made the decision to kill themselves rather than be taken by the Christian mob.⁶⁷ Samson closed his account by saying the crusaders held a thanksgiving service in the archbishop’s palace. The story of the Jews of Mainz was an awful harbinger of persecutions yet to come.

Popes and prelates educated and trained to understand the nuances of Augustinian theology regarding the Jews were confronted with an illiterate faithful and often semiliterate clergy who could not understand any excuses made for the Jews. A Jew was a Christ-killer, capable of any manner of evil acts. For the first time, the Church appeared unable to stop the killing.

The Crusades marked another turning point: Jews were now identified as the “enemy within.” Coupled with this was the change in Christian piety. The Roman liturgy already reflected the traditional hostility toward the Jews in the petition in the Good Friday liturgy. In contrast to the solemn simplicity of the Latin rite, the Orthodox liturgy for Great and Holy Friday was emotional and repetitive in its identification of the Jews as the killers of Christ. A more identifiably human Jesus who suffered with his people gradually replaced the august Christ who was depicted as the Sovereign of the Universe. The era of the Black Death and the decimation of Europe promoted the devotion to the suffering Jesus whose pains were exacerbated by the unbelieving Jews.

Christian piety and popular devotion had a long history of “loyal” countercultural presence within the Church. It sought to balance the Latin liturgy and its Latin theology with an emotional pietism that allowed the believer to empathies with Jesus, his mother, and the saints. In contrast, Scholasticism—typified in the writings of theologians such as Albert the Great and his famous pupil Thomas Aquinas—attempted to create an all-embracing logical framework that would explain in rational form, as much as was possible, the mysteries of the faith. In this respect, Thomas’s treatment of the Jews followed the tradition of Augustine but was influenced by the growing mistrust of Jews endemic in the Middle Ages.

Doctor angelicus

Aquinas believed Christians should avoid Jews except where circumstances made this unavoidable. He dismissed the stories of blood libel and host profanation as crude myths, but nonetheless subscribed to the popular belief that Jews were dangerous.⁶⁸ We find in the *Summa Theologica* Aquinas’ theological development of the position of Augustine. It is important to note where Aquinas placed the Jews in the *Summa*. Divided into three sections, Part I deals with God and creation, Part II with “virtues, vices, and other things pertaining to morality,” and Part III with Christ and the Church. Part II is further subdivided into the *prima secundae*, dealing with the metaphysics of morality, and *secunda secundae*, an analysis of morality in terms of virtue and vice. The Jews are found in the *secunda secundae*, question 10, “On Unbelief in General.” Therefore, without even examining Aquinas’ position, we observe that his placement of the Jews is indicative of his understanding of them in the schema of salvation.

Aquinas followed traditional Catholic teaching about enforced baptism. Since faith was a voluntary act of reception, it was pointless to drag Jews to the baptismal font. He added, however, the Jews “should be compelled by the faithful, if it be possible to do so, so that they do not hinder the faith, by their blasphemies, or by their evil persuasions, or even by their open persecutions.”⁶⁹ Thomas agreed with Innocent III that Jews who had been baptized, even against their will, were Christians. If they reverted to Judaism, they were to be treated like heretics and subjected to the inquisition.⁷⁰ At the same time, Aquinas argued against the forceful baptism of Jewish children because taking them from their parents was contrary to natural law.⁷¹ The logical outcome of this line of thinking was that the natural law of the parent–child bond is greater than the law of the Church that taught that those outside the Church are damned.⁷²

Toward the end of question 10, Aquinas argued the traditional case of permitting Jews to practice their religion since this served as a testimony to Christianity. Since Judaism foreshadowed the coming of Christ, it followed that “our very enemies bear witness to our faith and that our faith is represented in figure so to speak. For this reason they are tolerated.”⁷³ In this article, Thomas provided an apologia for the Church’s social policy toward the Jews. Grounded in his understanding of natural law and guided by the spirit of Augustine and papal protection of Jews, Aquinas’ understanding served to underscore the traditional approach to Judaism. Jews were to be protected and tolerated only in so far as their presence testified to the truth of Christianity. Granting the Jews “rights” was absurd since full status in Christendom was dependent on baptism, something Jews had consistently rejected.

The Blood Libel

The litany of Jewish evil seemed endless. By the opening of the fourteenth century, the Jews of Europe were identified with every form of

abomination imaginable. They killed Christian children at Pesach and ritually “re-killed” Christ through the profanation of the host. It mattered not that various popes and prelates had made repeated condemnations of these charges; as far as the “simple” believer was concerned, it was true. The cults of the child victims of the blood libel stories spread across Europe testifying to these odious people.

Allegations against Jews were that they committed murder of Christians or mutilation murder, or crucifixion murder—for a variety of religious, health, or sexual motives. Generally known in the literature as “blood libels,” the stories were a mixture of fact, fiction, allegation, and defamation. The aim was to defame and denigrate Jews. In the nineteenth century, “ritual murder” became the popular term—indicating not a dreadful calumny but an institutionalized, formal, prescriptive protocol of Judaism—a law of Moses to kill children for their blood.⁷⁴

Throughout the following centuries, accusations of Jews mutilating, crucifying, and committing “plain” murder found a receptive audience prepared to believe Jews did such things. It made no difference that the Torah and *Halakah* forbade the consumption of blood under any circumstances.⁷⁵ Even Christian scholars, including many popes, were well aware of the prohibition surrounding the consumption of blood. Accusations of ritual murder were a further proof that the Jews were a different breed from those described in the Bible. Allegations that Jews added Christian blood to *matzot* (the unleavened bread used at Passover) for use at Passover were absurd, but a culture dominated by superstitious beliefs in vampires and other blood-sucking demons made it possible to believe Jews fed on the blood of Christian children.

The work of scholars like Darren O’Brien and Saul Friedländer have shown how the blood libel remained dormant but powerful in the main subcurrents of European folklore until their deliberate revival under the Nazis in the 1930s, pan-Arab supporters in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in the 1950s, and Saddam Hussein in Iraq in the 1990s.⁷⁶

The Fourth Council of the Lateran, 1215

Ostracized and condemned to perpetual servitude within Christendom, by 1517, Jews were a marked and exposed vulnerable group within a society that had lost all semblance of tolerance to those deemed alien to the majority. Public discrimination had been a part of Christian anti-Judaism since the fifth century. Innocent III reaffirmed the second-class status of the Jews and added a new dimension, that of physical segregation through distinctive clothing. At the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the pope and bishops believed the Jews were a great threat to the unity and moral integrity of Europe. The council ordered Jews not to oppress Christians through usury, and canon 67 demanded “adequate satisfaction for the

immoderate burden” if any Jew was deemed to have charged excessive interest.⁷⁷

However, canon 67 was not the area of greatest concern for the Council. Responding to rumors of Christian men having sexual relations with Jewish and Saracen women and the far greater outrage, that of Jewish and Saracen men having sex with Christian women, Innocent set out new guidelines:

In order that the offence of such a damnable mixing may not spread further . . . we decree that such persons [Jews and Saracens] of either sex, in every Christian province and at all times, are to be distinguished in public from other people by the character of their dress—seeing moreover that this was enjoined upon them by Moses himself as we have read.⁷⁸

Earlier, in 1179, the third Lateran Council had forbidden Christians to live with Jews or Saracens.⁷⁹ Fears of Christian women losing their virtue to Jews and infidels sent waves of horror through the patriarchal Church. This added to the mounting demonic imagery of Jews as seducers of Christian women. As for Christian men having sex with Jewish women, it would appear the “seductive charms” of Jewish women were hoodwinking otherwise upstanding Christian men.

The decrees of the Lateran Council had a lasting impact on the deleterious relations between Christians and Jews. Repeated papal letters and pronouncements were sent to various princes and bishops over the next several centuries ordering adherence to canon 68—the wearing of the Jewish badge.⁸⁰ This act alone ensured that Jews were increasingly marginalized, although there was not much room left for a people already on the margins for several centuries. Poliakov says of the canon: “This visible sign, which henceforth indicated the circumcised, impressed on men’s minds the notion that the Jew was a man of another physical aspect, radically different from other men . . . he belonged to some other species than that of the human race.”⁸¹ From here it was possible to imagine and accuse Jews of mutilation and crucifixion, profanation of the host, blaspheming Christ and the Virgin in the Talmud, of having a peculiar odor and being in league with the devil.

Harnessing the energies of the newly founded mendicant orders, the papacy enlisted the Dominicans and Franciscans as the invigilators of the Lateran Council. The friars launched a virtual crusade for the cause of orthodoxy. Talmud-burning became the leitmotif of this new stage in Christian anti-Judaism.⁸² Close to the people to whom they ministered, the friars imparted a more virulent anti-Judaism than the Church had previously tolerated. Mendicant preaching played no small part in the increase in anti-Jewish violence culminating in expulsions from England, France and other countries during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The friars almost certainly promoted the idea of the Jews being the

servants of the devil, poisoners of wells, and agents of the famine and plague that decimated Europe in 1315–1322 and 1347–1350.

Reformation: Christendom Torn Asunder

On the eve of the Reformation, the Jews who remained in Europe were an abject people. On top of the accusations of subversion within the Christian commonwealth, Jews were targeted as the agents of the Anti-Christ, the devil. To recapitulate: Jews killed children for their blood, reviled the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, and played at usury in order to bankrupt Christians, as well as crimes supposedly related to the Black Death. It was only logical that the origin of their evil came from the very source of evil itself, Satan. Stripped of their humanity and relegated to the realm of the occult, the Jews were demonized and no theologian could or would attempt to convince the faithful otherwise.

Reform was a dominant and pressing need within the Christian Church at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Feudal Europe was evolving into nation-states; mercantile economies were replacing the old methods; new worlds were being discovered. Science grew so that it began to question the foundations of the Christocentric worldview of the Church. For the Jews, the reform of Christendom was a mixed blessing. At first, many of the reformers looked kindly on the Jews, respecting the *Tanakh* and Talmud as resources that could help Christians better understand the scriptures. The anti-Roman nature of the reform movements lumped traditional anti-Jewish sentiment and prejudice among the many sins of the papal enslavement of the Church. When that baggage was cast aside, along with all the rest of Catholic superstition, the Jews would see Christianity in a new light, a true and authentic vision. And then they would convert—or so many in Wurtemberg and Geneva hoped. It came as a shock that the Jews did not flood into the protesting church to embrace the reformed religion. Initial favorable comments soon evaporated and a more traditional rhetoric resumed. In the Protestant anti-Jewish polemic, a new viciousness emerged, one free from the restraints the papacy had traditionally imposed. Its basis was still Augustinian, but without the legal measures implied by Augustine and imposed under the popes.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483–1546), Augustinian friar and noted scripture scholar, embarked on his journey to reform the Church in 1517 after confrontations with Rome ended in mutual condemnation. Convinced that only a thorough purge of the medieval church could restore the truth of the Christian gospel, Luther also believed the Jews would see in the reformed church the truth obscured for centuries by Roman “popery.” In 1523,

Luther was accused of denying the perpetual virginity of Mary, mother of Jesus. Stung into action, the reformer wrote a pamphlet entitled *That Jesus Christ was born a Jew*. The first part of the treatise deals with questions regarding the virginity of Mary. And in his opening Luther reviles his attackers, declaring: “If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian.”⁸³

Pouring scorn on traditional conversion tactics, Luther made a significant statement:

If the apostles, who were also Jews, had dealt with us Gentiles, as we Gentiles deal with the Jews, there would never have been a Christian among the Gentiles. Since they dealt with us Gentiles in such brotherly fashion, we in our turn ought to treat the Jews in a brotherly manner in order we might convert some of them... When we are inclined to boast of our position we should remember that we are but Gentiles, while the Jews are of the lineage of Christ.⁸⁴

Luther gently chided the Jews for not accepting Christianity’s interpretation of the messianic texts, but at no point did he condemn them. His style was irenic and patient. It was still conversionist and he never strayed from that objective, but the means toward that end were in glaring opposition to the preferred harangues common at the time.

Luther’s pamphlet continued in the more familiar vein of using texts from the Hebrew Bible as proof of the Christian faith. Working his way through passages that speak of a coming Messiah, Luther wrote that it was an amazing thing that “the Gentiles have never once yielded themselves so willingly to a Jew for their lord and king, as to this Jesus.”⁸⁵ And should the Jews find it too difficult to accept the idea of Jesus as human and divine, Luther counseled: “Let them first be suckled with milk, and begin by recognizing this man Jesus as the true Messiah; after that they may drink wine, and learn also that he is true God.”

Twenty years later, the same Luther wrote another pamphlet. In 1543 reflecting on his attempts to convert the Jews, Luther had to admit defeat. The reason for his failure lay not within himself or the reformed faith, but in the traditional perfidy of the Jews. In his work *Against the Jews and Their Lies*, the older Luther ranted and railed against the people he had formerly respected. It is a work that shows a medieval man embittered and disgusted with what he interpreted as proof of Jewish unbelief. Luther’s writing marks the final stage in the evolution of Christian anti-Judaism and the precursor to modern antisemitism.

Luther announced nothing new in this diatribe. It is a longwinded, repetitive lecture that rehashes old anti-Judaic polemic through the conventional methods of rebuttal of Judaism by selective use of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament. The structure of the treatise followed a logical pattern, tempered by Luther’s bitterness at the Jews’

adamant refusal to recognize the truth of the reformed religion. In fact, at the very outset Luther stated categorically that he was not attempting to convert the Jews—“for that is impossible.”⁸⁶

Relying on the works of several medieval anti-Jewish texts, Luther launched into a tirade of abuse, damning the Jews as blasphemers and killers of Christ.⁸⁷ Exhausting his line of argument, he asked the Christian reader what was to be done “with this condemned and rejected people, the Jews?”⁸⁸ The reformer offered seven points. They were to become famous under the Nazis as a propaganda tool for justifying Christian support for antisemitic actions.

A Sharp Mercy

In Luther’s opinion, there was only one option left: Christians “must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames.”⁸⁹ Therefore “set fire to their synagogues or school and bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them.” This measure would ensure a halt to Jewish blasphemy. Luther even cited Moses as the justification of his proposal.⁹⁰ The second point advised that Jewish homes “also be razed and destroyed.” By doing this, the Jews would come to realize that they were living “in captivity, as they incessantly wail and lament about us before God.”⁹¹

Obliteration of all signs of Jewish life and faith could only be achieved if all “their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught are taken from them.” As the source of Israel’s perpetual ignorance, rabbis were to be banned from teaching under pain of death.⁹² Luther demanded all safe-conduct for Jews be abolished within Christian realms. Next, he demanded an end to all Jewish practice of usury. Believing that Jews were alien to manual labor, Luther advocated “putting a flail, an axe, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow.” And if all else failed, expel them, emulating “the common sense of other nations.”⁹³

Luther asked those rulers who had Jewish subjects to “act like a good physician who, when gangrene has set in, proceeds to act without mercy to cut, saw, and burn flesh, veins, bone and marrow.”⁹⁴ Four centuries later, in language startlingly similar to that employed by Luther, the Nazi physician Fritz Klein attempted to justify the extermination of the Jews. He was asked how he reconciled his penchant for killing with the Hippocratic oath that instructed him to save life. “Of course I am a doctor and I want to preserve life. And out of respect for human life, I would remove a gangrenous appendix from a diseased body. The Jew is the gangrenous appendix in the body of mankind.”⁹⁵

At this point, the development of Christian anti-Judaism has reached its final stage. From Luther through to the twentieth century, theological reflection on Jews and Judaism varied little. The negative stereotypes and polemics remained. After the Peace of Westphalia and the end of the religious wars, Europe was exhausted. Institutional religion was relegated to a second-class position in the emerging states. Religion, Catholic or Protestant, would serve the needs of the state as a faithful assistant to the prince. The new humanist disciplines would now compete with religion for the minds of Europeans. For those in power, the goddess of reason proved a more attractive mistress than the God of Abraham or Jesus. Poliakov expressed the situation succinctly: "The age of incredulity, that is to say the Century of Enlightenment, was also, as we know, an age of extreme credulity. Once the yoke of the Church had been shaken off and theological discipline relaxed, the field was clear for new revelations to compete with the Judeo-Christian revelation."⁹⁶

The Catholic Church stood battered and bruised at the end of the sixteenth century and spent much of the seventeenth century directing its energies to a complete reformation of church life and discipline. Not since the fourth century had the Church been without a preeminent place in Europe, and this took a lot of getting used to. Catholic Christianity retreated into a rigid doctrinal orthodoxy where all forms of heterodoxy were crushed. The "barque of Peter" sailed on stormy seas and all Catholics had a duty of faith to submit with heart and mind to those who held the "deposit of faith" lest they fall into error and lose their immortal souls. With perceived enemies all around, within and without the Church, Jews were a peripheral issue, lumped together with other enemies of Catholic Christendom. Their perfidy had not lessened, but had merged into a more general anti-Catholic coalition. Soon they would reappear under the guises of Freemasons, Deists, Philosophes, pan-European financiers, and, finally, as Revolutionaries.

CHAPTER THREE

Et in Unum Ecclesiam

You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth, shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you lose on earth, shall be considered lost in heaven.

Matthew 16.18–19

The Church of Christ, therefore, is the one and only enduring Church; and all who depart from it depart from the will and command of Christ the Lord. They have left the path of salvation and are heading for destruction.

Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum* (1896)

Societas Perfecta: Catholic Ecclesiology in the Nineteenth Century

A survey of the self-understanding of the Catholic Church is imperative before a study can be made of Eugenio Pacelli. Without this, it is near impossible to appreciate the matrices through which Pacelli's thought and action were processed. Nor can the place of Jews and Judaism be recognized with accuracy without a contextual picture of the Church's ecclesiology. This context becomes all the more relevant because this theology of the Church dominated Catholic thinking throughout Pacelli's life, and into the 1960s before the great changes of Vatican II (1962–1965).

The history of the Church, from the end of the Reformation until the election of Leo XIII in 1878, was characterized by reaction. Social historian Bill McSweeney summarized the Church's battle with modernity, beginning with the French Revolution and lasting through to the 1960s:

The effect of the Revolution was to identify republicanism with anti-clericalism and the revolutionary ideals in France with irreligion. The anti-clericalism of the Enlightenment became inextricably

linked to the political liberalism and economic changes that followed it; to be “modern” was to approve of the new order and to reject the *Ancien Regime* and its religious base. Modernity came in a package; it was not available in its separate components. The modern world was seen as incompatible with Catholicism because the history and fortunes of the Church were for so long and so closely wedded to the *Ancien Regime* that any attack on the one was perceived inevitably as a threat to the other.¹

External historical forces were viewed through the lenses of eternity—*all things are passing*. The Church would remain because of the promise made to her by Christ: “And know I am with you always, until the end of time” (Matt 28.20). Therefore there was no need to engage in meaningful dialogue with the modern world. “The World” had nothing of worth to offer. All the enemies of the Church would eventually fade away, leaving the “Bride of Christ” resplendent in her witness to her “Divine Spouse.” Filled with this self-confidence, it is no wonder that the statements of the Magisterium were mighty in their condemnations of perceived threats and patronizing in their treatment of those outside the clerical universe.

This did not mean that the Church was not concerned about what were interpreted as “pernicious” trends in European intellectual and political life. The loss of the papal states ended any pretence at temporal authority but enhanced the moral prestige of the papacy throughout the Catholic world. The “Prisoner of the Vatican” now possessed a freedom to speak out that he had not previously enjoyed. And the Catholic world listened. Leo XIII’s first encyclical letter, *Inscrutabili dei consilio* (1878), was a treatise on the evils afflicting modern society. In many ways, it echoed the earlier encyclical of Pius IX, *Quanta cura* (1864). In both letters, the popes described what they saw as the collapse of the moral order, which in turn led to a similar collapse in the political and social order. Chief among the ills they cited were the disregard of religion, relativism, communism, socialism, liberalism, and the usurpation of the authority of the bishop of Rome.² The only solution to the ills of the modern world lay in a return to the Catholic Church, which, “far from being alien to or neglectful of progress, has a just claim to all men’s praise as its nurse, its mistress, and its mother.”³ This was predicated on the belief that the Church was an unchanging society whose truth was valid for all time.

Avery Dulles’ book *Models of the Church* is arguably the best summary of late Tridentine ecclesiology. His succinct treatise highlights a simple but often overlooked fact: the ecclesiology of the Tridentine church was relatively uncomplicated. Once the essential tenets had been grasped and placed within the general framework of an immutable theology, all the writings apart from the core were commentary. He cited Robert Bellarmine (1542–1624), Neapolitan bishop and theologian, whose definition of the Church became emblematic for three centuries: “The one and true Church is the community of men brought together by the profession

of the same Christian faith and conjoined in the communion of the same sacraments under the Government of the legitimate pastors and especially the one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff.”⁴

Bellarmino identified three elements that characterized the Church. First, members of the Church belonged to a living organism that professed the True Faith as defined by the gospels and the apostolic tradition entrusted to Peter and his successors, the bishops of Rome. This excluded from the Church those who did not submit to the symbols of faith, namely non-Christians (Jews, Muslims, apostates, and heretics). Second, the Church was a communion of believers who were marked by participation in the sacramental life of the Church. This excluded unbaptized Christians, as well as excommunicated Christians. Third, the Church expressed her adherence to the faith through submission of mind and heart to the authority of legitimate pastors. The pastors were united in a hierarchy that culminated in the office of the Roman pontiff. This excluded those deemed “schismatics”—all Christians “separated” from communion with the Apostolic See. Bellarmine’s definition left one group of people from the whole of humanity—Catholics.⁵

Allied to the definition of the Church militant was the idea of the *societas perfecta* (the perfect society). Not only was the Church clearly defined in its own self-understanding, it existed in a state of perfection, mirroring in the temporal the reality of the eternal.⁶ This visible society was as real and tangible as the kingdom of France or the republic of Venice.⁷ The Church, like any other human society, was headed by a government, ruled by law, and guarded by a constitution. It was, in all respects, an historical society that not only reflected civil or secular society but claimed to represent in itself the most perfect form of human civilization.

This model of the Church developed in reaction to the threats posed by the Protestant Reformation. Responding to the Catholic feeling of being attacked and persecuted, the Council of Trent established norms to regularize and centralize the power of the Church through the pope and the Roman Curia. Consequently, as Dulles and others point out, the Church favored a theology of itself that supported and sustained the belief that it was indeed the “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.”⁸ Institutionalism was “a system in which the institutional element is treated as primary.”⁹ This thinking permeated the entire Catholic Church and was considered integral to the self-understanding of Catholicism. Eugenio Pacelli accepted this theological axiom in the same way he accepted the scientific truth that the earth orbits the sun.

In a logical development of this theology, the ancient tradition that Christ handed on the “deposit of faith” to Peter and the Twelve evolved into a literalist belief that Christ established the institutional Church perfectly during his earthly life. All that had happened in the intervening years was clarification of that “fact.”¹⁰ Scripture became a source text, used by dogmatic theology to support the claims of the institution, a trend that severely stunted Catholic scripture study well into the twentieth

century. Therefore, the role of theology was to support and defend the institution of the Church, whose validity was already established by the very fact of the existence of the institution itself. With the acceptance of Christ's foundation came acceptance that Christ gave full authority to the apostles and their successors, the bishops, and above them all, the pope.¹¹ And, to complete the syllogism, those who rejected the authority of the pope were, in essence, rejecting Christ. Therefore, *anathema sit* (may they be condemned).¹²

The institution was an unequal society. From the pinnacle where the pope reigned and ruled, to the laity at the base of the pyramid, everyone had a place and proper role to fulfill. Those in Holy Orders were elected by God to rule and guide the baptized. The pope was responsible to God alone for his government of the Church. Bishops acted in his name, directing the affairs of the Church in their dioceses. The priests did the same on the smaller scale of the parish. The laity showed their fidelity to Christ through fidelity to the pope and the bishops, faithfully following the teaching of the Church pronounced through Christ's legitimately anointed pastors. To challenge this authority was to risk exclusion from the Church and endanger one's immortal soul.

In 1870, the First Vatican Council promulgated the doctrine of papal infallibility. This was the completion of a long process of centralization of authority and power. In essence, it was a reaction to a social order in Europe "distrustful of, even hostile to a Catholicism which stressed an authoritative Church structure and a set of tradition-bound values."¹³ After close to a century of being denounced as the final refuge of obscurantists and reactionaries, the Church, embattled and bloodied, "viewed the ideological revolution occurring as the Frankenstein a perverse world had turned loose against the Church of Christ."¹⁴

Pius IX believed it essential to provide a clear leadership to the Catholic faithful so that errors and dangers could be avoided and the false teachings of the world be condemned. The encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus of Errors* of 1864 demonstrated that there was, at least in the Roman mind, no shortage of errors and dangers. Many of the fathers of the Vatican Council shared Pius's concerns from personal experience. Defining the doctrine of papal infallibility would, they hoped, defend and protect the Church.¹⁵ "It follows that the decree comes to us with the authority of the infallible Church, and cannot be questioned without forfeiture of the name Catholic."¹⁶

The Bishop of Rome

With the promulgation of papal infallibility, the bishop of Rome was made supreme pastor of the Church in a way that would have been unthinkable barely fifty years before. The loss of the papal states in 1870, the increasing alienation of the Church in many parts of Europe, the *Kulturkampf* in

Germany, and the growing tide of anticlericalism in France meant that bishops and people increasingly turned to Rome for help. The doctrinal formulation was closely followed by the pastoral practice of referring all things to the Holy See for the Curia's judgment and the papal assent. Unwittingly, this created a highly centralized organization that was given authority and power without having to take it, or claim it, for itself. The justification and theologizing of this process quickly followed.

In his treatise on the role of the pope, Sylvester Hunter outlined the history and principal functions of the bishop of Rome. It is important to note that the treatise began with the position of the pope (in 1895), and then justified it with reference to scripture and tradition in the second chapter.¹⁷ This is a classic example of the ahistorical approach favored by the Tridentinist apologists: present fact must have come (in its more or less completed form) from the past.

The pope is described as "Sovereign of the States of the Church, a function which is at present in abeyance, owing to the usurpation of a neighboring government."¹⁸ He is the "teacher of the Church," with the right to survey and pronounce upon any matter pertaining to faith and morals. The pope is the supreme governor and is free to exercise the right of legislation, "laying down disciplinary laws which bind the conscience of the faithful so far as the legislator pleases," and this is in agreement with the local bishops.¹⁹ It was the prerogative of the pope to create and suppress dioceses, approve religious congregations, give permission for reform of the liturgy, and pass judgment on cases presented to him by the various curial tribunals.²⁰ It also belonged to the pope to appoint trusted men in overseeing the education of future clerics.

The Roman Curia surrounded the pope. This was the papal bureaucracy that handled the day-to-day running of the Church. It advised him on matters as diverse as dogmatic theology, the constitutions of various religious orders, the cost of the maintenance of St Peter's, and the length of nuns' habits. The office of the secretary of state was more than a foreign minister or a prime minister. He was the "eyes and ears" of the pope, the man who was "his master's voice." The men who held this office from the time of Pius IX until 1944, when Pius XII assumed the duties himself, were the closest collaborators of the Holy Father and were identified with papal policy. It was the secretary of state's function to keep the pope informed of relevant material, offer advice, and pass on papal decisions to the appropriate dicasteries and congregations. The power of the Curia grew increasingly stronger throughout the nineteenth century. Clerics, and a caste of "clerical" laypeople, worked side by side. Many came from families such as the Pacellis who supplied generations of civil servants to the Vatican.

In such a theocratic system, the formation of priests was treated very seriously. Each pope, from Pius IX onward, instituted reforms to ensure that seminaries and theological faculties instructed the young clerics in the spirit of the late Tridentine age. The irony was that that same age

was also the age of industrial revolution, imperial expansion, nationalism, liberalism, socialism, and a host of other political and social ideologies at odds with the “received” tradition. Seminaries in the mid- to late nineteenth century were places where fidelity to the institution was the hallmark of orthodoxy. It was into this environment that the young Eugenio Pacelli entered in 1891 when he commenced studies for the priesthood in the Roman diocesan seminary, Collegio Capranica.

Formation of Priests in the Late Tridentine Era

During the twenty-third session of the Council of Trent, the bishops discussed, and finally approved, the measures for the establishment of seminaries. Boys of twelve or more years, born of “lawful wedlock,” literate, pious, and from any social class were to be placed under the direct supervision of the local bishop and his appointed supervisors. Daily mass, frequent confession, regular, disciplined, and supervised study along with duties assigned by the bishop provided a highly structured life for the Tridentine seminarian. This process was gradually refined into a program of approximately six years of training in philosophy, theology, scripture, liturgy, pastoral work, and canon law. All this took place within the seminary, away from the “distractions of the world.” After “this mental and moral training...he is deemed worthy of receiving the honor...of the priesthood...he is ready to live and work among men as the ambassador of Christ.”²¹

It is important to consider the Catholic understanding of the priesthood that was prevalent from the Council of Trent to Vatican II. For centuries, the Catholic priesthood was the most visible image of the bridge between the seen and unseen worlds. The priest was, by virtue of his ordination, a “sacred person” who possessed “sacred power”:

Priesthood was defined in terms of the priest’s relationship to the Eucharist, specifically his power to consecrate. From this perspective the priest [is]...a sacred person who stands over the community, a mediator between God and the faithful marked by special powers and separated from them by the obligations and privileges of a clerical culture.²²

The entire life of the priest was meant to reflect his status as acting *in persona Christi*. To the nonordained, he belonged to a “superior state,” and, in the words of the Vatican I schema *De vita et honestate clericorum*, he was a “completely spiritual man, different in desire and life from other men, disciplined in all his activities, retiring in prayer and in the striving for personal sanctification in order to be an example for the faithful.”²³

It was the cultic action of the mass where the priest found his most important and enduring sense of identity. In medieval Europe, the

harmony between the sacred and secular was clearly seen in the role of the clergy who ensured, through the observance of the liturgical life of the Church, the maintenance of the divine order. “The priest dealt with sacred matters in a sacred language. He was versed in the mysteries of the faith. He was holy by the mere fact of being a priest.”²⁴ Priests were indispensable because they provided access to the divine realm.

Such attitudes remained consistent in the Catholic world over the centuries. In devout Catholic families such as the Pacellis, the greatest “gift” they could make “was to give a son to the Church” as a priest. Catholic theology supported the understanding of the priest as an “offerer of sacrifice” who brought blessing on the world through the participation in the one sacrifice of Christ made on the cross. His God-given power to consecrate bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ made him essential to the life of the Catholic people. To be deprived of priests meant to be deprived of the sacraments. In traditional Catholic thinking and devotion, this was the worst fate that could befall the Church.

Leo XIII shared many of the concerns of his predecessor Pius IX, but was a pragmatist in so far as he believed that some rapprochement with the modern world was essential. During his long pontificate, Leo worked hard at establishing ties between the Church and those he believed were alienated from the faith because of the “errors” of the day. A major part of his literary output was directed at seminary formation.

Convinced of the need for a sound, modern academic education for the clergy, Leo insisted students study the sciences alongside traditional philosophy and theology. He encouraged historical research by opening the Vatican Archives to scholars in 1881. He promoted biblical studies and founded the Pontifical Biblical Institute in 1902. But it was his penchant for Thomas Aquinas that would mark and shape seminary education until the 1960s. The 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris* mandated the philosophy of the Angelic Doctor, who “towers over all theologians of his own or of any other age,”²⁵ as the basis of all Catholic philosophical studies. While the integrity of Catholic tertiary study improved greatly, it must also be acknowledged that the reestablishment of Thomism as the official philosophy of the Church was not successful in providing a solid ground for argument and debate between Catholics and nonbelievers.

Under Pius X, seminaries received even greater attention. A full investigation of Italian seminaries was undertaken between 1904 and 1907. The result was a detailed report and program for reorganization that reflected, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the concerns and recommendations of the Council of Trent. The pope “urgently wanted the priests to concentrate on their ultimate religious task, and he took several measures for the purpose of releasing them and preventing them from participating in all activities of an economic or political nature.”²⁶ This crossed over into the academic realm as well. Pius’s fear of what he termed “modernism”—attempts on the part of some Catholic scholars to reconcile faith with contemporary science and reason—led him to

demand strict surveillance of seminary education. Defenders of the pope praised him for saving the faith from the encroachment of rationalism, relativism, and “spiritual democracy.”²⁷ Great pain and distress was caused by his 1907 encyclical on modernism, *Pascendi*. It put Catholic academia under a permanent shadow and effectively halted much research in all areas of Catholic life. This was further compounded by the oath required of all professors and seminary teachers from 1910 until 1966. The positive aspects of Pius’s seminary reforms were lost in the modernist witch hunts of the early part of the twentieth century.

In 1917, the Code of Canon Law was promulgated. As with much of the code, the canons that dealt with the training of priests were drawn from older practices. The seminary training of Eugenio Pacelli took place in the 1890s when the first major reform of seminary curriculum had been undertaken by Leo XIII. It is reasonable to say that the outlines of curriculum contained in the code closely reflect the program of study Pacelli undertook at the Collegio Capranica and then, after 1894, when he was given special leave to complete his studies at the family home.

Prerequisites for entry into the seminary included a proficient knowledge of Latin “as well as the vernacular.”²⁸ The reference to a sound understanding of the vernacular reflected the concern that the clergy be educated men, able to move in all social circles. Therefore, standards in the seminaries were not to be lower than those of the equivalent secular learning institutions and seminarians were to be encouraged to take civil degrees.²⁹

Seminary Study and Life

Canon 1365 outlined the program of study for students of philosophy and theology. The curriculum was near-identical to courses mandated in Italian seminaries from the 1850s.³⁰ At the core of seminary education was the scholastic methodology exemplified in manuals produced by the Jesuits.

Theology was also heavily influenced by the Jesuits. Giovanni Perrone (1794–1876), professor of dogmatic theology at the Roman College for nearly 50 years, was famous for reviving the scholastic method. His were standard texts in Roman seminaries for much of the century. Perrone’s style was continued in the work of Domenico Palmieri (1829–1909), who taught at the Roman College between 1863 and 1879. Texts were set out in a question-and-answer form, with a series of propositions and counter-propositions in the style of the medieval theologians. It was not meant to be speculative thinking, but the illumination of divine truths that were accessible to human reason through the medium of the Magisterium of the Church. Scholastic theology was believed to be the best antidote to “the errors of modernity,” but was chiefly noted for its “arid form and immutable concepts.”³¹

Moral theology was similarly dry. One of its most important teachers, Pietro Scavini (1791–1869), devoted much time to the relationship between the Holy See and the modern world in what could only be described as “hair-splitting.”³² Gury’s *Compendium Theologiae Moralis* (1900) was written as an explanation of morality in legal terms. Much detail was spent on defining “acts,” “states,” grades, and varieties of sin and virtue, and the responsibilities surrounding the dispensation of the sacraments.³³ And so it continued for all subjects. Scripture study was notable for its anti-rationalist, anti-Protestant, and polemical nature. Exegesis was literalist and noncritical, used more for proving the validity of dogmatic theology than probing the meaning of the texts in order to discover the author’s intentions.³⁴

The *Institutionem Canoniarum* (1785) of Giovanni Devoti (1744–1820) was the classic text for the study of canon law for over a century. Devoti’s work, written during the years of the Enlightenment, paved the way for the reaction against rationalism, liberalism, and socialism. “This type of canon law was necessarily reflected in the mentality of the clergy and bishops . . . supporting a vision of the Church as a perfect society, in which the juridical dimension was the most prominent.”³⁵ Even areas of pastoral theology, the discipline designed to train students to work with people in all kinds of sensitive personal areas, were reduced to manuals that were set out in excruciating detail.³⁶ The young Pacelli showed himself quite at home in the world of abstract legalism and its application to the life of the Church. Law, and its ordering of human life in the secular realm, found its ultimate meaning in the ordering of life in the sacred realm. Obedience to the law of God, expressed through the laws of the Catholic Church, was axiomatic in Pacelli’s thinking. Without divine law, there would be no order and the very life of the Church would be in danger. Consequently, law was more than rules and regulations—law was a vehicle through which Catholics could find salvation. The 1917 code of canon law was made up of several thousand individual laws. Ironically, Catholics commonly criticized Judaism as a religion of legalisms.

Outside these major areas of study, the remainder of the seminary curriculum was given much less attention. Church history usually stopped at the Council of Trent and liturgy “was reduced to an exposition of the minutiae of ceremonial.”³⁷

The program of study complemented the spiritual and religious aspect of seminary life. Daily mass, attendance at morning and evening prayer, practice of devotions such as the Rosary and the Angelus, “visits” to the Blessed Sacrament and “doing” the Stations of the Cross, and weekly or monthly confession were standard expectations applicable to all students and professors. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary was cultivated with particular fervor. The place of the mother of Jesus in the spiritual lives of Catholics had experienced a major resurgence in the eighteenth century and her cult was promoted by Pius IX in an almost militant manner through the promulgation of the dogma of the

Immaculate Conception in 1854. In the same vein, spiritual reading was encouraged but tended to focus on devotional and emotional texts such the *Imitation of Christ* by the medieval author Thomas à Kempis. Provision was made for regular spiritual direction and interviews with the rector. All details of life were covered so that there would be little or no opportunity for distraction.

“Separation from the world” was considered essential in the training of student priests. In 1891, the bishops of the Marches area of Italy prescribed a highly detailed set of regulations that covered all aspects of the students’ lives, even to the point of proscribing what they should wear at night.³⁸ All contact with people outside the seminary, including immediate family, was strictly supervised. The object of the rules was to create an obedient and submissive clergy that would give its first loyalty to the “family” of the seminary, and then ultimately to the Church.³⁹

Canon 1370 made provision for what must have been an unusual exception to regular seminary life. Evidently there were occasions when a student “for whatsoever reason” lived outside the seminary. “They should be placed under the care of pious and worthy persons, who shall watch over them and lead them on to piety.” Eugenio Pacelli completed most of his ecclesiastical study as an external student working from home. Clearly the seminary rector at the Capranica authorized Pacelli’s home study program. What measure of supervision he experienced at home and the manner of examinations is unclear, but it does appear that the academically inclined Pacelli completed his studies and met the requirements for ordination. It remains clear, however, that Pacelli’s home study was highly unusual. The nature of the household must have been such that it imitated in its domestic routine the daily life of a seminary.

Catholicism and Judaism: The Synagogue Despondent⁴⁰

Jews and Judaism had a place in the seminary curriculum in the late nineteenth century. From the outset, it is important to note the inherent contradiction in Catholic and indeed in most Christian theology at this time. Judaism, as a religion, was a subject fit for study only in so far as it was understood as the precursor to Christ and the founding of the Christian Church.⁴¹ This meant that it was the religion of the Hebrew Bible that was of interest to Christian theologians. Post-70 CE Judaism held little interest. The Jews as a people held even less interest to theologians outside the traditional Augustinian polemic. Liberalism, rationalism, and the advent of socialism were perceived as greater threats to the Church than the emancipation of the Jews. This did not mean that Catholic theologians remained neutral in expressing anti-Jewish and antisemitic statements within their discipline. Some did, and many did not. The fact that Jews benefited from the decline in the authority of the Church was, for many Catholic academics, a regrettable and lamentable testimony to the

breakdown of Christendom, but not necessarily a license to indulge in political antisemitism.⁴²

Catholic theological and apologetical writings concerning Jews were positive when speaking of Judaism as the herald of Christianity. In 1852, John MacHale, author of *The Evidences and Doctrines of the Catholic Church*, wrote that the survival of the Jewish people was “not a tribute to their religion: no it is forced on the reflecting mind by those circumstances, which mark the Jews as an exception to all the nations of the earth,” which is that they are “incapable of incorporating with any other nation.”⁴³ Everything of value in the religion of the Old Testament “was only a shadow of a more perfect covenant” of the coming of Christ, who was killed by the Jewish priests out of jealousy.⁴⁴ Following the traditional pattern of Catholic theology, MacHale wrote that the ruin of the Jews was the result of their presumption to know the Divine will. In other words, the Jews were “lost” precisely because they held so tightly to the idea of a “Chosen People” and remained faithful to the Mosaic covenant.⁴⁵

Scripture studies of the late nineteenth century reflected an equally uncritical appreciation of Judaism. As with theology, scripture study used Judaism and the Hebrew Bible as a source tool to validate the claims of the Christian Church.⁴⁶ The German scholar Heinrich Ewald wrote an eight-volume history of Israel. In the final volume, he came to the conclusion that the purpose of Judaism was ultimately to prepare the way for Christ and Christianity. Once that was achieved, Jewish history was ended. Christianity fulfilled and completed the now defunct faith.⁴⁷ Whatever was good in Judaism was passed on to Christianity; the only positive use the Jews served was to remind Christians that their religion was “very far from being what it ought to be.” Ewald added that Judaism drew its strength from the imperfection of Christians.⁴⁸

The very fact of Jewish survival, both in ethnocentric and religious terms, led to a regular repetition of the classical arguments. In the post-Enlightenment age, however, the arguments sounded as hollow and shallow as the apologetics and dogmatic theology they were meant to defend. Some Christians looked on religious Jews as a quaint relic that prompted feelings of devotion.⁴⁹ Whatever the perspective, Jews were generally regarded as archeological anachronisms who bore little relation to the emancipated Jews of western Europe or the Yiddish-speaking peasants of eastern Europe.

Tracing the development of religious belief, Baring-Gould declared in 1884 that the great gift of the Jews to the world was monotheism. From this flowed the arts, literature, and science: “But, like an alpine glacier, it hangs cold and barren above the flowering meadows, which derive their beauty and their freshment from itself. In one of the Arctic expeditions an explorer kindled a fire by means of a prism of ice. Jewdom has been that prism, giving birth to warmth but remaining cold itself.”⁵⁰ Putting a more theological slant on this expression delivered the same

outcome. The study of Judaism was necessary for an understanding of Christianity, but it was nonetheless a study of an “antique religious community.”⁵¹

Catholic scripture study fared little better than the tomes of dogmatic theology. Francis Gigot’s *Outlines of New Testament History* in 1898 was a fundamentalist interpretation of the life of Jesus. Treating the gospels as pieces of biographical literature, it is not difficult to see how any reference to Jews would be negative. The Jews continually undermined Jesus’s work and Jesus himself prophesied the demise of Israel, which “drew from his loving heart the most tender expression of grief.”⁵² The final rejection of Christ was, of course, at the scene of his trial before Pilate, thus sealing the fate of the unbelieving Jews, whom Harnack described as “a people stiff-necked and prone to idolatry.”⁵³

The Jewishness of Jesus was never seriously questioned outside a small group of largely German scholars. It was his relationship with Judaism that exegetes felt they had to explain. Wilhelm Bousset, in his 1908 work *What is Religion?*, was at pains to show how Judaism came to be hated among the nations precisely because of Jewish fidelity to the Torah and the spirit of the prophets. According to Bousset, this made Judaism a religion of legalisms. In placing Jesus within the context of his times and his Judaism, he wrote: “First of all Jesus freed religion from nationality. Judaism spells fetters, Christianity, freedom.”⁵⁴ Although he was a faithful Jew, Jesus sought to free Judaism from its purely worldly messianic longings. “Thus Jesus freed the belief in the future life . . . from any thought of the Jewish nation.” Indeed, Bousset went on to claim that Jesus freed Judaism from ceremonial observances, “outdated erudition,” and, most importantly of all, “religion of the Law.” His closing remark typifies the contempt of Judaism that flowed directly from the earliest centuries of the Christian Church: “Judaism since the period of the New Testament has only had a history of stagnation.”⁵⁵

Adolf Harnack, one of the great luminaries of German Protestant theological and historical scholarship, expressed the generally held views of many Christian scholars on the relationship between contemporary Judaism and Christianity:

The Jewish nation in which Jesus Christ appeared, has for the time at least, no special relation to the God whom Jesus revealed. Whether it had such a relation at an earlier period is doubtful, but certain it is that God has now cast it off, and that all revelations of God so far as they took place before Christ, must have aimed solely at the call of the “new people,” and in some way prepared for the revelation of God through his Son.⁵⁶

Judaism as a religion has been abandoned and superseded by the Church.⁵⁷

Harnack's anti-Judaism became so vitriolic that he had serious doubts as to the validity of retaining the Hebrew Bible in the Christian canon.⁵⁸ The influence of a man of the intellectual stature of Harnack was significant not only in Germany but throughout educated Europe. He was known and read in many liberal Catholic circles, but it is hard to say how extensive his influence was on Catholic theologians and scripture scholars.

Christian theological attitudes toward Judaism were challenged by the growth of racist antisemitism in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913) provides a valuable insight into the way the Church handled the distinction between racial antisemitism and its propensity for violence, and the traditional anti-Judaism of the Christian Church. Francis Gigot, author of the article, outlined the standard approach toward Jews and Judaism. A distinction was clearly made between the people of the pre-Christian era, the hard-hearted Jews who rejected Christ, and the fate of the Jews since the year 70 CE. Gigot's writing is fundamentalist and ahistorical. The Jews were a rejected people. The tone of the article was dispassionate—it was a fact, obvious to all. Consequently, anti-Jewish violence, while regrettable, was understandable. The sources of consolation for this pathetic people were the Roman pontiffs, who showed “beneficent efforts . . . in their regard.”⁵⁹

Even though, at times, the Church had legislated harshly against the Jews, this was understood as the Church defending her own from “the power of [Christ's] enemies.”⁶⁰ This included restrictions on Jewish movement, the wearing of the badge, and the creation of ghettos. This presaged a dangerous direction, and again showed a link with racial antisemitism. For the protection of the Christian people, the Church enacted anti-Jewish laws. The Jews were, at best, a potential menace by the mere fact of their presence among the Christians. And the feeling toward the Jews, to use Gigot's word, was “hatred.” In the mixture of religious and pseudosociological thought, Gigot demonstrates a disturbing similarity to many of the continental antisemites.⁶¹

Finally, Gigot summarized the main reasons why people hated Jews, and further, why the Catholic Church has been the greatest defender of the Jews. In his reasons, he unwittingly demonstrated how effectively and thoroughly the language of racial antisemitism had penetrated Catholic thinking. Jews were hated because of “the deep and wide racial difference between Jews and Christians which was, moreover, emphasized by the ritual and dietary laws of Talmudic Judaism.”⁶² This was a new direction in Catholic thinking, even if it was unintentional. Jews were not only a different religious group, but they were now identified as a distinct racial group. Gigot's language may not have been precise, but it was clear. And since the encyclopedia carried with it the *imprimatur* and *nihil obstat*, the article must have passed through a theological scrutiny before publication. Less than two decades later, this thinking was refined into a form described as “permissible antisemitism.”

“Permissible Antisemitism”

Gustav Gundlach (1892–1963) was a German Jesuit who wrote the entry *Antisemitismus* for the *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche*.⁶³ He identified two forms of antisemitism. The first was described as “politico-racial” and sought to “combat Judaism simply because of its racial and national foreignness, the latter because of the excessive and deleterious influence of the Jewish segment of the population of a given people.”⁶⁴ This was contrary to Christianity, and was condemned. However, Gundlach argued that a second form of antisemitism was permissible

when it combats, by moral and legal means, a truly harmful influence of the Jewish segment of the population in the areas of economy, politics, theatre, cinema, the press, science, and art. Here we must reject exceptional laws directed against Jewish citizens *qua* Jews, and do so from the point of view of the modern legal state. The positive means are: impregnating social life with the Christian spirit, fighting against not only Semitic but also “Aryan” *vermin* [my italics], reinforcing positive moral and religious factors within Judaism against the liberal, “assimilated” Jews who, being for the most part given to moral nihilism and without any national or religious ties, operate within the camp of world plutocracy as well as within that of international Bolshevism, thus unleashing the darker traits of the soul of the Jewish people expelled from its fatherland.⁶⁵

Gundlach’s article was ambiguous. How could a modern state legislate against Jews without recourse to some racial classification? How could the state determine the influence of Jews on the economy or any other area of national life without using racial categories to locate them? How could any legal means be anything other than exceptional according to the criteria listed above, since the Semitic *vermin* were busily “white-anting” the state and destroying the moral fiber of the otherwise Christian people? At the time of his writing, the Nuremberg laws were only five years in the future, but for theologians such as Gundlach, the article reflected a perceived reality—a Jewish problem—in need of a solution. This mishmash of antisemitic diatribe was an accurate reflection of Catholic thinking and teaching in 1930. Toward the end of the article, Gundlach restated the myth of the Church’s benevolence given to the Jews when faced with oppression. But all of this benevolence was to demonstrate the true position of the Jews: “The Church must reject modern systems of anti-Semitism that are based on false theories of man and of the course of history, by constantly stressing the preponderant role that has been assigned to Judaism as a chosen people within the divine and Christian economy of salvation.”⁶⁶

As stressed before, Gundlach’s article was not exceptional. It was written for a theological handbook and as such was available for students as a

reference source. Traditional theological language was now tied, uncritically, into the language of racist pseudoscience. And having become common currency in educated circles, it passed into popular culture. “Permissible antisemitism” was taught and accepted in the seminaries of Europe.⁶⁷ I have no reason to think that Eugenio Pacelli would have been taught differently, either in his school education or at the seminaries and universities he attended. Hostility toward Jews remained a given in Catholic self-understanding, which made the pronouncement of the Holy Office in 1928 condemning antisemitism all the more interesting.

Amici Israel

In 1926 a Dutch Jewish convert, Sophie Franziska van Leer (1892–1953) founded a pious association for priests with a twofold objective: firstly to pray and work for the conversion of the Jews using positive means rather than the old polemical approach, and secondly, to work for the removal of the word “perfidis” in the Good Friday prayer. Within a very short time, van Leer’s group had spread across Europe and enjoyed significant support including Cardinals Michael Faulhaber (1869–1952) of Munich; Pietro Gasparri (1852–1934), the papal secretary of state; and Raphael Merry del Val (1865–1930), Prefect of the Holy Office.

The *Amici* were convinced that the language of the liturgy was open to an antisemitic interpretation and should be changed. A petition to the pope was written and sent in January 1928. More significantly there was discussion in their 1928 pamphlet *Pax super Israel* (Peace over Israel) of changing the ancient theology of supersessionism and revoking the charge of deicide as well as developing a more contemporary understanding of Jews and Judaism. Pius XI received the pamphlet and a petition from the *Amici* and passed them to the Congregation of Rites, which had responsibility for the supervision of the liturgy. After a consultative process and following standard forms, the Congregation of Rites submitted the proposal to the Holy Office because any change to the liturgy was a change in the expression of faith and required the consent of the Church’s guardians of orthodoxy.

After completing its own consultation process, the Holy Office rejected all the proposals to change the liturgy and then issued a condemnation of the *Amici* itself. At the heart of the Holy Office decision lay a firm belief that any change to the traditional beliefs about Jews and Judaism and their rejection of Christ would be suggesting that the Church had been wrong for centuries. Such a thought could not be contemplated because it was, ipso facto, false. Furthermore, the *Amici Israel* had effectively accused the Church of being anti-Jewish and, by implication, antisemitic. Merry del Val, in his capacity as Prefect of the Holy Office, formally advised the Congregation of Rites to reject any attempt to reform the liturgy and asked the pope to order the dissolution of the group. Pius accepted the advice of Merry del Val and ordered the group dissolved.

However, the pope was concerned that any decree of dissolution must be careful to avoid any possible accusation of antisemitism. The published text of March 25, 1928 made no mention of the reasons for the dissolution of *Amici Israel* except to say that they had suggested ideas that were contrary to Catholic tradition and liturgy. What it did say in unambiguous terms was simple and direct.

The Catholic Church has always prayed for the Jewish people, depositories, until the coming of Jesus Christ, of the divine promise, regardless of their subsequent blindness, or rather, precisely because of it. Moved by the spirit of charity, the Apostolic See has protected this same people against unjust vexations, and just as it reproves all hatreds and animosities between people, so it especially condemns hatred against the people once chosen by God, which today is commonly called “anti-Semitism.”⁶⁸

Anna Lysiak summarized the fate of the *Amici Israel* and the subsequent decree: “This was the Church’s first official condemnation of antisemitism, but paradoxically, it appeared only in the decree that dissolved the organization that also endeavored to oppose it.”⁶⁹ Hubert Wolf was even blunter. He charges Pius XI with “moral impoverishment, because it is easy to condemn hatred of Jews in others while not changing one’s own anti-Semitic conduct, in this case, the working of the liturgy.”⁷⁰ Prayer for the conversion of the Jews was acceptable, but any suggestion that traditional Catholic teaching of contempt needed changing, was not. In other words, Catholic anti-Judaism was a “permissible” form of antisemitism. The swiftness of the Holy See’s response, less than four months from the receipt of the petition to its condemnation, is of itself evidence of a defensive reaction to any challenge to the theological status quo.

Theology, Catholics, and Jews in Italy

Postrisorgimento Italy was a collection of many “little Italies” that had emerged from the Piedmontese-led unification of the peninsula. With the breach of the Porta Pia in Rome on September 18, 1870, the long and hard task of creating a nation-state began. Massimo D’Azeglio’s quip, “Italy is made, now we must make Italians,” was not intended as a joke.⁷¹ The new Savoy kingdom was already marked by a liberal spirit that was determined to make Italy a modern and secular European state. The years 1870 to 1915 are regarded as the “Liberal Period” during which the foundations of the modern state were laid.

For the 35,800 Jews of Italy, unification was welcomed as the harbinger of full emancipation.⁷² On October 13, 1870, Vittorio Emanuele II formally repealed all remaining religious disabilities anywhere in Italy. Jews were full subjects of the Savoy monarchy and citizens of the Italian

state. They shared all the privileges and responsibilities of all Italians, with access to all parts of society, and they were not slow to show they were willing to participate in the new state.

Italian Jews were already noted for their rapid assimilation into mainstream national political and economic life.⁷³ After 1870, this process accelerated to the point that the greatest danger confronting Italian Jewry was peaceful extinction.⁷⁴ In gratitude for their full emancipation, the Jews of Italy gave near total loyalty to the monarchy, liberal political institutions, and nation-building. Of all sections of Italian society, Italian Jews were among the most dedicated and enthusiastic supporters of a unified and cohesive social order.⁷⁵ They stood in marked contrast to some sections of the liberal movement who saw a “state within a state” when they looked at Jews, and the recalcitrant clergy who believed that the newfound freedoms granted to Jews were signs of a dangerous and perverse state, which had robbed the Church of its rightful property and status.⁷⁶

There were antisemites in Italy but modern, political antisemitism was not a part of mainstream Italian culture either before or after the *Risorgimento*. The relative absence of antisemitism in Italy was due to a combination of reasons. The homogeneous composition of the population and the lack of small “national minorities” meant that political scapegoating did not assume the proportions of countries such as Germany and Austria. Italian industrial and international development occurred much later than other European powers.⁷⁷

The size of the Jewish community, the absence of the despised “Eastern Jews,” the *Ostjuden*, and a generally tolerant non-Jewish population were other factors. Italian antisemitism, such as it was, tended to be restricted to a form of nonracial discrimination on the part of some liberals, where Jews were used as “bogeymen” in order to encourage greater efforts in strengthening national cohesion. It is important to keep in mind that Italian antisemitism, of whatever kind, was only ever a peripheral element in political and social life. The vast majority of Italians were quite content to live in peace with their Jewish neighbors. This was hardly surprising, since most Italians had never met a Jew.

Clerical anti-Jewish sentiment was easier to explain. “In contrast to the liberal current, Catholic antisemites were more significant in numbers, more persistent in time, and more representative of their ideological camp as a whole.”⁷⁸ Clerical antisemitism focused on the familiar themes that had dominated the propapal Catholic siege mentality since 1870.⁷⁹ For most of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, clerical antisemites waged a solitary and generally ignored battle. The Hierarchy did not share their concerns at the danger of the Jews; there were more important things to concern episcopal minds. The evidence shows that more than a few bishops had cordial and friendly relations with local Jewish communities.⁸⁰ This illustrates the gulf between the “official” and “unofficial” teaching of the Church. To the Jews as a faith, nothing; to the Jews as people and Italians, everything.

This was typified in the person of Pius X (1903–1914). As bishop and later as pope, Giuseppe Sarto enjoyed personal friendships with a number of Jews. When it came to theology, however, he followed traditional Catholic anti-Judaism. When, on January 25, 1904, Theodore Herzl sought papal support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, Pius said, “The Jews have not recognized Our Lord, therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people.” It also needs to be remembered that most Italian Jews were opposed to Zionism, and that the Pope’s response was not unusual for the time.⁸¹

The most significant examples of clerical antisemitism were to be found in the Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Founded in Naples in April 1850, *Civiltà* gave antisemitism “the intellectual prestige of the Jesuits and the authority of a publication considered universally as the oracle of orthodox Catholicism.”⁸² The journal’s director was approved personally by the pope, and the editorial committee met with the secretary of state before each edition was published. Approval of the content of *Civiltà* rested on three principles:

1. All articles had to be in conformity to the teaching of the Catholic Church in faith and morals.
2. They were to be faithful expositions of the position of the Holy See in its relations with other states.
3. The timing of article publication had to be opportune and favorable to the Vatican.

Although the journal had a subscription of about 11,000, it had a global readership that extended from Melbourne to Montreal. Therefore whatever was published in *Civiltà* was naturally presumed to be, at the very least, official Church thinking on the issue.

Between October 6 and December 7, 1881, the journal ran a series of articles written by Giuseppe Oreglia (1823–1895) on the veracity of the blood libel.⁸³ *Civiltà* promised its readers that it would “provide authentic proof of the existence of a religious–talmudic–rabbinic law which obligated Jews to celebrate Passover with Christian blood.” Further, the sources were supposedly found in the Vatican Archives.⁸⁴ Ironically, in June 1898, another Jesuit journal, the English *Month*, published an article by Herbert Thurston condemning antisemitism and refuting charges of blood libel.⁸⁵

In 1890, *Civiltà* published a series of articles entitled *Della questione giudaica in Europa*. The editor was preoccupied with the Jewish menace stalking Europe, but stated categorically that political or racial antisemites were tackling the question incorrectly. At the heart of Europe’s unease with Jews was morality. Christians hate “Talmudic” Judaism because its morality “contradicts the most elementary principles of natural ethics.”⁸⁶ Jews considered themselves a *razza superiore* who, armed with the Talmud, sought to dominate the world.⁸⁷ This knowledge was revealed by converted

Jews who wanted to warn Christians of the dangers of Judaism.⁸⁸ Other aspects of Jewish danger to Christian civilization included the influx of *Ostjuden* into Austria-Hungary, Jewish wealth, control of the press, links to Freemasonry, and all the negative fruits of the French Revolution.⁸⁹

Civiltà was also vocal during the Dreyfus Affair in 1894 and in the years following. Declaring Alfred Dreyfus, a French army officer, a traitor and fully deserving of his sentence to banishment to Devil's Island, *Civiltà* declared that the whole "Dreyfusard conspiracy" was the work of the "Jewish race" who were intent on plotting the overthrow of Catholic France through an alliance with Protestants, Freemasons, anarchists, and socialists. To counter this threat, the journal urged the nations of the world to create a fundamental law depriving Jews of any form of citizenship, relegating them to the status only of tolerated guests and foreigners.⁹⁰

Clerical antisemitism remained the domain of the intransigent opponents of the *Risorgimento*. Their influence must not be exaggerated, but at the same time, it is important to note that the reach of a journal such as *Civiltà* was wide-ranging. Its impact on the thinking of its reading public remains speculative. It is reasonable to suggest that most readers of *Civiltà* at least sympathized with the editor's position. Italian clerical antisemitism was always a marginal affair.⁹¹

Whatever the young Eugenio Pacelli thought about Jews, if he thought about them at all, needs to be seen through the matrices outlined above. Pacelli was an Italian and a Roman. He was born in the years following the breach of the Porta Pia and grew up in the first decades of the new liberal state and was educated by that state. He was also a Catholic and grew up in the shadow of the "Prisoner of the Vatican." His family was educated and intensely loyal to the institution of the papacy. Working close to the center of Catholicism, Marcantonio Pacelli, and later his son, Filippo, could not have escaped exposure to the thinking espoused in journals such as *Civiltà* and the Vatican's daily broadsheet *L'Osservatore Romano*. The anti-Judaic sentiments of late Tridentine Catholicism that permeated the official teaching of the Church must have found their way into the minds and hearts of that devout family who lived in Via Monte Giardiano, a "stone's throw" from St Peter's. Young Eugenio was not immune to the currents of thought swirling about him in either of the two worlds he lived in. It is to the geography and history of those two worlds that we now turn.

CHAPTER FOUR

Eugenio Pacelli 1876–1917

[I]n one way, though, he was different from other children of his age: he was nearly always alone. He preferred to keep to himself—to remain detached . . . the boy seemed to find his own company sufficient.

Prince Constantine, *The Pope: A Portrait from Life*, 168

The Pacelli Family

Eugenio Pacelli's family history is an important part of the study of the future pope's actions and reactions during the Holocaust. His attitudes toward the Catholic Church and the wider world were in no small part shaped by his family history and environment. The convergence of religious, historical, political, and social matrices with those of the Pacelli family gave Eugenio the foundation on which he built his own worldview. Family history is not used here to "explain away" Pius XII, but as a vehicle to help the historian understand the personal environment of the man who became the highest moral authority in the world during the years of, arguably, the greatest acts of immorality in recorded history.

The origins of the Pacelli family are obscure. They first appear in Onano in the far north of the province of Lazio toward the end of the seventeenth century. The name underwent a change sometime during the early eighteenth century, becoming the familiar Pacelli. By 1763, the family had their own *stemma*, or coat of arms, which appeared over the main door of Casa Pacelli on the street known today as Via Cavour. What is known is that the family enjoyed a reasonable standard of living, and although not listed in the noble families of the region, was prosperous and esteemed. Various members of the family owned property throughout the town, along with several farms.

On January 8, 1774, Maria Domenica Pacelli, daughter of Marco Antonio, married Francesco Caterini. The Caterini were a prominent Onano family. Six children were born of this union. The youngest was Prospero (1795–1881), who was to play an important role in the life of

Eugenio Pacelli's grandfather, Marcantonio. Twenty-four years later, Maria Domenica's brother Gaetano Pacelli married Maria Antonia Caterini, sister of Francesco. Of this union, five sons and one daughter were born. The third son, Marcantonio, the future grandfather of Eugenio, was born on April 15, 1804.

Prospero Caterini was judged to be of sufficient caliber and promise to be sent to Rome to study for the priesthood. Most biographers agree that Prospero encouraged several of his cousins to join him in Rome, where prospects for careers were more positive than in provincial Onano. In 1819, Marcantonio left the village with his brother Giuseppe (c.1806–1894) and moved to Rome, settling in Rione di Parione just across the Tiber from St Peter's. Parione is one of the oldest inhabited parts of Rome, nestled between Colonna, Pigna, and Ponte. It is a small suburb marked by narrow winding streets, tall storied apartment buildings, *piazze*, churches, and baroque splendors such as Chiesa Nuova.

The Pacellis lived less than ten minutes' walk from Piazza Navone in Via degli Orsini 34, known in the early nineteenth century as via Monte Giordano, in the Palazzo Pediconi. It was a short walk of about fifteen to twenty minutes from Via degli Orsini across Ponte Sant'Angelo to San Pietro. It was another short walk of about the same time to reach the Sant'Angelo *rione* to the south of Parione—the Jewish ghetto.

Marcantonio Pacelli

Marcantonio advanced rapidly under the patronage of his prominent cousin. In 1824, he received his doctorate in law, *ad proemium*, and began practicing within the papal courts. By 1834 he was an advocate with the tribunal of the Holy Roman Rota, the ecclesiastical courts that dealt with marriage.¹ Marcantonio married at this time and had ten children.² Filippo, the second son and future father of Eugenio Pacelli, was born on September 1, 1837 during a cholera epidemic.

Pacelli's devotion to the Holy See and the person of the pope made him a loyal servant of Pius IX. Revolution and the emergent Italian nationalist movement were alien sentiments to him. When Pius IX was forced to flee Rome in the wake of the insurrection of November 24, 1848, the faithful Pacelli joined him as a legal and political adviser.³ Until the French sponsored restoration of papal power in April 1850, Pius, and presumably the antiliberal Pacelli, remained in the Neapolitan city of Gaeta as the guests of the local abbot. A furious, humiliated, and impotent pontiff thundered invective against the "outrageous treason of democracy." The pope returned to Rome, helped by French bayonets and Rothschild money, with an implacable suspicion of liberalism and the modern world. It is probably safe to say that his faithful servant, Marcantonio Pacelli, shared the same opinions, including the reconstruction of the Roman ghetto and the reinstatement of conversion sermons.

Pius was not slow to reward Pacelli. On January 29, 1851, he appointed Marcantonio as the minister of the interior of the papal states, a position he held until the fall of Rome in September 1870. Part of Pacelli's duties was the investigation of those suspected of participating in the 1848 revolt. The now reactionary pope would not have entrusted such a sensitive post to a man of suspect sympathies or doubtful loyalty. Two years later, the pope enrolled Pacelli in the list of the *Nobile di Aquapendente*.⁴ This was followed on January 5, 1858 with enrolment in the *Nobile di Sant' Angelo in Vado*.⁵ The Pacellis were a recently ennobled family, albeit in a minor rank, and not aristocracy.

The proclamation of the new kingdom of Italy in Florence on March 17, 1861 prompted a reaction from Rome. Marcantonio believed there was a need for a vigorous broadsheet that would defend the claims of the pope and his temporal sovereignty. With papal approval, he founded *L'Osservatore Romano* as a deliberately polemical and apologetic newspaper. Describing itself as a "political and moral" paper, *L'Osservatore* launched itself with an attack on the recently dead Cavour and all the evils of Italian liberalism. The aggressive tone grew more strident as the pope's temporal power declined. When the Porta Pia was breached, the paper suspended publication for a month. In its first edition after the *Risorgimento*, *L'Osservatore* proclaimed its total loyalty and obedience to the pope. What is of greater significance was the recognition that *L'Osservatore* generally reflected the current thinking of the pope and the Curia.

An ever-increasing conservatism and hostility toward the modern world marked the last years of Pio Nono's temporal power. Gladstone, visiting Italy in 1852, likened Rome to a prison. Perhaps no other event characterized the pope's retreat from engagement with the modern world as the Mortara scandal in 1858.

Edgardo Mortara was the son of Bolognese Jews, Momolo and Marianna, born on August 27, 1851.⁶ About December 1853, the sixteen-month-old baby contracted neuritis and was believed to be dying. Anna Morisi, an illiterate Catholic servant girl employed in the household, secretly baptized Edgardo. Bologna was still part of the papal states at this time and Catholic canon law was enforced in the same manner as secular law. Church law stated that a Jewish child became a Christian upon baptism, even if the parents did not approve. Further, once baptism had occurred, it was forbidden to leave the child in a Jewish home, "even if the home belongs to his parents." Learning of the baptism several years later, the local officer of the Inquisition, Dominican Gaetano Feletti, ordered the child taken from his parent's home on June 23, 1853. Taken to Rome, Edgardo was placed under the personal protection of Pius IX, who formally adopted the boy. He was sent to the House of Neophytes, a conversion institute reopened after the Pope's return from Gaeta. The young Mortara was educated in Catholic institutions and eventually entered the Canons Regular of the Lateran in 1870, just before the fall of Rome.⁷

International outrage at the kidnapping of the boy culminated at the pope and the regime in the papal states. Pius ignored all of it, including the personal appeals made by Napoleon III, the pope's protector in Rome, and the papal financier, the Jew, Lord Rothschild.⁸ Mortara's family was given limited access to Edgardo, but after he left Rome, the family never saw him again. Throughout the scandal, Marcantonio Pacelli, the papal minister of the interior, must have known the whole course of events. It is reasonable to assume that he fully agreed with his master's actions and rationale.

This begs the question: was Pacelli antisemitic? The simple answer is "no." He was most likely anti-Judaic in the sense outlined in [chapter 3](#) and would have accepted the Church's attitude toward Judaism, as described in [chapter 4](#). It is also highly likely that these sentiments were handed on to his children, including Filippo, who in his turn handed them on to his children, including Eugenio. There is no question of a malicious anti-Jewishness about the Pacellis. Pius IX's action was not "wrong" because a Jewish child had been saved from potential damnation. It mattered naught that "the world" condemned the pontiff; what mattered was loyalty and faithful service to the Holy See and all it represented.

Marcantonio, as minister and papal lawyer, belonged to a new class within the Vatican. He also represented a new force within government that was fast replacing the old style that had so often ruled by force of personality and with connections of family or class. Modern government, and the papal administration—modern in form if not in nature—was run by middle-class bureaucrats who served in a system. Their function was to maintain the system, not create or change it. And often they served the system first, and the leader second. The Pacellis' service was a combination of loyalty to the system and loyalty to the person of the pope. The Vatican bureaucracy, however, was fundamentally biased against men such as Pacelli: Pacelli was not a cleric, and in the Vatican clerical culture, actual power resided in the clergy, who headed all the curial congregations and dicasteries. A layman such as Marcantonio may have been a dutiful and loyal son of the Church, but he was outside the clerical caste that wielded the sacral-political power of the Keys given to Peter and his successors.

Marcantonio's career was a service of devotion that was to last well into the life of his grandson Eugenio. It was also a service that was well rewarded with further titles. With the fall of the papal states in 1870, the Pacellis, along with other members of the papal nobility, refused to recognize the new Italy. Marcantonio declined the invitation from the new government to accept the position of a state councilor. His papal biographer saw this as "giving further evidence of his steadfastness" in loyalty to Pio Nono.⁹ Known as the "Black Nobility," the cluster of families about the Vatican grew increasingly conservative and ultramontanist. Until 1929, some Black Noble families maintained the custom of leaving the shutters on the street side of their homes closed. Others kept one door permanently closed, wore

only one glove, or placed a chair permanently in the corner of the main family room symbolizing the “Prisoner of the Vatican.” The Pacellis kept the windows facing Via Monte Giordano shut fast. Both men and women wore the papal colors of white and gold in sharp contrast to the Savoy colors of red, white, and green. The new Rome and the new Italy were foreign places for the Pacellis and families like them.

Filippo Pacelli

Marcantonio’s second son, Filippo, followed his father into a legal career in Vatican service, eventually becoming dean of the Consistorial Advocates.¹⁰ Filippo also followed his father in a sense of deep devotion to the papacy and the Church.¹¹ When not engaged in legal work on marriages, ordinations, and religious professions in the Roman Rota, Filippo taught catechism to local children and gave out copies of pious tracts.¹²

Unlike his father, Filippo believed some participation in the new Italy was necessary if Catholicism was to regain what the Black Nobility saw as its rightful place in Italian life. Between 1886 and 1905, Filippo served as a member of the Rome City Council.¹³ Although Pius IX had banned Catholics from participating in national political life in 1862, neither he nor his successors banned activity in local and regional politics. Men such as Filippo Pacelli formed the vanguard of Catholic social and political action that “crusaded joyfully for the *reconquista* of Italian society, while still remaining firmly committed to Papal claims and to ‘intransigence’ on the Roman question.”¹⁴

The early governments of the *Postrisorgimento* viewed the Catholic Church with great suspicion and distrust. Pius IX turned his back on the new government and refused to have anything to do with it. Civil marriage was mandated, attempts were made to make divorce legal, and education made the domain of a government department. All these measures were, in part, designed to break the cultural and spiritual hold of the Church over Italians. Successive governments waxed and waned in anticlericalism primarily because the vast majority of Italians refused to abandon the Church. Some church land was seized and used for government departments, hospitals, and schools. Some religious were expelled from their convents, and some orders were suppressed, but after the first explosion of anticlericalism, calmer minds prevailed and by 1880 had largely silenced the extremists.

For the most part, the two Italys lived side by side in a state of “uneasy cohabitation—punctuated by many petty quarrels.”¹⁵ Indeed, the Italian government “bent over backwards” to reach an accommodation with the pope. In 1871, the Law of Guarantees was passed (with the votes of all the Jewish deputies) giving the Church more or less complete freedom to run its own affairs. Resolving the “Roman question” and the relationship of the Vatican to the Italian state would take the next fifty-eight years.¹⁶

Eugenio Pacelli, 1876–1917: In the Shadow of St Peter’s

On October 1, 1871, Filippo married Virginia Graziosi, daughter of another Black Noble family. Little is known about the future mother of Eugenio Pacelli except that she is variously described as “a woman of extraordinary *sensibilità*, a sensitive woman, a saint.”¹⁷ Virginia shared the worldview of her husband and passed it onto her children. Filippo and Virginia had four children: Giuseppina, Francesco, Eugenio, and Elisabetta.¹⁸

Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni was born on March 3, 1876 into a family characterized by conservative, antiliberal politics, and ultramontanist Catholic theology. A Pacelli was first and foremost a defender of God’s holy Church and Christ’s Vicar on Earth. Eugenio was baptized on March 4 in the parish church of Santi Celso e Giuliano by his paternal great-uncle, Don Giuseppe Pacelli.

The early years of Pacelli’s life were spent in the close confines of Parione. By all accounts, Eugenio grew up in a loving and affectionate family. His mother doted on him, and he was particularly close to his younger sister, Elisabetta, joining her in games with other young children in the street. At all times the family’s identification with the “Prisoner of the Vatican” asserted itself, even to the other children of the area. Spinosa writes that Virginia was concerned that her children not play with the so-called “dangerous infidels” whose parents had forsaken loyalty to the pope and made their peace with Savoy Italy.

The Pacelli children were raised in the pious atmosphere of Via Monte Giardano. In 1880, the family moved quite literally around the corner to 19, Via Vetrina. Marcantonio’s home in Palazzo Pediconi was too small for the growing family. Via Vetrina became the Pacelli home for the next thirty years.

Life revolved around the cycle of the Church’s liturgical year. The family worshipped at Chiesa Nuova where the Oratorian priests were family friends, especially Father Giuseppe Lais, who appears to have been a priestly role model for the young Pacelli. Eugenio and the other children made their first communion at this church, and Eugenio served there as an altar boy from 1886. The daily life of the family was marked by frequent “visits” to the shrine of La Madonna della Strada in the great Jesuit church Il Gesu, wearing the brown scapular of La Madonna della Carmine, daily rosary, and other pious devotions.

Shortly after the move to Via Vetrina, Eugenio began school at the convent of the French Sisters of Divine Providence in the Piazza Fiammetta. Hatch and Walshe make the point that the Pacellis would not entrust the education of their children to the state school system, which they considered riddled with “anti-clericalism and new ideas on philosophy”; they wanted a school “they were sure was run in the old familiar way.”¹⁹ And while the “old familiar way” is not described, it most likely meant a school that taught the values of faithful loyalty to the Church and the pope, as well as alertness to the dangers of the modern liberal state. Pacelli’s later

adult suspicions of the modern world were implanted in his earliest years, and the evidence of his life, right up to the end, suggests that he saw little that warranted a change of those suspicions.

In 1886, Eugenio was sent to the private school of Professor Giuseppe Marchi in the piazza Santa Lucia dei Ginnasi, a short walk from Il Gesu and near Piazza Venezia in the center of the city. Marchi was described as a classicist and gifted linguist who passed on a love of history, and especially Catholic history, to Eugenio.²⁰ The school was a two-room affair run by Marchi, his wife, and his priest-brother. Padellaro described *il professore* as a gifted teacher who peppered his lessons with denunciations against “the hard-hearted Jews and his block-headed pupils.”²¹ Cornwell places far too much significance on Padellaro’s record of Marchi’s “antisemitism.”²² The comments were not unusual for the time or place in ultramontanist Rome. Marchi probably railed against other groups such as the masons, liberals, and other anticlericals as much as he did against the Jews. This environment would have built on similar sentiments in the Pacelli home. This is insufficient evidence to say Pacelli or his family were antisemitic, though it is fair to say that such comments would not have made the Pacellis sympathetic toward Jews.

Ironically, Marchi’s schoolrooms were quite close to the entrance to the ghetto. The young Pacelli boys must have passed Jewish vendors and peddlers as they walked home from school. They would have certainly seen Jews in the Campo dei Fiori where the daily markets were held. Whether they recognized the traders and hawkers as Jews is impossible to say. It is highly unlikely they even saw a difference between Jewish Italians and Catholic Italians. The Italian proverb *una faccia una razza* (“one face one race”), often applied to Italians and Greeks, can fit just as well here. “Jews” were an abstract enemy of the Holy Father, not flesh-and-blood people.

Filippo was determined to send his sons to a government school for their secondary education. He was a firm believer in the principle of “know thine enemy.” For this reason, he sent Francesco and then Eugenio to the Liceo Ennio Quirini Visconti in what had been the Collegio Romano, the premier Jesuit university in Rome. Eugenio began studies there in 1891. The environment was anticlerical, antipapal, and anti-Catholic. Filippo evidently believed his sons needed to grow strong through adversity while getting the best classical education in Rome at that time under the tutelage of Ildebrando della Giovanna.²³ Anecdotal evidence from Pacelli’s time at the college describes a young man possessed of great self-control and sense of purpose, unafraid of defending papal claims and Catholic history.²⁴

Eugenio developed a love of music, becoming a talented violinist. He cultivated his gift of languages and a passion for Christian archeology.²⁵ Curiously, while he strove to reach the heights of academic excellence, his spiritual and theological development remained essentially simple and childlike. His favorite religious authors were the late medieval writer Thomas à Kempis and the French bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet;

Bousset remained on Pacelli's bedside table until his death.²⁶ The German Jesuit Robert Lieber, Pacelli's personal secretary for forty years, wrote in 1958 of his master's piety: "In his own religious life he remained the pious boy of those days... [He] had a genuine respect for any unpretentious, humble piety. He preserved a child-like love for the Mother of God."²⁷

Domenico Tardini, who was to serve with Pacelli in the Secretariat of State throughout the 1930s, described Pacelli: "He was by temperament gentle and rather shy. He wasn't a fighter... His great goodness led him to wish to please everyone, and to prefer the path of gentleness to that of severity, to persuade rather than to impose."²⁸

Lieber's article revealed other details that point to significant aspects of Pacelli's character. Although he was writing just after the pope's death, the traits he wrote about were certainly shaped and honed from Pacelli's earliest years: "A sober matter-of-factness was the dominant characteristic of Pacelli. Everything was thought through and balanced against as many contingencies as possible. He was disciplined to the point of an almost merciless gravity towards himself. He disliked any exaggeration." Facts had to be gathered, sorted, interpreted, and analyzed, a process he preferred to do by himself, and which suggests a careful weighing of opinions against orthodox church teaching. Decisions were never made in haste, and words were always chosen with deliberate and great care. Ever the diplomat, Pacelli never disclosed his deepest personal opinions, and once a decision was made he never resiled, facing the outcomes with an almost stoic fortitude. Sentimentality played no part in his life.²⁹

Pacelli saw himself as a teacher of others, imparting instruction even when the reception was negative. Behind his every word was an unshakeable belief in the rightness of the Catholic faith, and the obligation to preserve the *bonum commune* of the Church, no matter the cost. Indeed, the portrait Lieber paints is of a man who so focused on the needs of the Church that "the Church" became synonymous with the pope. Pacelli almost disappeared.³⁰ I am convinced this is a major part of the process of unraveling the "hows" and "whys" that explain Pacelli's actions from his earliest years. For traditional Catholics, this is not necessarily a problem. Historically, however, there appears to be a continuum between young Pacelli, the nuncio, and the pope. Even as a young man, he stood within the ultramontanist theology of a supranational, authoritarian, and demanding church. He was never an innovator, but always a preserver of tradition. And it was the tradition of the Roman Church that provided the sure and known "way." Pacelli's worldview, from his earliest years, could only survive within the known structure. If something outside that structure presented itself, it was by definition an "unknown" factor, which had to be examined and analyzed so that an authentic Catholic response could be made. It was, I believe, Pacelli's fatal flaw that he could not move outside this mind-set and when events of enormous destruction confronted him, his usual methods quite simply could not function.

Tu es sacerdos

Upon graduating from secondary school in the summer of 1894, Eugenio sought admission to the Collegio Capranica, the Roman diocesan seminary. His decision was made after a retreat at the monastery of Sant'Agnese in Via Nomenata during the summer. Filippo made the application to Cardinal Lucido Mario Parocchi, Vicar General of Rome, with a recommendation from the family's parish priest, Don Pietro Monti.³¹ Like all the other places associated with the young Pacelli, Collegio Capranica was only a short walk from Via Vetrina.

Founded in 1457 by Cardinal Domenico Capranica, the college was Rome's oldest seminary. It was a small building set within the walls of what had been Capranica's Rome palazzo and was known as the starting place for many Vatican diplomats. Pacelli's room was on the second floor.³² Students studied in other colleges throughout the city, returning to the Capranica for meals, religious observances, and sleep. Evidently the food at the college left something to be desired. Several of Pacelli's biographers mention the family's making weekly visits to the seminary, bringing food. Elisabetta recalled her brother's "fastidious stomach" giving him no end of trouble. Other writers speak of "delicate health" and a "frail body." This was to become a more serious matter by the summer of 1895.³³

In November 1894, the eighteen-year-old Pacelli began his ecclesiastical studies. He studied philosophy at the Gregorianum, the premier papal university under the care of the Jesuits, and theology at the Ateneo Pontificio di Sant'Apollinare. Pacelli was also enrolled at the State University, La Sapienza, where he took classes in modern languages and history. His academic career followed the traditional late Tridentine seminary formula described in the previous chapter.

At the end of the academic year in 1895, it was decided that Pacelli's health was too poor to survive the rigors of the Capranica. After time spent recuperating in his home town Onano, he was granted the highly unusual dispensation of being allowed to continue his seminary studies at the family home. It is generally held that the family used connections "in high places" to secure this dispensation.

What this does tell us is that Eugenio Pacelli spent most of his seminary years as an external student who did not live the often high-spirited communal life of his peers. Late Tridentine seminaries, despite all the rules and regulations, were still places full of young men, many still in late adolescence, who were coming to understand their place in the church hierarchy. Time was allowed for recreation, often in the form of sports and physical exercise for the simple need to burn off excess energy. To think of seminaries as places of monastic-like silence and contemplation is a fantasy. The formation of the diocesan clergy rested heavily on the establishment of long-lasting friendships among the students who would later work together as priests. Pacelli did not share this experience. In fact, apart from meeting other clerical students at lectures, there is no evidence that he even knew

his fellow seminarians. Here is another aspect of his life that must be taken into consideration. Pacelli was a loner who did not actively seek out the company of others. He was content to be with his family, read his books, and say his prayers. He was “wedded” to the Church and appears to have felt no need for any other human company, and this later extended to his manner of working with others in Vatican offices. He was content to work under or above others, but not as a colleague or equal. Shared responsibility was not part of his approach to his personal or professional life.

Upon completing his studies, Pacelli was ordained a priest on Easter Sunday, April 2, 1899.³⁴ His ordination was unusual. Traditionally, ordinations in the diocese of Rome took place on Holy Saturday, in the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano, the cathedral church of the bishop of Rome, the pope. Pacelli was ordained in the private chapel of the Vice-Regent of Rome, Mgr Paolo Cassetta, alone. The following day, Easter Monday, he celebrated mass for the first time in the Borghese Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore, before the revered icon of Our Lady, Help of the Romans. The dignitaries present included the Archpriest of the basilica, Cardinal Serafino Vannutelli, Fr Giuseppe Lais, childhood mentor of the new priest, and friends of the family from both Vatican and City Council circles. On the Tuesday, Don Pacelli celebrated mass in Chiesa Nuova, assisted by Father Lais.³⁵

His experience of pastoral work was in keeping with the times. He assisted at Chiesa Nuova, which was odd, since he was a diocesan priest and Chiesa Nuova was a nondiocesan parish, entrusted to the Oratorians. He also worked as a chaplain at a number of Roman convents and taught catechism to the children of the parish. Many of Pacelli’s biographers claim that the young priest wanted nothing more than to work “for the salvation of souls,” preferably in a parish away from the “distractions of the world.” From what we know of his character, this is most likely a pious legend. Shortly after ordination, he began postgraduate studies in canon law at Sant’ Apollinare.

The young Eugenio was clever, agile of mind, quick with languages, and son of a family known for decades of loyal service to the Holy See. I believe that the talk of being a humble parish priest is pure myth. Pacelli had been watched from Vatican curial circles for some time, and it was not long before the request to enter papal service came. Less than two years after his ordination, Pacelli was invited to enter the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs headed by the Undersecretary Monsignor Pietro Gasparri. He commenced his bureaucratic career as an apprentice, in Gasparri’s department, which lay within the mandate of Leo XIII’s secretary of state, Cardinal Mariano Rampolla (1843–1913).

On His Holiness’ Service

Leo XIII (1878–1903) was an experienced diplomat who had served as nuncio in Belgium before his election as pope in 1878. He was the head

of a rapidly growing Church that was spreading throughout the globe. Keeping relations between nation-states and the Church amicable and workable required an efficient and intelligent diplomatic service. He had inherited a papal system “in a feud with nearly every European government.”³⁶ The legacy of Pius IX would take time to dissipate. Leo had seen the *Kulturkampf* in Germany inflict great damage on the Church. Relations with France were tense and the rise of mass political movements gave the pontiff cause for concern. The pope was eager to have the Vatican and the papal office seen as an independent judge of international affairs as well as the sole arbiter in internal ecclesiastical matters.

It is necessary to understand Leo’s teaching on the relationship between the Church and the modern state. In his encyclical letter *Immortale dei*, Leo went to great lengths to teach the concept of two powers—civil and ecclesiastical:

The Almighty, therefore, has given the charge of the human race to two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine, and the other over human, things. Each in its kind is supreme, each has fixed limits within which it is contained, limits which are defined by the nature and special object of the province of each.³⁷

These two powers necessarily cross over, since both have power over the same subjects. To the civil domain belongs “the well being of this mortal life” and to the Church that which leads to “the everlasting joys of heaven.”³⁸ Recognizing the realities of modern politics, Leo went on to say that there would be occasions when “rulers of the State and the Roman Pontiff come to an understanding touching some special matter.”³⁹ After pointing out the role of law and the need for a stable society, which, he reminded his readers, could be found in the principles espoused in the gospels, Leo issued a warning against a new concept of law at variance with Christian and natural law, namely popular democracy.⁴⁰

Moving from this development of law, the pope warned that the next step was the relegation of religion to the private sphere. This would lead to religious relativism and indifference and the erosion of the rights of the Church and their abrogation by the state.⁴¹ Marriage, education, and the freedom of the clergy were to be left in the Church’s domain, without prejudice from the state. Expecting the Church to submit itself to the civil authority was “a great folly and a sheer injustice.”⁴² Catholics had the right to participate in the life of the state—unless there were valid reasons against this⁴³—under the supervision of the Church.

Theology and the place of the Church in the modern world were rightly the concerns of the pope. However, Leo had a very limited understanding of the power politics of the late nineteenth century. He was genuinely surprised when Germany and Austria-Hungary entered into the Dual Alliance in 1879, and more surprised when Italy was invited to join this alliance in 1887. In the same way, he found it hard to understand why

Republican France would join with Tsarist Russia in 1891 in an arrangement that was formalized in the Dual Entente in 1894. Nonetheless, Leo's spiritual authority throughout the Catholic world grew rapidly, out of respect for the goodness of the man more than for his diplomatic strategies. Further, Catholic clergy and people in many states were tiring of the religious battles being fought in parliaments and assemblies. Rome was asked for guidance and moral support. This Leo could, and did, give. From his desk within the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Don Pacelli assisted Mgr Gasparri in helping the Holy Father.

Pacelli advanced quickly. In 1901, Leo sent him to London with a personal letter addressed to Edward VII offering the pope's sympathy at the death of Queen Victoria. To be entrusted with a mission of such significance points to the high regard in which the twenty-five-year-old Pacelli was held in the Congregation. In 1902, he was advanced to the position of *minutante*, where he was responsible for drafting letters and texts in response to diplomatic needs, as well as writing up summaries of reports arriving from around the world. At the same time, he was appointed a lecturer in canon law at Sant'Apollinare as well as given a position at the Academy for Nobles and Ecclesiastics where he taught young diplomats canon and civil law. By 1904, he had completed his doctoral dissertation in canon law. The topic was significant, given that Pacelli had begun working with Gasparri on the project for the codification of the canon law of the Catholic Church, a task that was not completed until 1917.

Don Pacelli cut his teeth in international diplomacy during the *débâcle* between the Vatican and France. Relations between Paris and the Holy See had been tense for some time. In 1901, the Waldeck-Rousseau ministry had passed a series of anticlerical laws designed to marginalize the place of the Church in French society and break anti-Catholic hostility to the republic. The reactionary and anti-Republican stance of many French Catholics did not help matters. Added to this was the scandal of the Dreyfus Affair, where the major organs of the Catholic press, in particular *La Croix*, presumed Dreyfus' guilt and launched into vitriolic anti-semitic tirades.⁴⁴ Leo XIII had appealed to the French bishops, clergy, and people to adopt a more conciliatory attitude—to little effect. Relations were not improved under Waldeck-Rousseau's successor, Émile Combes. Under the Combes government, religious were expelled from France, the Jesuits suppressed, and bishops nominated to sees without reference to the Vatican. All that remained to stop an open rift between both sides was the 1801 Concordat.

In April 1904, the French president, Émile-François Loubet, visited Rome and made a state visit to Vittorio Emanuele III. For the nondiplomatic and authoritarian Pius X, who had succeeded Leo XIII in August 1903, this was the last insult. It had been the accepted, if quaint, diplomatic norm that Catholic heads of state did not visit Rome out of deference to the "Prisoner of the Vatican." When Loubet "violated" this protocol, the Vatican sent a memorandum to its nunciatures expressing outrage.

The memorandum was leaked to the French press and the Quai d'Orsay reacted by recalling the French minister to the Holy See. On December 2, 1905, the French National Assembly passed the Law of Separation, which effectively nullified the 1801 Concordat. Pius refused to recognize it and rather than allow any government control of the Church, the pope handed all Church property over to the state.⁴⁵

Pius X's secretary of state, Cardinal Raphael Merry del Val, commissioned Gasparri to compile a *Libro bianco*, or "White Book," that set out the grievances of the Vatican against the French government. Gasparri delegated the task to Pacelli, whom he described as "my excellent assistant." *La Separation de L'Eglise et de L'etat en France: Exposé et Documents* was a collection of specific facts, similar to a legal brief prepared by a defense or prosecuting counsel. It ran to 273 pages of detailed memoranda between Rome and the nuncio in Paris, as well as diplomatic letters between the pope and French government ministers and summaries of antichurch activities.⁴⁶

The long-term strategy employed by Pius X was consistent with the gradual Roman centralism that had begun under Pius IX and continued during the pontificate of Leo XIII. Cornwell summarized it well: "Pius X was determined to exert untrammelled primacy over the Church as a spiritual, doctrinal, legal, and administrative entity. This was the clear-eyed papal vision of total separation of sovereignties: the Church with the Pope unquestioningly at its head, and the world mediated through the papal diplomatic service and the bishops."⁴⁷ Pius expressed a similar attitude to the Catholic political parties. It pertained to the pope and bishops alone to rule and govern the Church. There was no governing role for the laity.⁴⁸ Eugenio Pacelli was to follow in very similar patterns in the 1930s.

On March 12, 1904, Pacelli was granted the title Monsignor and on May 8, 1905 he was made a Domestic Prelate. Three years later, Monsignor Pacelli accompanied the secretary of state, Cardinal Merry del Val, to London for the 1908 Eucharistic Congress.⁴⁹ On March 7, 1911, he was made the under-secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs.⁵⁰ He went to London again in June 1911 as part of the papal mission to the coronation of George V.⁵¹ The rapid rise of Eugenio Pacelli during the early years of the century must be seen against the background of the "anti-Modernist" campaign inaugurated by Pius X in 1907. Cornwell commented: "The fact that he remained an exceptional favorite through this crisis . . . and continued to be promoted while others were cast aside, tells us much about his discretion, his resilience, and his survival skills. That he was affected by the affair cannot be doubted."⁵²

Pacelli's survival during the Modernist crisis reaffirms my conviction that his guiding principle was loyalty to the institution of the Church. Believing the Church to be infallible, even when the direction appeared unclear, gave Pacelli surety and confidence. This pointed to an acceptance of truth as something one held as a complete entity rather than something continually discovered through a process of enquiry. In this, Pacelli was

typical of the insular world of the Roman Curia. David Schultenover's comment about Pius X applies equally to Eugenio Pacelli: "Latin clerics like Pius X and others had no real possibility of understanding what was happening in the rest of the Western world because they were culturally bound by their projection of their own personal, familial, and social structures onto the whole church."⁵³

Pacelli's appointment as an advisor, to the Holy Office on November 25, 1912 was a virtual papal seal on his orthodoxy in all things.⁵⁴ He was a man the pope trusted implicitly. The fact that he took the name Pius in honor of Pius X, and granted Giuseppe Sarto the "honors of the altar" on May 29, 1954, gave some indication of his personal esteem for the pope who effectively stifled academic freedom within the Church for five decades. Perhaps the most significant effect the Modernist witchhunt had on the young Pacelli was the development of veiled language and circumlocution—valuable tools for a diplomat, but fatal for a pastor.

By 1912, Pacelli's place in the Vatican hierarchy was more or less established. In June of that year he was appointed pro-secretary of the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, and in February 1914 was named secretary.⁵⁵ He was regarded as a gifted bureaucrat with a penchant for law and diplomacy. The codification of the canon law of the Catholic Church and involvement in some delicate diplomatic negotiation were to occupy Monsignor Pacelli's time up to his next promotion in early 1917.

As seen earlier, the process of centralization in the Catholic Church was accelerated under the papacy of Pius X and his successors. As the modern world discarded interest in the affairs of the Church, Rome accrued more and more direct power in the organization and running of local churches. At first, this was seen in the gradual abolition of some local customs, but by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the process had moved to a more significant level. Slowly, more and more bishops were appointed directly from Rome, thereby increasing direct Roman involvement in the local diocese. The importance of this development was not generally understood for some time. In effect, what happened was a slow but certain emasculation of the authority of local bishops to make decisions within their own countries based on the needs and situations facing them. More and more decisions were reserved to Rome, decisions that would have been more appropriately made in the local environment.

Gasparri and Pacelli were charged with the task of streamlining the processes by which episcopal appointments were made. In codifying the relevant canons, they had to deal with the historical fact that many of the concordats negotiated over the years allowed for secular rulers to nominate bishops. This would have to go if the new Code of Canon Law was to have full force. It was in this area that Rome came to circumvent the local bishops through concordats. Pacelli had unwittingly helped to create a fatal flaw within the system. It was beyond his imagination to consider the possibility of a government that would refuse point-blank to negotiate

with Rome. It was his tragedy that when he was confronted with such governments in the 1920s and 1930s, he was unable to find a way out of the canonical procedures he had helped create.

The First World War

On June 24, 1914, the Vatican signed a concordat with the government of Serbia.⁵⁶ Cornwell has made much of this episode, effectively implying that Pacelli's role in the negotiations went beyond that of a secretary to the more sinister behavior of a Machiavellian manipulator who pursued a reckless and irresponsible agenda. According to Cornwell, Pacelli "choreographed the entire process," creating a precedent in church diplomacy and policy, which would ensure "the expansion of papal power over the Catholic Church at the local level, and, in particular, control of the appointment of bishops." The concordat would ensure the elimination of local episcopal involvement in decisions that would have a direct impact on the life of the Church in a particular region.⁵⁷

While the Serbian concordat *may* have been an indirect cause of the outbreak of hostilities between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, it was not a source of significant contention between the two states. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that Orthodox Serbia saw a concordat as a way of exercising indirect pressure on Catholic Vienna, which was not a part of the consultation process, as well as advancing Serbian nationalist claims. But to blame Pacelli as the instigator of some international plot is simply not viable. Owen Chadwick remarked astutely that Cornwell's assertion was a case of "blaming the minute-taker for the minutes."⁵⁸

The evidence Cornwell cited was taken from Pacelli's minutes and records of meetings between Serbian officials and members of several Roman congregations, all held in the Vatican Archives. However, there is nothing to suggest that Pacelli willfully or deliberately acted without the consent or approval of his superiors. Both Merry del Val and Gasparri were powerful men who faithfully executed the will of the pope, not an undersecretary, not even one as promising as Eugenio Pacelli. For his part, it would have been completely out of character for Pacelli to act independently, even if he did believe he was doing so out of the highest motives. There is no evidence of Pacelli's operating alone before he became pope—he was a faithful executor of orders.

The Serbian concordat came to naught with the beginning of the war in August 1914. Pius X died on August 20. His successor was Giacomo Della Chiesa (1854–1922), an experienced diplomat who had served in the nunciature in Madrid with Rampolla, and then in the Secretariat of State with Merry del Val. Della Chiesa was "exiled" as archbishop of Bologna until his election on September 3, whereupon he took the name Benedict XV. He named his old friend, Gasparri, as secretary of state and immediately called on the belligerent nations to cease the fighting. Gasparri took

Pacelli with him into the Secretariat of State, making him undersecretary. Pacelli was now in a position to observe all the major decision-making processes within the Vatican.

Central to Benedict's war policy was strict neutrality. In an allocution of January 22, 1915, the pope declared that he reserved the right to be "the highest interpreter and protector of eternal law," while at the same time remaining strictly impartial in the conflict.⁵⁹ Benedict's neutrality was spelled out clearly in his first encyclical letter, *Ad beatissimi apostolorum*, issued on November 1, 1914. The pope lamented the destruction of the war across Europe calling on the combatants to recognize the common humanity of each other and to end the slaughter.⁶⁰

In the face of such slaughter, the only honest response, according to Benedict, was for rulers to come together and end the violence.⁶¹ Benedict continued to say that in the midst of the conflagration the Church, whose members cross all the boundaries of the warring nations, must continue to proclaim the gospel of peace.⁶²

Nonetheless, there is enough circumstantial evidence to point to a pro-Central Power sympathy on the part of the pope and the Roman Curia. Poor relations with the Entente, especially France and Russia, and the long positive relations with Austria and Bavaria, tilted the Vatican toward the Habsburg Empire and the German *Kaiserstaat*. It appears that claims of Benedict's supposed favoritism of Germany were essentially without articulated substance. What is more plausible is the pope's desire to maintain the status quo in Europe. Catholic Austria-Hungary and Bavaria provided a solid counterbalance to Protestant Prussia, Orthodox Russia, lapsed France, and indifferent Britain. Hovering in the background was also the fear of what the socialists and their allies might do if the Central Powers collapsed. Peace must not come at the price of a new and unpredictable social order on the Continent.⁶³

Under the pope's direction, the Vatican undertook a significant program of assistance for the victims of war without reference to nationality, ethnicity, or religion.⁶⁴ This was most obvious in the direct relief organized by papal agencies during the genocide perpetrated by Ottoman Turkey on the Armenians. The pope wrote directly to Sultan Mehmed V. While he avoided naming the perpetrators, Benedict called on the Sultan to do all he could to stop the killing and save the survivors.⁶⁵

Through the Secretariat of State, Benedict, Gasparri, and Pacelli operated a wide-flung relief operation. In the spring of 1915, *L'opera dei Prigionieri* was established within the Secretariat. Through this office, the Vatican helped to trace missing persons, arrange prisoner of war transfers, communicate between families split because of the hostilities, and arrange for release of interned civilians.⁶⁶ Between 1914 and 1918, Benedict authorized the distribution of nearly 82 million gold lire for war relief.

In the Secretariat of State, Pacelli worked to implement the papal relief initiatives. Alongside the more immediate operations, he issued canonical

statements on such things as the extension of faculties for military chaplains working in Belgium, as well as the supplying of religious items for the soldiers.⁶⁷ On August 27, 1915, Pacelli met with the pope and Cardinal Mercier, the archbishop of Malines, Belgium. This meeting gave Benedict and Pacelli a first-hand account of the war and, importantly, for the Vatican, its effect on Catholic life.⁶⁸

Things changed dramatically for Eugenio Pacelli in early 1917. Events within and without the Vatican took a dramatic turn during the second half of 1916. Franz Josef, Emperor of Austria-Hungary, died in November 1916 and was succeeded by his nephew, Karl I. Austria's position in the alliance with Germany was more and more subservient after the battering Austria suffered at the hands of the Russians during the Brusilov offensive in early June 1916. The young monarch believed some form of a negotiated peace to end the war would be the only way to save his empire from disintegration. Germany sent peace feelers to both the United States and the Vatican in December of the same year. For the pope, this was an opportunity to make an official offer of help to broker peace between the belligerent nations. The moment was lost when the Allies rejected the German proposal and President Wilson issued his own peace proposal. Any mediation seemed doomed when Germany announced unrestricted submarine warfare shortly afterward. Then, in February 1917, Russia erupted. Benedict and Gasparri warned that the prolongation of the war would bring more disasters along similar lines.⁶⁹

The Apostolic Nuncio to Bavaria, Archbishop Giuseppe Aversa, died suddenly on April 3, 1917. Three days later, the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies, further confounding the pope's attempts at a mediated peace. Aversa's death opened up a major possibility for the Vatican to retake the peace proposal initiative. Both Benedict and Gasparri believed that a professional diplomat with extensive experience and tact in dealing with difficult governments, as well as an intimate knowledge of, and loyalty to, the papal cause, was needed in Munich.

On April 20, Benedict XV nominated Eugenio Pacelli as the new nuncio to Bavaria.⁷⁰ Don Pacelli was consecrated bishop by Benedict XV in the Sistine Chapel on May 13, 1917 in the presence of his family and a large congregation of Black Nobility. Assisting the pope were Pacelli's former superiors, Merry del Val and Gasparri. Archbishop Pacelli left Rome for the Wittelsbach court in Munich on May 18, 1917. He was forty-one years old.⁷¹

CHAPTER FIVE

When Worlds Collide

Both Catholicism and Fascism were autocratic, ruled by one man; both were absolutist, admitting no question of their creeds; both insisted on the submission of the individual to the system; both attached importance to external ceremonies and mass psychology; both encouraged large families.

Anthony Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators*, 30

Missing the Point: Understanding History

Throughout the late twentieth century, revisionist and denialist David Irving made much of his taunt that Adolf Hitler did not know about the “Final Solution” because there was not one piece of written evidence that was either penned or signed by Hitler ordering the extermination of European Jewry. Therefore, if there was no “smoking gun,” Irving asserts, there was no way historians (or Jews) could point their finger at the Führer. Hitler may have committed questionable acts and even been a primary factor in the outbreak of the 1939–1945 war, but he could not be held responsible for the deaths of six million Jews. Irving has been labeled an antisemite and a liar, inside and outside the courtroom.¹ His views were generally held to be those of a vicious and “lunatic fringe” minority. Less acknowledged, however, were the views held by several generations of English-speaking people who were educated in schools where the history of the Second World War was interpreted through the histories of A. J. P. Taylor, Basil Liddell-Hart and Allan Bullock, to name but three.

There has been little evidence to suggest that those English-speaking historians successfully recognized, or were willing to recognize, the nature of the Nazi Weltanschauung. The lack of reference to the biopolitical war waged against the Jews and others deemed unworthy of living pointed to what has been a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the 1939–1945 war.² It also made dealing with the Holocaust easier, because it could be relegated to a minor aspect of the conflict, at times to a mere footnote—an aspect that played no significant role in the objectives of the “conventional” war. Until quite recently, Western historians such

as those mentioned above tended to write of the war using the lexicon of “traditional” warfare.

All this is vital for attempting an appraisal of the pontificate of Pius XII. I believe that the same blinkered vision of the Second World War has been used, and is being used, when examining the Catholic Church during the interwar and war years. Few historians have studied the Church or the pope in the broader context of the political and social frameworks of the time. Most war historians mention Pius only in passing. The role of the Church was usually discussed only when a church leader was in some form of engagement with the political leadership of one of the belligerent countries, or when the rescue and resistance work undertaken by members of different Christian denominations was analyzed. There has been very little serious writing attempting to analyze the intricate networks of official and grassroots Church life with the political, antisemitic, and biopolitical sentiments of the time. This serious lacuna needs to be addressed. The only way I believe we can come close to a fuller understanding of the position taken, or not taken, by Pope Pius XII is to use religious and theological language.

Just as many English-speaking historians failed to grasp the true nature of Nazism and Hitler’s deliberate linking of the biopolitical war against the Jews with the smokescreen of “conventional” war, so too, historians have failed to see the person and position of Pope Pius XII within the many layers of his involvement and his offices. The temptation of Pacelli’s defenders was to treat the war as “conventional” and his role as that of a spiritual leader pleading for peace, thereby making it alarmingly easy to say “he did all he could given the circumstances.” The temptation for his detractors was to say that his inaction effectively immobilized the vast majority of Catholics throughout Europe, thereby making it simple enough to blame one man for the sins of the Church as a whole. Christian anti-Judaism and antisemitism provide more excuses to blacken Pacelli’s name and attribute dark motives to him and the Roman Curia. Neither extremes are satisfactory.

Hitler did not appear from outer space; his actions were not isolated or in a vacuum; he was shaped by historical factors, social interactions, and cultures; he was a man who made choices based on his understanding of his worldview. In his case, the goal was the destruction of Europe’s Jews and the implementation of a biopolitical New Order across the Continent. The same paradigm held true for Pacelli. He was not born in a vacuum. He was shaped by the historical factors of late nineteenth-century Italy and late Tridentine Catholicism. Pius XII was responsible for his actions.

In a similar way to Hitler, Pacelli acted in the hope that his deeds reflected what he believed was the will of God as mediated through the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Hitler often claimed he worked under the inspiration of “Providence,” a nefarious force that he claimed gave him insight and true understanding to see Germany’s destiny. Pacelli claimed to work in obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, the

giver of wisdom, in order to lead the Church toward her final destiny in the next life. Both men were the centers of a cult, and both received the adulation and homage of their subjects. Hitler and Pacelli were, after a fashion, absolute rulers who addressed the world in absolute and, despite nuances and technical differences, explicitly religious terms.

The Crisis in Modernity

In the 1920s and 1930s, Pacelli and the Catholic Church were the inheritors of an ancient Christian tradition that had been the dominant ideological force in shaping Europe since the fourth century CE. “Christian Europe” and, more particularly, “Catholic Europe” had existed only as a shadow of its former self since the time of the French Revolution. Throughout the postrevolutionary era, institutional religion had been battered and bruised by successive nonreligious and secular ideologies that rejected the need for a personal God and Christ-figure in order to make a better world. Time and again the Church opted for a reactionary response, siding with regimes and power alliances that used the Church as a social regulator and control mechanism. The tragedy of nineteenth-century Catholicism was the official rejection of the modern world. Unwittingly, the Vatican gave support to the nonreligious movements in Europe through its refusal to engage in a meaningful way with the realities of life “at the coal face.” For many of Europe’s Catholics, the tension became intolerable, and they left the institution by the thousands. Rome’s determination to retain and exercise its traditional and presumed prerogatives was bought at a terrible cost.

The Vatican and its network of nuncios and legates continued to use the arcane language and practices of an era that was rapidly fading. Relying on an increasingly tired and residual loyalty from its traditional support groups, the aristocracy, educated elites, and the middle classes, the pope acted as though the fault lines running through European society were nonexistent. Problems were caused by those outside the Church—masons, liberals, socialists, and Jews.

Some efforts were made to reach out to the alienated working classes and those on the fringes of society. This was partly in keeping with traditional Catholic charity work, as well as a response to the fear of socialism; it was, in essence, reaction rather than action. Leo XIII’s *Rerum novarum* was heralded as a major sign of the Church’s willingness to engage in defense of the workers. In reality, Leo’s first steps in an engagement with industrialized Europe were a very limited recognition of the rights of workers to a basic wage and fair treatment. The pontificate of Pius X extended the fundamental distrust of the modern world into the Church itself. Defensive, reactionary, and fortress-mentality Catholicism found it increasingly difficult to relate to a world that offered more and more readily available options to improve the quality of life.

It is vital to note that every attempt to reach out to groups like the working class was outweighed by attempts to regain the “lost ground” through encyclicals devoted to reminding the faithful of their duties toward Christ’s Vicar and those who governed them in the Church. In particular, calls to devotionism were a popular way of trying to keep Catholics faithfully aligned to Rome.

Europe’s governments were content to allow a modicum of respect toward the Vatican in deference to their Catholic citizens. Such respect must not be interpreted as preparedness to listen to what the pope had to say, much less a willingness to do as he suggested. If Rome made a statement a government happened to agree with, so much the better for that particular state. If the reverse was the case, then Rome was ignored. The latter state of affairs was typical of the late nineteenth century and much of the early twentieth century.

The year 1914 was a watershed within the Catholic Church and throughout Europe: it redefined the battleground for winning Europe’s hearts and minds. It was a war the Catholic Church lost, with appalling consequences for the decades that followed. Weighed down with centuries of tradition that had conditioned the official Church to act slowly and respond cautiously, institutional Catholicism had no mechanism to respond to the tragedy that unfolded after Sarajevo. Appeals by the new pope, Benedict XV, for a mediated peace fell upon deaf ears. Catholic Germans fought and killed Catholic Frenchmen; Catholic Austrians fought and killed Catholic Italians. German bishops blessed the Kaiser’s armies as they went to the front. In Vienna, Warsaw, Paris, and Rome, masses were offered for the victory of the respective father or motherlands. For the first time in history, the Church (along with the rest of the world) watched as the conflict spread across borders and included whole populations in a violent and seemingly unstoppable bloodbath. For many, faith in God and the Church died in the mud of Flanders and the Somme. Through it all, Benedict used every means at his disposal, including Eugenio Pacelli.

By war’s end in November 1918, an exhausted continent set about establishing a form of compromised and “half-boiled” peace. Victors dictated terms; the vanquished accepted. Benedict was not given a seat at Versailles. He had been effectively shunned by a clause in the secret Treaty of London that secured Italy’s entry into the war in 1915.³ Not that the pope’s presence would have made much difference. Postwar Europe was fashioned out of the remains of three fallen empires under the various agendas of those who wrote the several treaties forced upon the defeated powers.

Benedict’s heartfelt desire to secure a just peace for Europe rested on Rome’s own worldview. A dismembered Austria-Hungary meant the end of a Catholic bloc in central Europe, leaving the way open for the increasing influence of anticlerical France and indifferent Britain. The new Weimar republic was an untried entity, but the proposed constitution that guaranteed full religious freedom held potential dangers for the

status of the Church in traditional Catholic areas such as Bavaria and the Rhineland. Distrustful of democracy, the Church tended to side with antidemocratic elements within the European society. What was different in 1919 was that the Church often found itself allied with increasingly antidemocratic movements that did not scruple to use violence to achieve their aims. Rejection of modernity, the ongoing trauma and dislocation caused by the war, and, particularly in Germany, the national amnesia that gave rise to the legends of the November Criminals, the *Dolchtosslegende* (*Stab in the Back Legend*) and hatred of the Versailles Treaty led to unwitting alliances between many Catholic leaders and people and a prevailing sense of hopelessness and despair.

Catholicism's suspicion of the modern world found a new expression and a sense of validation. For many church leaders, the only solution lay in full and total reaction and rejection of everything promised by the Versailles Treaty. Finally, the advent of Bolshevism further convinced Benedict and the vast majority of the world's bishops that a greater threat to Europe and the world was at hand. For the first time in the history of Christian Europe, an opposing ideology that used language similar to religion had taken political power. Eugenio Pacelli was one of the first Vatican diplomats to become aware of the potential danger of the Russian Revolutions. He was kept well-informed by Catholic Centre Party politician, Matthias Erzberger.⁴

Bolshevism was a secular faith that promised an earthly utopia to the faithful. It rejected Christianity and all organized religion with a ferocity never seen before. The Church would need every resource and ally available to combat and defeat atheistic communism. Rome, therefore, had few scruples in supporting governments and movements that shared similar fears and revulsions about Bolshevism, which up to 1922 had included the active role of Catholic political parties and political clerics. Nor did the Vatican scruple much about discerning between truth and fiction when it came to such "truths" as the supposed domination of the Bolsheviks by Jews, or a conspiracy of other Jews to take over the world. After all, Catholic Christianity had believed and taught that Jews were effectively capable of all manner of evil. The language may have changed somewhat, but the ancient hates still simmered.

The relationship of the Church and the right-wing regimes that proliferated across Europe during the 1920s and 1930s has been well documented in Anthony Rhodes's *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators*. Rhodes illustrated the withdrawal of Catholicism from organized political life, especially in Italy and Germany, into the lay-oriented Catholic Action founded by Pius XI. Under Pius XI and his successor, the modus operandi of the Church in its relations with the secular governments of the day was to be mediated through a highly organized and loyal laity in each particular country. Negotiations between governments and the Vatican were more and more facilitated by the use of concordats. Political parties were dangerous because their existence suggested an alternative way

forward and the threat of divided loyalties. Late Tridentine Catholicism was a monarchical system that tolerated no rivals. It was a system Pacelli knew well, and one which he, as an experienced diplomat, would prefer as the vehicle through which the Church related to the world. This model of governing would prove to be fatal during the 1939–1945 war.

Fascism, Nazism, and Catholicism

Pacelli looked at Nazism and saw a rival religion that offered salvation, redemption, and an eschatological worldview. Hitler's New Order was a biopolitical religion complete with all the necessary equipment to win the hearts and minds of his followers and harbored the long-term intention of destroying all the rivals. A report written by the exiled German Jesuit priest Friedrich Muckermann and sent to Rome in late 1934 confirmed Nazism's self-understanding as the only religion for Germany.⁵ One did not follow Nazism solely out of a sense of social or political conviction. People followed Hitler because they either believed what he offered, or wanted to believe so desperately that they were prepared to suspend their critical faculties and follow with blind faith. In many ways, fascism and Nazism developed their *modus vivendi* by adoption and adaptation of the practices of Europe's oldest authoritarian structure, the Catholic Church.

The roots of the twentieth-century fascist movements lay in the emergence of a growing disquiet and discomfort across Europe. Industrialization, and the movement toward modernity, was greeted by many as the next step toward humanity's destiny. For many others, the "dark satanic mills" were emblematic of tremendous dislocation and alienation. This disquiet was felt at all levels of society, but none more so than among the ranks of the increasingly vocal middle classes. As economies boomed and expanded in the 1870s through to the 1890s, the principal beneficiaries of this growth demanded more and more access to real power within their particular countries. Bismarck's social reform policies in the *Kaiserstaat* of the 1880s were master strokes of social cohesion that prevented any real diminution of the power of the traditional elites. Similar reform policies were enacted in France, Italy, and Britain, with varying degrees of compromise on the part of the elites. At the heart of all the reforms lay the recognition that social cohesion was necessary for the survival and flourishing of the state. However, the attempts at reform "from above" were mixed. The growth of socialist movements pointed to a continued and growing dissatisfaction with the traditional elites and power structures of Europe. The question remained as to whether or not the forces for reform "from below" would be strong enough (and united enough) to move the elites "from above."

For those who felt that the new world of international imperialism, industrialization, socialism, and democracy was threatening the fabric of "traditional"—that is, "pre-modern"—values and moral systems, the retreat into antimodernity became a viable option, even if the move was

not necessarily a conscious or deliberate one. The collision of these two opposed worldviews led to enormous tensions within European society. Unwittingly, the Catholic Church was drawn into the antimodern orbit because of its inherent distrust of the world in general, and its loud denunciations of modern forces such as socialism and democracy. Out of the conglomeration of antimodern coalitions and schools of thought, along with the common sentiments shared by millions, the movement that came to be known as “fascist” was created. The disaster of 1914–1918 gave fascism its retrospective self-justification.

The First World War did not dissipate the tensions within Europe. The failure and defeat of Germany and her allies left their respective nations exhausted. Bolshevik success in Russia heralded the growth of similar movements across Germany and Hungary and the equally rapid growth of anti-Bolshevik movements. Imperialism and internationalism were defunct in the postwar world, at least for most of the decade after 1918. It is not my intention to summarize the postwar settlements and the emergencies that swept central and eastern Europe in the postwar years, except to say that the crisis precipitated a final showdown between the traditional elites that had survived the war and the revolutionary factions that demanded the complete and radical rebuilding of the political, economic, social, and religious order.

The majority of Europe’s populations were situated between both extremes. Victory would belong to the side that won over, by whatever means, the masses in the middle. While Catholics were to be found across the spectrum, the ecclesiastical leadership and its guardians were, almost without exception, found on the side of the traditional power groups. That splits did not rend the Church asunder spoke forcefully for the strength of its internal cohesion and its ability to squash intellectual and political dissent.

The coalitions that formed in the 1920s and into the 1930s illustrated the complex and extremely fluid realities of interwar European politics. In the broadest terms, the two opposing sides may be generally described as the rump elites that still held sufficient power to remain the dominant social and political forces within their states, and the radicalized, and often alienated, soldier-worker/socialist movements with their attendant allies. Nowhere was the situation starker than in Germany.

Pacelli’s position as nuncio in Bavaria from 1917, and then Berlin from 1925, gave him the perspective of seeing both forces in action. Germany’s postwar political life highlighted the collision of these sides. Weimar Germany was a hybrid concoction, a “bastard child,” foisted on the defeated country by the victorious Allies. It was unloved and unwanted by the majority of Germans. Its democratic government, with its model constitution, was administered, for the most part, by very undemocratic and unrepentant politicians and civil servants. Nostalgia for the authoritarianism of the Imperial Reich hung like a pall over much of the republic’s history. Germany’s Catholics were indistinguishable

from the rest of the Fatherland in their discomfort with the new state. For the pope's ambassador, the nationalist crassness and thuggery of much of the German Right was only outweighed by the atheistic, pro-Bolshevik crassness and thuggery of much of the German Left, a view that was shared by many of the German bishops as late as 1936.⁶ But at the same time, it was clear that the strong support for the parties of the Left, especially in the rapid growth of the socialist-dominated workers' unions, indicated an urgent need for far-reaching reforms.⁷ In the ever-shrinking middle ground was the Catholic Centre Party. Pacelli and most of the German bishops felt no pressing obligation to support and nurture it. The emerging democratic credentials of the Centre were not to their liking or taste, even when, in the last years of the Weimar Republic, the Centre Party moved further and further to the political right. It was not surprising that many of the leading Catholics of Germany (and beyond) felt sympathetic to the demands of the nascent fascist movements.

Fascism provided a nonthinking philosophy of life built upon "old-fashioned" virtues and premodern values. It was the antithesis of Bolshevism. Whereas Lenin announced Russia was going to advance into the new century and become the model socialist state, German fascists and others effectively announced the opposite. Greatness was to be found in the past, albeit a past of fascist reconstruction.

The "Anti" World of Fascism

The chief elements of fascism were essentially "anti" components of a nonsystematic reaction to modernity. Fascism was "anti-Marxist, anti-communist, anti-proletarian, but also anti-liberal, anti-parliamentarian, and in a very special sense, anti-conservative and anti-bourgeois." Anticlericalism and antiinstitutional religion often sat alongside "anti-individualism and anti-democratic authoritarianism and elitism combined with a strong populist appeal." Added to the list of "antis" were antisemitism, "anti-urbanism . . . anti-capitalism . . . sometimes anti-feminism" and a hatred of internationalism.⁸

In every case of fascist government in the interwar years, the anti-ideology positions were challenged and changed to suit the pragmatic needs of a modern state. The one major exception to this was the Nazi intransigence on any modification of the regime's official antisemitism and genocidal attitude toward the Jews.

Motivation within fascist ideology was powered by a profound sense of alienation caused by the "anti" positions adopted and proclaimed. Acceptance of the fascist position was not unlike the acceptance of a religious creed. Certainly the trappings of fascism encouraged a faith-like response, and of course the "anti" mentality mirrored the fierce antimodernism of the Church.

At the center was authoritarian leadership by one man whose ability and gift to rule was understood in terms of an intuition of what was in the best interests of the national community. Whether this was described as a divine *placet* or a communion with the eternal life-force of the people was immaterial to the political fact that power was held in the hands of one man. Called from obscurity to assume the mantle of leadership, there was always a messianic quality about the leader. He justified the seizure, or acquisition, of power, by whatever means, as an act of selfless love of the mother/fatherland, whose very life was imperiled by enemies within and without. Almost without exception, the leader claimed that his accession to power was in accord with an unseen, and to the uninitiated, an unknowable, plan that would restore the nation to greatness. And at the heart of every *credo* was fanatical nationalism.

Total love and submission of the will of the individual to the community of the nation formed the next step in the fascist understanding of the world. All citizens were obliged to devote themselves to the whole community. All were bonded together by blood, culture, a common self-identification and commitment to the work of national restoration. “Traditional” values and a “return” to a “purified” national life where class distinctions had no place, and where the peasant could eat side by side with the prince, were aspirations to cultivate. It mattered not that the reality was usually quite other. What mattered was that the leader’s will, his vision for the national community, was perceived as being implemented. By logical and theological extension, the leader’s will was equated with the will of Providence or, more explicitly, with God.

The leader communicated his wisdom through a pyramid of faithful acolytes who administered the organs of government in his name, not in the name of constitutions or law. In effect, the national community was to be renewed thoroughly in mind, heart, and body. Mussolini’s vision for Italy and Hitler’s vision for Germany were precisely that: visions they alone possessed, and which they communicated in prophetic-like statements interpreted by their disciples. At the core of these visions was the creation of a New Italy and a New Germany that would establish very much on earth the eternal truths they had discerned from the will of Providence.

Fascism in power demanded total submission of the individual. There was no place for rival affections or loyalties. Burleigh’s comments on the ideology of Nazism point out the faith dimension inherent in the fascist worldview:

Nazi ideology offered redemption from a national ontological crisis to which it was attracted like a predatory shark to blood... Nazism offered intense inclusivity in a society that had been scarred by deep division, dynamism where there was stagnation, and a sense of lofty purpose, almost a universal mission, in a society where material interests seemed all-pervasive... [Nazism] appealed to a widespread

desire to believe that hidden forces were responsible for Germany's postwar tribulations. All people had to do was make the quantum leap of faith; unified national self-belief was the solution to every mundane problem.⁹

Although Hitler rejected the suggestion that Nazism was a religious cult, he spoke of the party's ideology as the expression of "eternal scientific laws, revealed by God and in turn invested with sacred properties."¹⁰ Thus Nazi racism and biopolitics were accorded the status of divinely revealed truth. Antisemitism became a national duty, and had nothing to do with personal morality or sensibility. Only Germany developed this aspect of fascist ideology to such an extreme. For this reason, I will concentrate on the religious element of National Socialism in Germany as opposed to other fascist regimes.

Political and Ersatz Religion

Unless the quasireligious element of National Socialism is acknowledged, the discussion of Pius XII and his role during the Holocaust and the Second World War will be without its most compelling dimension. Hitler's statements that Nazism was not a religion were true in so far as the day-to-day running of a modern industrialized state were concerned. At the same time, Hitler's February 1, 1933 statement, affirming the place of the two major Christian confessions in the Reich, needs to be seen as it was—a statement designed to pacify potential alienation of the churches, and not in any way a sign of government support for Catholicism or Protestantism. Nuncio Orsenigo certainly understood this in his report to Rome three days after Hitler's speech.¹¹ There was no abrogation of the fundamental refusal to allow rivals for the nation's mind and heart, but at the same time it is essential that statements be seen in context and are not influenced by hindsight. It was too early to pick a fight with the Church, Catholic or Protestant.¹² Hitler never saw himself as a politician or even as a president or prime minister. He was, by the grace of Providence, Führer, a de facto religious leader. He could see what others could not or would not. He alone possessed the insight and will to turn the hopes and aspirations of the German *Völk* (racial Germans) into reality.

Hitler's mission to redeem Germany began, according to him, in Vienna. After his arrival in the city, he continued to pursue his artistic dreams, but hardship and poverty soon directed his attention to seeking the source of the world's misery—the Jews. Hitler described this "conversion" as "my greatest transformation."¹³ Enlightened, Hitler pursued his vocation with zeal, reading literature in order to better understand "the Jewish question" (*Judenfrage*). Declaring himself an antisemite and fully aware of the Jews' violation of the eternal laws of nature, the future Führer wrote a personal statement of faith: "Eternal Nature inexorably avenges the infringements

of her commands. Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.”¹⁴ No other fascist leader or political organization used such explicitly religious language to justify himself or party platforms. No other fascist regime linked antisemitism to the core of their self-understanding and national program. In these aspects, German Nazism was unique.

The combination of all the elements described above, and the peculiar messianic quality that Hitler added to Nazism, found their final “theological” form in what Saul Friedländer termed “redemptive anti-Semitism.” For Hitler and the inner circle of Nazi believers, the struggle against the Jews was the dominant motif of their *Weltanschauung* (worldview)—everything else flowed from it. This noble work was to be done, by whatever means, for the salvation of the *Völk* whose very existence depended on the purity of its blood. The Jews had to go. Hitler’s salvific mission was to build the Thousand Year Reich that would give Germanism supremacy over the earth.¹⁵

Although Jews were to be the most hunted of people under Nazism, they were by no means the only ones. Within the pseudosociological framework of National Socialism, there came a hierarchy of humanity based on a criterion of “life worthy of living” and “life unworthy of living.” Stemming from the “eternal laws of nature,” there were immutable precepts that dictated how the “Chosen Race”—the Aryans—were to live and survive. Nazi biopolitics was built on fundamental inequality between those who belonged to the “Chosen” and those who were outside. Jews typified the most damned of those deemed not only forbidden to join the “Chosen,” but because of their biological composition, unable to join, even if they had wanted to. To the ever-increasing list of undesirables and aliens were added, in accordance with Nazi “morality” and “ethics,” all who did not, for whatever reason, conform to the National Socialist “New Man.” And since biopolitics was the ultimate determination of a person’s suitability to join and participate in the *Volksgemeinschaft* (the people’s community), the constantly changing “theologies” within different parts of the Reich government led to a dangerous relativism in the application of the “eternal laws.”

The regime persecuted and murdered those who were designated as threats to the life of the *Völk*. Homosexual men, Gypsies, the physically and mentally disabled, the permanently unemployed, alcoholics, lovers of American jazz, and Jehovah’s Witnesses were among non-Jewish groups targeted for removal from the body-politic of Nazi Germany. Whether they had intentionally or biologically perverted the law of nature according to the Nazi vision of the world, they had put themselves outside the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and therefore outside the protection of the law. These people were beyond redemption unless they repented of their “sin” and sought to be reconciled with the *Völk*. For some, such as the Gypsies and the disabled, there was no hope of reconciliation; they lived on the grace and favor of the Führer.

State-sanctioned killing was cloaked under the language of “protecting the blood” and removing “useless eaters” from dependency on the state. Once classified, the outcasts of the Third Reich eked out a perilous and precarious existence. The extent of biological determinism in the growing number of people added to court lists for all manner of infractions of racial and behavioral codes grew dramatically in the years before 1939.¹⁶ After the war broke out, compulsory service in the *Wehrmacht* (the armed forces) solved many problems. For those who could not serve in the armed forces, concentration camps provided convenient disposal locations.

The question arises: how was it possible that so many Germans, and so many Catholic Germans, followed Hitler and supported the regime? Research into the spread and depth of Nazism across Germany and its impact on different parts of German society, such as the Catholic Church, show a large degree of inconsistency. Different areas of the Reich responded with different levels of enthusiasm and different levels of adherence to the new way of doing things. Persecution of minorities took on different manifestations across the country.

Gleichshaltung (coordination) was the euphemism for “Nazification” of all aspects of German life after January 1933. However, 1933 was not the starting date for the process. Universities, teaching, medical, legal, and engineering professions in Germany had already embraced National Socialism long before Hitler’s appointment as chancellor. Many were anti-semitic and gave tacit support to increasingly violent measures to remove Jews from German social, political, cultural, and economic life. Catholics were present in all the professions. The lack of evidence suggesting Catholic resistance to the encroachment and embrace of Nazism points to acquiescence and acceptance. Catholic professionals, along with other German or Aryan professionals, were not prepared to support, or stand in solidarity with, their increasingly marginalized and pilloried Jewish colleagues. What emerged through studies of the medical, legal, education, and engineering professions was a pattern of racial purging, self-coordination, near universal conformity with Nazi principles, and blatant opportunism and careerism at the expense of Jews. Any misgivings of conscience were stifled.¹⁷

Gordon Zahn’s study of German Catholics revealed the ever-increasing levels of tolerance for the violence and extremes of National Socialism. The regime effected social change slowly and always under the guise of building up the Fatherland. Most people wanted to believe their government had the best interests of the people at heart and since most Germans held to one or other of the post-1918 myths, Nazi rhetoric found a receptive audience. As long as the regime did not impinge drastically on the day-to-day lives of most of the citizenry, loyalty would be given to Germany first and only then to the Church. Zahn’s work demonstrated how deeply Germany’s bishops and laity were involved in the Nazi myths of the *Volkgemeinschaft*, the belief in *Lebensraum*, and loyalty to the Führer. Obedience even in the face of Germany’s impending defeat in late 1944 was their Christian

and Catholic duty to *Völk*, *Vaterland*, and *Heimat* (people, Fatherland, and love of the homeland).¹⁸ Disappearing Jews and others were consigned to a willful amnesia. Only when programs such as the Cloppenburg and Bislich crucifix controversies or, more seriously, the sterilization and euthanasia campaigns directly touched Catholic lives, was there a concerted protest. In each case, the state retreated.¹⁹ The implication was that Jews did not directly touch the lives of most German Catholics, or at least did not touch Catholics in sufficient strength to encourage large-scale resistance to the murderous policy of the Nazi genocide.

Episcopal condemnations of Nazism throughout the 1920s and early 1930s had no discernible effect on the number of Catholics who joined or supported the movement. That some German bishops felt obliged to ban the wearing of Nazi insignia at mass in the years prior to 1933 suggests, at the very least, a high level of sympathy for Hitler and his politics among considerable numbers of observant Catholics.²⁰ Even among the bishops there was a lack of unity. Some, such as Germany's senior bishop, Cardinal Adolf Bertram of Breslau, advocated a policy of working with the regime in the hope that anti-Catholic rhetoric would remain relatively innocuous. Others, like Cardinal Michael Faulhaber of Munich, wanted a more vigorous denunciation of the anti-Christian elements of Nazi ideology regardless of the cost to himself along the lines of Bishop Hugo Ludwig of Mainz. Ludwig declared his intention to help Catholics avoid the "contagion of deadly National Socialism" by forbidding Catholics in Mainz diocese joining the Nazi party and denying the sacraments to those Catholics who did.²¹ Others again, such as the young bishop Konrad von Preysing of Eichstätt, wanted no reconciliation with the Nazis at all. On one issue, the bishops were in agreement, if only by default. Not one bishop spoke out in defense or even outrage at what was happening to the Jews or any other persecuted minority (unless there were Catholics involved).

At no point during the history of the Third Reich did Hitler ever have cause to worry about any potential or actual organized Catholic resistance. It never happened, and the historical data indicates that it most likely would not have happened. Acts of resistance came from sources other than the bishops. John Conway's detailed treatment of Catholic and Protestant responses to Nazism shows quite clearly that the "church struggle" is a misnomer. The majority of Germany's Christians, including Catholics, accepted and supported the regime without wavering until the very end despite an ongoing but essentially petty harassment of different sections of the Church.²²

Nazism was not a caricature of Christianity—it was an opposite religion that actively sought to crush what it perceived as a bastardized form of Judaism. Whereas Christianity preached a crucified and risen Christ, who offered eternal life to anyone who accepted him through baptism and the community of believers, Nazism preached a warrior bloodlust ethic through Adolf Hitler, who offered to restore the life-force of the *Völk* to all who were bonded through "blood and soil" to the *Volkgemeinschaft*.

Christianity proclaimed a gospel built on the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount and the Commandment of love of God and neighbor. Christians were challenged to model their response to the needs of others through the paradigm of the Good Samaritan and the image of the foot-washing Christ. Nazism proclaimed a new ethic based on biopolitics and brute force, holding the destruction of the weak and alien as a sacred duty. Charity was only for those within the national community.

Integral to the will of Providence was the divine duty to redeem the *Völk* from all violators of Aryan blood through violence and war. The greatest enemy were the Jews. Therefore, mercy and compassion were qualities alien to the *Völk*. Christianity believed that God had been fully revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and that through Christ redemption was offered for all people at all times and in all places. The hallmark of redemption was a radical inclusivity gained through baptism and affirmed in the sacramental life of the Church. The Nazi vision of redemption was built on the ideology of blood and radical exclusivity. Redemption meant deliverance from all that was alien to the life of the *Völk*, as defined by the Führer, and in particular it meant the destruction of the Jews. Christians looked forward to the life promised in the next world, while Hitler proclaimed the eternity of the *Völk* in an endless chain of being on earth found most clearly in Germany. Christianity and Nazism mediated their respective theologies through institutional structures that provided for communal gatherings—Christian liturgy and Nazi rallies; through rites that confirmed identity and purpose—Christian sacraments and Nazi blood banners; and through sacred texts—the Christian Bible and Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.

The collision of two opposed worldviews in Germany in the 1930s was bitter and drawn out for the “professional religious”—clergy, religious brothers and sisters, theologians and some employees of Catholic organizations. For the vast majority, the isolated disturbances, while admittedly disquieting, did not detract from the Nazi vision of the New Germany. For most German Catholics, National Socialism promised a way out of the doldrums. It was vastly different from the collision between Mussolini’s fascists and Italian Catholicism. In Germany, the Church was faced with a people who, while still largely faithful to the core teachings of Christian faith, did not see sufficient, if any, evidence of a Nazi apostasy to warrant abandoning the regime.

Hitler was constructing a new religious worldview. It was subtle so as not to frighten people, and it was not too outrageous so that people could not see parallels with their current religious practices. Nazism was a stealthy enemy that most Catholics simply did not, or did not want to, see.²³

The only Catholics (and for that matter, Protestants) able to, and willing, to distinguish between orthodoxy and heresy were the theologians and bishops. As mentioned above, there were divisions among them on how to deal with National Socialism. It is reasonable to say that most

German Catholics may have found certain elements of Nazism distasteful and even abhorrent. The same majority also felt sufficiently comfortable with Hitler and his government to give them their loyalty. Does this mean there was a danger of many German Catholics leaving the Church? I think the answer was most likely “no.” People had made an internal peace between their loyalty to the regime and their loyalty to the Church. However, some German bishops reported to Rome that to press for some form of Catholic resistance to the Nazis would result in a large desertion or schism from the Church.²⁴ The message was clear: if the bishops kept a cool distance from the regime without overtly criticizing Hitler or his minions, the chances of survival were enhanced. To do otherwise was to court disaster, unless there was a serious and unavoidable reason that demanded an episcopal response. During the Third Reich, many within the Catholic Church pinned their hopes on the controversial *Reichskonkordat* (Reich Concordat) that the Church hoped would moderate Nazi extremists and give the Church some measure of protection and independence.

The Nuncio and the Nazis

The Apostolic Nuncio to Germany (1917–1929), Eugenio Pacelli, monitored the development and growth of the many movements of Right and Left including the young National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi) (NSDAP). He had witnessed first-hand the chaos and violence of the immediate postwar years in Munich, especially during the short-lived Bavarian Soviet in 1919.²⁵ Reports to Rome during this time demonstrated his antipathy toward Bolshevism and a comment on the Jewishness of some of the revolutionaries.

Of particular interest are Pacelli’s letters of April 18, 1919 and May 5, 1919.²⁶ Here the nuncio described to Cardinal Gasparri, the secretary of state, the young revolutionaries encountered by the nuncio’s *uditore* (equivalent to a secretary), Monsignor Lorenzo Schioppa, who went to see Max Levien about permits for the nunciature. Pacelli described one group: “a group of young women, not particularly reassuring in their appearance, all Jews, like the first one.” Next he described “the first one”—Levien: a young man, Russian like the rest of them, and a Jew, about thirty or thirty-five years old. It is on these two citations that Cornwell bases much of his assertion that Pacelli was antisemitic.²⁷ Careful reading of the Italian, which neither Cornwell nor Goldhagen appear to have done, shows that the reference to the Jewishness of the revolutionaries is used as a general description. I believe this is more an observation of the non-German composition of the revolutionary councils in Munich at the time than an antisemitic or anti-Jewish assertion. Cornwell and Goldhagen may well be correct in suggesting that this points to Pacelli subscribing to the growing belief in a Judeo-Bolshevist

conspiracy, but the claim is tenuous at best. What I believe it does illustrate is an intense dislike of revolutionaries.

In 1925, the nunciature moved permanently from Munich to Berlin. Pacelli stayed in the residence in Rauschstrasse 21 until he left for Rome in December 1929. During his years in Germany, Pacelli became one of the best informed diplomats in the country, as well as dean of the Diplomatic Corps.²⁸ He had an empathy for Germany and Germans that lasted for the rest of his life. He also had an acute understanding of the dilemmas confronting the Reich in the first decade after Versailles. Although naturally inclined toward authoritarian governments, since they were the most like the authoritarian Church he served, Pacelli was astute enough to see the dangers of both right- and left-wing extremes in German politics. But it was the ever-present suspicion and fear of Bolshevism and its attendant manifestations that occupied considerable space in reports he sent to Rome.²⁹

What Eugenio Pacelli did think about the Nazis was clear from the letter he wrote to the cardinal secretary of state, Pietro Gasparri, on November 14, 1923, only days after Hitler's failed Munich *putsch*. Referring to the failed coup, the nuncio told the secretary of state of the anti-Catholic nature of National Socialist rhetoric during the weeks leading up to the *putsch* and, in particular, attacks directed at Cardinal Faulhaber, archbishop of Munich:

This character was revealed above all in the systematic attacks on the Catholic clergy with which the followers of Hitler and Ludendorff, especially in street speeches, stirred up the population, thus exposing the ecclesiastics to insults and abuse. The attacks were especially focused on this learned and zealous cardinal archbishop, who, in a sermon he gave in the Cathedral on the 4th of this month and in a letter of his to the Chancellor of the Reich published by the Wolff Agency on the 7th, had denounced the persecutions against the Jews.³⁰

Pacelli knew of the NSDAP and Adolf Hitler and, as the letter suggests, had a fairly sound grasp of the nature of Nazi politics. Contrary to some persistent myths the nuncio never met Hitler, a man he described as "a notorious political agitator."³¹ If the manner of Pacelli's reporting appeared, for the most part, distant and detached, it must be remembered that Pacelli was under instructions from Gasparri to stay strictly neutral with regard to Reich politics of whatever side.³² This did not mean he resiled from reporting what he described as the "vulgar and violent campaign" of the *völkish* press directed against the Holy See, which claimed Catholics and Jews as allies in an anti-German conspiracy, trampling the rights of Germany underfoot.³³ The nuncio went so far to write to Cardinal Gasparri that nationalism of the type promoted by Hitler could prove to be the greatest heresy of the age.³⁴

Later, when he addressed Nazism in public statements as secretary of state from 1930 to 1939, he left his hearers with a very clear message that Catholicism and the ideology of Nazism were incompatible. Note that it was the *ideology* of Nazism that was incompatible, not the lived expression of National Socialism in toto. A blanket condemnation of a party that promised to restore the nation's morals and values would not be politically prudent. Pacelli's criticisms reflected those of most of the German episcopate, who likewise singled out and condemned particular obnoxious aspects of the ideology. At this point, it should not be surprising that there was no public repudiation of antisemitism during the 1920s and the early 1930s by either Pacelli or any Catholic Church leader in Germany or elsewhere outside of Rome—it was not perceived as a problem, even though the nuncio had recognized antisemitism as an integral part of the National Socialist political agenda as early as April 1924.³⁵ In fact Pacelli had recognized antisemitism as a factor in conservative German social and political life since shortly after arriving in Munich.³⁶ General condemnations of racism were issued, but since the most active expression of racism in the Third Reich was directed against Jews, the silence is all the more telling and the confirmation of traditional Catholic anti-Judaism all the more dramatic.

Pacelli was sent to Germany as the representative of the Holy See. He was not expected to be an original thinker or problem-solver. What he said and did reflected the mind of the pope. Throughout the period 1919–1924, the most important thing that occupied the nuncio was the protracted discussion for a concordat between Bavaria and the Vatican. Pacelli considered this his greatest achievement in Germany. Signed on March 29, 1924 and ratified by the Bavarian Ländtag on January 15, 1925, the concordat remained in force until 1966.

Pacelli's most important role was to work with the Bavarian (and later the German) bishops in ensuring that the work of the Church continued. He was responsible for overseeing the implementation of the 1917 Code of Canon Law and, in a rare venture into the public gaze, monitored the 1923 Ruhr Valley crisis at the express wish of the pope.³⁷ This continued the ongoing centralization of the Catholic Church begun under Pius IX in the 1870s. Slowly and gradually, the German bishops were excluded when issues between Rome and Berlin were discussed. Pacelli followed his instructions from Benedict XV, and, after 1922, Pius XI. Again, this was hardly surprising: the Vatican was following the patterns of political life that were arising across much of Europe.

At the heart of Rome's German policy was the necessity of keeping the integral unity of the state. "The Church must not weaken the unity of the Reich; Catholics had a duty to support a strong Germany as a safe bulwark against the menace coming from the east and the centre of Christian Europe," although channels of communication remained open for occasional meetings with Russian diplomats.³⁸ Even traditional Bavarian reservations about Berlin had to be put behind in order to counter the greater

danger.³⁹ To this end, Benedict XV pursued a policy of urging Allied leniency toward Germany, an issue that earned the pope the ire of the French and the effusive gratitude of President Ebert and the Reich government.⁴⁰ Rome opposed the Versailles Treaty and condemned it as fundamentally unjust since it would allow the further spread of Bolshevism, “a hidden danger, real and concrete.”

When Achille Ratti succeeded Benedict XV as Pius XI in 1922, Berlin was concerned that the new pontiff might reverse the pro-German trend of recent years. Pius XI had been nuncio in Poland between 1919 and 1921 and had overseen very difficult and tense moments between Polish Catholics and German Catholics in Upper Silesia. In 1920 Pope Benedict had announced his intention to raise Faulhaber of Munich and Schulte of Cologne to the College of Cardinals and retain Gasparri as secretary of state, all signs interpreted by Pacelli and Ebert that papal policy remained constant. The Reich government responded quickly, establishing diplomatic relations with the Holy See, appointing Diego von Bergen as its first ambassador in April of the same year.⁴¹

The experience of Achille Ratti, the nuncio in Warsaw, seemingly confirmed Pope Benedict’s worst fears about the Bolsheviks.⁴² More and more it was the fear of communism in Russia and, after 1924, the revolutionary regime of Plutarco Calles in Mexico that drove papal policies with governments around the world, and especially with Germany. The nuncio in Munich did exactly what was expected of him, so that by the time Pacelli departed Berlin for Rome in December 1929, his service in the Weimar Republic was, in terms of papal foreign policy, one of the most successful of the interwar years.⁴³ Concerns about the National Socialists, while creating some concern, were not the most pressing items on the agenda of either Pacelli or the pope.

CHAPTER SIX

His Master's Voice

Our dear Son, the Cardinal Legate a latere, represents Our person in your midst, speaks to you in my name, and interprets Our thoughts in his pious and eloquent words.

Pius XI speaking of Cardinal Pacelli (July 17, 1937)

“The World” as Seen by Pope Pius XI

Eugenio Pacelli's worldview was well established before 1939. In fact, his appreciation of the relationship of the Catholic Church and the world was fixed during his time in the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs. He remained faithful to this worldview until his death in 1958.

Pius XI and Pius XII believed that the Church was a “perfect society,” with a divinely given mission to teach God's will for humanity. It was never the Church that had to change or adjust to the vagaries of time, for it was without need of change. Nor was the Church to be tied to any form of human political structure, fascist or communist. “By necessary consequence the Church is independent of any sort of earthly power as well in the origin as in the exercise of her mission as educator, not merely in regard to her proper end and object, but also in regard to the means necessary and suitable to attain that end.”¹

“The World,” inasmuch as it erred from following the Christian revelation as taught by the Vicar of Christ and his representatives, was constantly in need of paternal correction and discipline.² Therefore, papal plays in power politics in the early twentieth century were a mixture of the traditional “calls to faith and repentance” of the kind associated with the Middle Ages, and cries of desperation as the position, prerogatives, and presumed rights of the Church were eroded by modern political movements and political religions such as Marxism and fascism.

A survey of the *New York Times* and *The Times* (London) indices—under the headings “Pius XI,” “Vatican,” “Roman Catholic Church,” and “Pacelli”—show an ever-increasing number of references throughout the 1920s and 1930s. This illustrated the growing significance of the Vatican

and the Church as centers of influence in world matters. However, a word of caution is needed. Newspapers reported matters of interest to their readers and always operated within their own social, political, and economic contexts. Wide reporting of the activities of Pope Pius XI or Cardinal Pacelli did not mean acceptance of every part of the message of these men. What we can learn from these reports is the value of context.

Outside Vatican and Catholic circles, the major issues that confronted Europe and the English-speaking world in the 1920s were the implementation and maintenance of a lasting peace, preservation of national and imperial interests, economic stability, fear of Bolshevism, and the “return to normalcy.”³ After 1929, the focus shifted to economic and international stability. These issues were also of concern to Rome, but seen through a religious and, significantly, supranational matrix. It is essential for the historian to keep this context in mind when examining papal responses to world events. If there was an intersection of issues—such as the economic crisis of 1929–1932 or the worsening international climate of the late 1930s—the internationality of the papacy guaranteed a solution that would be theologically inclusive and politically general or neutral in order to accommodate Catholic teaching and the reality of Catholic supranationality. But this does not suggest that Rome expressed no opinion on particular political systems. The Church had to live under, and with, a variety of political structures and consequently had to find means of securing its life and prerogatives. The preferred tool was the Concordat concluded through the delicate work of nuncios like Pacelli. It was often a fine balancing act between negotiations with governments and the Vatican and Pius XI’s broadsides against what he perceived as the problems of the day.

Dominating the writings of both Pius XI and Pius XII from the end of the Great War until the end of the Second World War was a concern with the “revolutionary spirit” destroying Christian Europe. This term meant more than the Bolshevik genre of revolution. It was a global term used to cover a huge range of issues that church leaders felt were destroying the heart of Christian Europe. From the beginning of his pontificate, Pius XI undertook to name the dangers and warn against them. Pacelli, in his turn, did exactly the same.

The 1914–1918 war had so destabilized society that the conventional norms that had governed the behavior and social contracts among families and nations were disintegrating. In his first encyclical letter, *Ubi arcano dei consilio*, Pius XI commented and lamented on the state of the world. True peace had not been found and states of war continued to exist in different parts of the world. Class war “like a cancer is eating away the vital forces of the social fabric,” infecting even “that sanctuary of peace and love, the family” so that “idleness and unemployment” contribute to “the restless spirit of revolt” threatening society.⁴ The rise of “the condition of an extreme nationalism, when we forget that all men are our brothers and members of the same great human family,” linked to other evils

such as civil marriage, public secular education, and veiled references to Bolshevism, caused the Pope much sadness.⁵ The only remedy was to be found in the reestablishment of a society built upon Christian values, “that true League of Nations, Christianity,” and demonstrated in the life and work of Catholic Action.⁶ Finally, Pius ended the letter with a reaffirmation of the traditional understanding of the Church’s relations with the secular state:

The Church does not desire, neither ought she to desire, to mix up without a *just cause* in the direction of purely civil affairs. On the other hand, she cannot permit or tolerate that the state use the *pretext of certain laws of unjust regulations* to do injury to the rights of an order superior to that of the state, to interfere with the constitution given the Church by Christ, or to violate the rights of God Himself over civil society. (Emphases added)⁷

The teaching authority of the Church, embodied in the pope, decided what constituted a “just cause” that would warrant ecclesiastical interference in a state matter. It was not difficult to judge what might have constituted a “just cause,” especially in the light of the list of woes cited above. The rights and prerogatives of the Church were to be defended. Deals were only struck if the Church believed its rights were guaranteed. As the 1920s continued and the position of the Church weakened in many different parts of the world, the cry of anguish from the pope grew louder with each crisis and disaster. This thinking dominated the diplomacy of Pius XI’s papacy. Eugenio Pacelli had already demonstrated his sympathy with the pope’s methodology in his work in Germany. His appointment as secretary of state confirmed his master’s confidence that the two shared a common view on the role and place of the Church in the world.

Very little has been written about Pacelli’s role in defining and defending the Church’s position in Europe during his time as secretary of state. The proactive and often aggressive stands taken by Pope Pius XI were shared by Pacelli. While both men differed significantly in temperament, they shared the same conviction with regard to the position of the Church in the world of the 1930s. By examining the statements of Pius XI and those of his secretary of state during this time, we see a consistent pattern emerge that remained essentially unchanged throughout Pacelli’s pontificate. Integral to this pattern was the emerging different standards of judgment applied to regimes of the Right in places like Italy, Germany, and Nationalist Spain; and those of the Left, especially Russia, Mexico, and Republican Spain. The Vatican’s attitude toward communism was to be of enormous significance throughout Pacelli’s time as secretary of state and shaped much of his diplomatic style from the 1930s onward. Reading the official record in this light makes it possible to place European Jewry within the Church’s global picture. For the Jews, it was not a comforting scenario.

Before I examine the statements of Pacelli during the 1930s, it is necessary to survey the 1920s and the various critical moments that defined and shaped the Vatican's policies and responses. Reconciliation with Italy and the accommodation with the regimes of the Right in Europe marked one part of the Church's diplomatic work. Alongside it was an increasingly strident condemnation and denunciation of the regimes of the Left, especially communism. By 1924, a paradigm was established that remained unchanged until the papacy of John XXIII. It was to create a hellishly difficult and dangerous road for Rome to travel.

While Pacelli was still nuncio in Germany, the Vatican had begun to make its peace with the Italian state. Mussolini's overtures for reconciliation were heeded and a long process that concluded with the Lateran Pacts of February 1929 began between the two sides. The Quirinal recognized the Vatican as a sovereign state free to conduct its business as any other state, paid the Holy See 1000 million lire in state bonds, gave official recognition to Catholicism as the state religion, and abolished civil marriage. In return, the Vatican afforded Mussolini recognition and promised to end all Catholic clerical political activity.⁸ Pius XI and, later, Pius XII saw no value in priests' participation in the political processes but were limited in their ability to stop clerics from accepting political appointments, as the case of Tiso in Slovakia was to illustrate. Perceived divided loyalties were dangerous.

The settlement of the "Roman Question" and the appearance of an accommodation reached with the fascist government in Italy gave the appearance that the Vatican was prepared to live alongside dictatorships of the Right while fulminating against those of the Left. There is some truth in this. Pius XI was not so naïve as to believe that the fascists would leave the Church alone entirely. Within two years of the Lateran Treaty, the pope wrote the encyclical *Non habbiamo bisogno* in protest at violations of the treaty and, in particular, harassment of Catholic Action. The dispute over Catholic Action in Italy became emblematic of the struggle fought by the Church and the totalitarian states. Pius' appeal, through the encyclical, to the universal Church lifted the struggle from a purely Italian domestic fight to a perceived battle for the hearts and minds of Catholic youth throughout the world.⁹

What occupied much of Pius XI's time in the 1920s and well into the 1930s was what he termed *il terribile triangolo*—the terrible triangle—Russia, Mexico, and Spain.¹⁰

Russia

Throughout much of the 1920s, the Vatican had attempted a number of diplomatic missions to the Soviet Union. Demonstrating a willingness to persist in trying to meet the Bolshevik government midway, Rome provided aid during the famine after the Civil War as well as assurances that

any religious activity would be directed solely toward Latin Rite Catholics within Russia. For a time, Pius XI believed the Bolshevik regime would not last long and that its antireligion policies would be moderated. A desperate Politburo, needing every shred of international support, made positive noises to the Holy See. Lenin authorized the admission of a Vatican relief mission to help the victims of the post-civil war famine. Rome proceeded to send aid, establish dioceses, and create a hierarchical structure from European Russia through to Vladivostok. Hope gradually withered after 1923 when the archbishop of Mogilev (Petrograd), Jan Cieplak, and his Vicar General, Konstantin Budkiewicz, were arrested on charges of supporting "counter-revolutionaries." The archbishop was spared the death sentence for ten years in prison. Budkiewicz was shot on Good Friday, 1923. The very public arrest, imprisoning, and execution sent tremors through Rome.¹¹

Nine months after the death of Lenin in January 1924, the Vatican's relief mission was expelled from Russia and the supplies sent to feed the victims of famine were seized. All attempts at a *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union fell apart after Italy gave formal recognition to the Bolshevik government; Moscow had no need for Vatican diplomacy any longer.¹² For the next five years, Moscow played a strange game of teasing the Vatican, promising concessions for Catholics in return for papal recognition of the Soviet government. Rome continued the dialogue until 1929. When Josef Stalin announced an official government-sponsored program to eradicate religion in April 1929, Pius XI reluctantly ended attempts to reach a *modus vivendi* with Moscow.

Stories of religious persecution in Russia filled hundreds of newspaper columns across the world. The nature of the literature often bordered on the hysterical and used apocalyptic language to describe the diabolical nature of the Bolsheviks. In one of the more influential histories published at the time, Italian priest-author Orazio Premoli left the Catholic reader in no doubt as to where much of the hatred of the Church originated. Commenting on the trial of Archbishop Cieplak, Premoli noted that "amid the hatred of the Jews . . . [Cieplak and the others] behaved like martyrs." "Jews or declared atheists" were responsible for the censorship of information concerning the true state of affairs in Russia.¹³ Premoli's Judeophobia appeared consistently throughout his book. Behind every attack on the Catholic Church lurked the Jews.¹⁴

On February 10, 1930 Pius XI addressed a public letter to Cardinal Pompili, the Vicar General of Rome. The pope, "profoundly moved by the horrible criminal sacrileges which are repeated and increased every day against God and the souls of the innumerable population of Russia, all dear to our heart," lamented that despite the best intentions of the Catholic Church, the Soviet government had effectively declared a war upon religion. So great was the apostasy raging through Russia that the pope called for the Catholic world to join him in "an act of reparation for all these outrages."¹⁵ In the presence of 50,000 worshippers, the pope celebrated a

mass of expiation in St Peter's Basilica. Around the world, thousands of Catholics joined in similar masses. The battlelines were drawn.

Mexico

Mexico had been undergoing a process of various radical and moderate reforms in the wake of the 1910 revolution and the successive waves of unrest, civil war, new governments, and further revolutionary activity. A simmering anticlericalism underpinned the 1917 Queretaro Constitution, and anticlerical laws similar to the 1904 Waldeck-Rousseau laws in France were enacted. Religious schools were closed, restrictions on public and political activity of the clergy and religious were authorized, religious events outside church buildings were curbed, church land was sequestered by the government, the Catholic press was suppressed, and political parties related to the Church were banned. Until 1923, the laws were rarely enforced. The dedication of a monument to "Christ the King of Mexico" in January 1923 involving some 40,000 pilgrims, 12 bishops, and the papal delegate proved to be the catalyst for government action. The pope was cheered as indulgences were granted and Christ declared king of all Mexicans.

Interpreting the Church's action as an act of direct defiance, a "campaign by the Vatican to retain its old domination over the minds of the people," and a repudiation of the state's authority, the Mexican government expelled the papal delegate.¹⁶ In 1925, Pius instituted the feast of Christ the King in direct response to the anticlerical regimes in Mexico and Russia:

If We ordain that the whole Catholic world shall revere Christ as King, We shall minister to the need of the present day, and at the same time provide an excellent remedy for the plague which now infects society. We refer to the plague of anti-clericalism, its errors and impious activities... it has long lurked beneath the surface. The empire of Christ over all nations was rejected.¹⁷

Three years later, a new government, led by the fanatically anticlerical and socialist Plutarcho Calles, implemented the Queretaro Laws to the letter. In ways similar to those used in Russia, the Mexican government launched a radical campaign against the Catholic Church. Within weeks of Calles' election, hundreds of religious houses and schools were closed, Spanish priests were expelled, and the Soviet ambassador commented that Mexican anticlericalism was more stringent than anything seen in Russia!¹⁸

Rome was not slow to respond. The Vatican advised the Mexican bishops to comply with the law literally and effectively close down the operation of the Church in the country from July 31, 1926. The impact

on a devoutly Catholic country, where the Church was the only social institution powerful enough to confront the government, was drastic. A group of Catholic antigovernment activists formed themselves into the National League of Religious Defense and protested against the acts of the Calles' administration. Calles responded by revising the Penal Code to include "religious crimes." As the confrontation escalated, more and more Catholics were radicalized. After a final government rejection of a request for the repeal of the antireligious statutes, civil war broke out in 1926.¹⁹

Those defending the rights of the Church labeled themselves "Cristeros"—the fighters for "Christ the King." The pope gave explicit approval to those defending the rights of the Church, although he did not mention the armed conflict. Citing the long history of anticlericalism, Pius praised the Mexican bishops and Catholic people for choosing "to obey God rather than men," and described the deaths of "men and boys" in the language used of martyrs.²⁰

Civil war raged for three years, with both sides committing atrocities. Finally, the United States intervened, in no small part due to concerns for American business interests and the need for a stable Mexico and not out of any major concern for Catholic interests.²¹ The Mexican government and the Catholic Church "committed themselves to respecting their respective realms of this and the other world, the temporal and spiritual spheres: the Church wouldn't incite its followers to take power, nor would the state attempt to interfere with the internal order of the ecclesiastic institutions."²²

Spain

Of all the countries in Europe, none was as visibly Catholic as Spain. Her ruling elites had maintained the position and privileges of the Church since the *reconquista* (reconquest of Spain by the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella) in the fifteenth century. By the nineteenth century, Spain had begun to modernize, although this was a process that lagged decades behind the rest of the Continent. Spanish liberals embraced anticlericalism and portrayed the Church as the main object to progress, citing clerical control of education and the enormous influence wielded over political and social life as the two most obvious examples of Catholic obscurantism. Change was swift when a combination of economic disasters led to demands for social and political reform. When the monarchy of Alfonso XIII collapsed under the weight of corruption and incompetence, the new liberal-reformist government was quick to move.

As far as the Spanish bishops were concerned, April 1931 ended traditional Catholic Spain and ushered in anticlericalism. Churches were burnt and several bishops, including the primate, were expelled from their dioceses. What staggered Rome was the alarming spread of anti-Church activity and its seeming acceptance by the people. On January 24, 1932,

a new constitution abolished the Jesuits in Spain, instituted civil divorce, secularized the cemeteries, and removed crucifixes from all public buildings. Pius spoke of events in Spain as *una vera desolazione*—a true desolation—but refrained from a full statement until his encyclical *Dilectissima nobis* eighteen months later, in June 1933.²³

Rome's "wait and see" approach to Spain changed dramatically in 1936 when the country slid into civil war. Pius's language became apocalyptic. When he addressed a group of Spanish refugees at Castelgandolfo in September 1936, he described the persecution of the Church as similar to that of the early Christian martyrs:

Your presence here, beloved sons and exiles of Spain, of a Spain so dear to us and now so desolate, fills our heart with an utterly inexpressible tumult of afflicting and conflicting feelings and emotions... It is just as the Apostle [Paul] saw the first martyrs and his admiration and exultation at seeing them... You have come to tell us of your joy in having been found worthy like the first Apostle to suffer for the name of Jesus, and of your happiness, like that once praised by the first pope [Peter].²⁴

By the time Franco gained the upper hand in the civil war, over 6,800 priests and religious sisters and brothers had been killed. Ironically, the persecution of the Church ended any hope of reconciliation with modernity. The Spanish Church was to remain conservative and unyielding for the next half-century. The savagery of the Republican movement left an indelible mark on the mind and heart of Pius XI and his successor. One of Pacelli's first acts as pope was to write to Franco at the end of the conflict. In the telegram, he sent his benediction, "expressing his gratitude to the Most High for the victory of Catholic Spain."²⁵ Franco was not slow to make the Church an integral part of Spanish society. On February 2, 1939, all anticlerical laws were repealed and all Church privileges restored. Diplomatic niceties aside, the communication from the new pope was nothing short of a firm reminder of Rome's sympathies in the struggle for the soul of Europe.

Secretary of State: Cardinal Pacelli and Pope Pius XI, 1930–1939

Eugenio Pacelli worked in the middle of all the Vatican's anguish over the *terribile triangolo*. The urbane, diplomatic, and cultivated Pacelli, friend of statesmen and confidant of presidents, left the presidential palace with full military honors, a gesture of affection from the Protestant Paul von Hindenburg. His departure from Berlin's Anhalter Station was no less impressive. The recall to Rome came with the news of the pope's intention to make Pacelli cardinal and successor to the aging Gasparri,

secretary of state. The coverage given Pacelli's red hat and appointment was unprecedented. Throughout the 1920s both *The Times* (London) and the *New York Times* had written with great sympathy of Pius XI's attempts to secure peace in Europe and save it from Bolshevism. Both papers were to continue to do so throughout the 1930s. Pacelli already had a firm reputation for being an unswerving opponent of communism. In general, the papers wrote favorably about Pius XI and then Pius XII.²⁶

Pius XI chose Pacelli, among other reasons, for his diplomatic skills, a talent the pope did not have. The relationship between pope and secretary was close and affectionate. In 1937, at the dedication of the basilica in Lisieux, Pius XI's affirmation of Pacelli was loud and clear: "Our dear Son, the Cardinal Legate *a latere*, represents Our person in your midst, speaks to you in my name, and interprets Our thoughts in his pious and eloquent words."²⁷ Pius could also rely on the cardinal's obsession with detail and legal nuance. Commenting on Pacelli's role in the 1933 Concordat, German ecclesiastical historian Klaus Scholder made this scathing assessment:

One can find nearly all the characteristics of Pacelli's negotiating style...in the 1933 negotiations. The exclusive concentration of church politics on the legal form of the concordat; the tendency to reckless exploitation of a situation apparently favorable to the Church; almost complete lack of interest in specifically German problems and difficulties, and, not least, disregard for the German episcopate—all this made Pacelli...a nearly ideal negotiating partner for Hitler.²⁸

The content of Scholder's comments is a fair assessment and comes as no great surprise. Nonetheless, the tone is unduly severe. His comments need to be put beside the reality within Germany in the late Weimar Republic and the new Third Reich. Quite simply, Pacelli operated as the agent of an autocratic institution. His *modus operandi* was similar to other agents of other autocratic institutions.

Pacelli's skills in smoothing difficult relations between Rome and Berlin were well known. Several years later, Diego von Bergen commented to Foreign Minister von Neurath that Cardinal Pacelli "constantly strives to pacify, and to exert a moderating influence on the Pope, who is difficult to manage and to influence." The comment was made after Pius XI had made some strong comments on the Reich's treatment of the Church in 1935. Bergen went from the pope to Pacelli, who undertook to find out the truth of the report and respond with a "private letter." The cardinal secretary of state quickly engineered a "truce" between the German embassy and the Vatican.²⁹ It was not to be the last time he had to bring two opposing sides together. The danger that emerged in the 1930s was not limited to Rome. Appeasement—or whatever name was given to describe the bargaining done between political, national, or religious entities—was a diplomatic tool for many governments.

“The Old Man,” as Mussolini sneeringly referred to Pius, was a fighter. Immediately after his election on February 6, 1922, Pius XI announced to the cardinals:

I protest before the members of the sacred College that I have at heart the preservation and defense of the rights of the Church and the prerogatives of the Holy See; but since I have made this clear, I desire that my first blessing shall go, as a pledge of that peace to which the whole human race aspires, not merely to Rome and Italy, but to the whole Church, to the entire world. I shall give it from the outside balcony of St Peter's.³⁰

For the first time since Pius IX locked the Vatican gates against the new Italian kingdom, the pope appeared publicly to give the traditional blessing *Urbi et Orbi*—to the city and the world. The symbolism was not lost on the government of Italy. Pius intended from the beginning to be an active player in the life of the Church in the world. His voice would pronounce Catholic teaching in direct and simple terms. There would be no room for misunderstanding. What Pius said was exactly what he meant.

Encyclical letters poured forth from Pius's study expressing Catholic doctrine and an ongoing papal commentary on the state of the world. It was not difficult to “read between the lines” to find “the Pope's mind” on any number of events or issues. From 1930, all of Pius' encyclical letters passed across the desk of his able secretary of state. Pacelli's role was that of trusted consultant who ensured the pope's thought was shaped into a well-crafted statement that accurately expressed “his master's voice.”

Apart from the particular national issues of *il terribile triangolo*, the pope was occupied by secularism, nationalism, pseudoscience, racism, and the threats to peace. Putting the encyclical letters alongside the travels of Pacelli during the 1930s reveals an important pattern of papal policy, diplomacy, and interpretation of the direction of world politics. I am reasonably convinced that Pius XI lived under few illusions as to the potential for a future war in Europe. He was canny enough to see the fascist dictators as “fair weather friends” and intuitive enough to see Stalin as the long-term threat to Europe's peace and stability.

Pacelli's trips in Europe and abroad between 1934 and 1938 were more than liturgical and spiritual extravaganzas. They were carefully orchestrated diplomatic events designed to strengthen Catholic presence and support in the host nation and across the globe. They were also valuable opportunities for Rome to gauge local sympathies and muster political support. There is evidence of considerable planning for each major trip. A world of difference existed between Pacelli's visit as Papal Legate to Argentina in 1934 and his “private” visit to the United States in 1936. Every public word spoken by the cardinal reflected the heart and mind of the pope. This gives us as close as possible an insight into Pacelli's thought as it evolved in the 1930s and into his papacy from 1939. It is here that I

believe we can find a way through Pacelli's action or inaction during the war and Holocaust.

The Encyclicals

Between December 1930 and May 1932, Pius XI issued four major statements directly addressing social and political matters. An area of great interest was the emergence of papal commentary on pseudoscientific matters and the growth of fanatical nationalism. Throughout the Catholic world, these encyclicals were well published and widely commented on.

Casti connubii

On December 31, 1930, *Casti connubii* focused on Christian marriage in response to what the pope described as a growing apathy toward religion. This was leading people to “ignore or shamelessly deny the great sanctity of Christian wedlock, or relying on the false principles of a new and utterly perverse morality, to often trample it under foot.”³¹ At the heart of the letter was the Catholic teaching on the sanctity of marriage. Through marriage, society was given stability and permanence and humanity invited to share in the creative power of God, bearing and rearing children as the future of both Church and state.³²

Regulation of marriage was one of the most important areas discussed in every concordat process. Every agreement signed between the Vatican and a state contained provision for state recognition of Church marriages. In Italy, one of the Concordat provisions explicitly declared that the Italian state “recognizes the civil effects of the sacrament of marriage as laid down by Canon Law.”³³ In countries where there were significant Catholic populations, the provisions were less strict but recognized Catholic sacramental marriage as having higher validity than civil marriage.

The pope made clear the Catholic opposition to “various new forms of matrimony... which beyond all question reduce our truly cultured nations to the barbarous standards of savage peoples.”³⁴ Closely allied to civil marriage were the “evils” of contraception, abortion, and sterilization.³⁵ It was ironic that on this issue the fascist dictatorships came close to agreement with the pope, but with different rationales. The pope taught that children were the gift of God; the Duce and Führer taught that children were the future warriors of the race.

Pius directly addressed the issue of eugenics in the encyclical. The pope recognized the medical profession's duty to counsel parents about possible risks and dangers in childbearing, but condemned eugenics as contrary to the will of God:

[T]here are some who, oversolicitous for the cause of eugenics, not only give salutary counsel for more certainly procuring the strength

and health of the future child—which, indeed, is not contrary to right reason—but put eugenics before aims of a higher order, and by public authority wish to prevent from marrying, all those whom, even though naturally fit for marriage, they consider, according to the norms and conjectures of their investigations, would through hereditary transmission, bring forth defective offspring.³⁶

These comments, and the ones above, became the Catholic response to all attempts at interference in human reproduction, right up to *Humanae vitae* in 1968. Reaction to the encyclical's condemnations was muted and there is no evidence of any government or hierarchy coming to blows over the application of eugenics.

Quadragesimo anno

Six months later, the pope published *Quadragesimo anno*, marking the fortieth anniversary of Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum*. In what was a Catholic response to social reform advocated by both Right and Left, Pius appealed for a new social order based on the principle of "subsidiary function," where power would be shared throughout society and not concentrated in the hands of one power faction or other.³⁷ In a pointed attack on aspects of liberal democracy, and an undisguised attack on all aspects of communism, the pope decried "individualism" and "collectivism" as against the will of God and the good of humanity.³⁸

In an indirect way, the pope deplored the economic hardships brought about by the Depression and the temptation to seek radical solutions. "Just as the unity of human society cannot be founded on an opposition of classes, so also the right ordering of economic life cannot be left to a free competition of forces."³⁹ While some remedy for social ills could be found in the democracies and fascist states, nothing good could emerge from communism: "Communism teaches and seeks two objectives: unrelenting class warfare and absolute extermination of private ownership."⁴⁰ The pope judged the horrors perpetrated by communism to be so well known that he included them as a warning for people to remain vigilant.⁴¹ Keep in mind that by 1931 all hope for a rapprochement with Moscow was gone. Pius named his greatest enemy in very clear language: it was to remain so for the rest of his life and throughout the life of his successor.

Casti connubii and *Quadragesimo anno* were written as teaching and instruction for the Catholic world on specific issues. They were, in one sense, academic documents that attempted to provide a structure for Catholics faced with new social conditions and the attendant problems. *Non habbiamo bisogno*, written in June 1931, confronted the very real situation of Italy and the tensions between the Church and Mussolini. Throughout the letter, Pius bemoaned the breaches of the Concordat committed by the state and, in particular, lamented the persecution of Catholic Action.⁴²

Non habbiamo bisogno

For the first time, a papal document painstakingly examined a fascist state and the Church's relationship with it. Pius accused the "hostile press of the party" of creating lies about the Church and accusations of "black ingratitude" in priests supposedly involved in political activity, despite the prohibitions of the Concordat.⁴³ Speaking of Mussolini, the pope expressed his disappointment: "We cannot be grateful to him who, after putting out of existence Socialism and anti-religious organizations, has permitted them to be so largely reintroduced that the whole world sees and deplores them."⁴⁴ Pius criticized the actions of Mussolini's government against Catholic youth movements and, in particular, the ludicrous assertion that Catholic youth in Italy acted at the behest of a "Foreign Power, the Vatican."⁴⁵

The encyclical moved from point to point to a climax that was a ringing condemnation of the neopagan attributes of the regime. Pius believed the Church was confronted with "a regime based on an ideology which clearly resolves itself into a true, a real pagan worship of the State—the 'Statolatry' which is no less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than it is in contradiction with the supernatural rights of the Church." Further, he went on to affirm that it was an "unjustifiable pretension" to presume to teach the Church and the pope what is pertinent for Christian education.⁴⁶

Toward the end of the letter, the pope addressed the vexed matter of the oath required by every holder of public office and every member of a fascist organization in Italy. The oath demanded total obedience and loyalty to the fascist regime. Pius judged it to be "unlawful." He then provided what was effectively an "escape clause" that would ease the consciences of many Catholics:

Realizing the many difficulties of the present hour and knowing that membership in the party and the oath are for countless persons a necessary condition of their career, of their daily bread, and even of their life itself, We have sought to find a way which would restore tranquility to these consciences, reducing to a minimum the external difficulties of the situation. It seems to Us that such a means for those who have already received their membership card would be to make for themselves before God, in their consciences, a reservation such as "Saving the laws of God and of the Church" or "In accordance with the duties of a good Christian," with the firm proposal to declare externally such a reservation if the need of it arose.⁴⁷

This "reservation" gave an officially sanctioned way around difficulties of conscience for Catholics. It raises the question of why such a clause was not considered elsewhere. I suspect the answer lies in the nature of the relationship between the Church and the fascist regime in Italy. Pius knew

and understood the Italian fascists well and, I believe, doubted whether there would ever be a showdown that the Church would not be able to win. Much of the fascist agenda was sympathetic to traditional Catholic authoritarianism, a point examined in the previous chapter.

A far more significant and more likely reason was the pope's measure of comfort with Italian fascism. In a meeting with Mussolini in early 1932, barely two months after *Non habbiamo bisogno* was published, the pope was alleged to have said: "I am happy that compatibility has been re-established between the Fascist Party and Catholic Action. If ever, the difficulties have disappeared for the Catholics. But I do not see, in the whole of fascist doctrine—with its affirmation of the principles of order, authority and discipline—anything contrary to Catholic conceptions."⁴⁸ Nonetheless, even a fighter like Pius XI knew when to appear to give some ground. Petty harassment of the type experienced in Italy paled in comparison to the persecution of the Church in Russia, Mexico, and Spain.

Caritate Christi compulsi

The last major document of this period was *Caritate Christi compulsi* of May 1932. Growing political unrest caused by the economic disaster prompted Pius to speak out against these trends and the "most perilous of all these evils"—communism. As far as the pope was concerned, only the communists stood to gain from the Depression. They had one aim, namely, to "wage an atrocious war against all religion and against God."⁴⁹ Communist leaders must not be trusted since they planned to use the "present distress and need of all things to their own purpose," which included persuading people "that God and religion are to blame as the cause of all these great evils."⁵⁰

Catholics were called on to become active in Catholic Action, joining the bishops in pressuring governments to put aside divisions and unite against the common enemy. Unlike *Quadragesimo anno*, the pope did not provide a plan of action to defeat communism. His language was apocalyptic against "this satanic hatred of religion," suggesting that he could see communism remaining the greatest threat to the Church for the foreseeable future. Aware of his limited power in world affairs, the pope addressed himself to the piety of the Catholic people. "Mindful then of our condition, that we are essentially limited and absolutely dependent on the Supreme Being, before everything else let us have recourse to prayer."⁵¹ Nothing in the encyclical suggests that Pius believed the Church would be overcome, but his appeal for prayer and penance rang with urgency. Catholics, used to such language, would have heard the warning in the pope's words. In closing, the pope called on the faithful to place the crusade against communism and atheism under the patronage of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The feast of the Sacred Heart and the eight days of the Octave were set aside in 1932 for days of special prayer and penance with

Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. For the Catholic world, this sent an electrifying message of great danger. For the cardinal secretary of state, the public words of the pontiff would be matched by very public actions from the one widely considered to be *papabile*.

During the early years in his position as secretary of state, Pacelli was closely involved in the administration of the Secretariat. He was a combination of papal prime minister, foreign minister, and chief executive officer of the Vatican State. He was answerable only to the pope and had near-privileged access to Pius on a daily basis. No document of significance reached the pope without passing over Pacelli's desk and none passed from the pope without Pacelli's knowledge and comment. If there was one man in the Vatican who had intimate knowledge of the Church's situation throughout the world apart from Pius XI, it was Cardinal Pacelli. Indeed Pacelli's importance was recognized by the secular power as well.⁵²

The opening of the archives for the pontificate of Pius XI has given considerable insight into the working relationship between the pope and his secretary of state. Hubert Wolf's research has shown that the collegial processes operative in the Roman Curia during the pontificates up to the death of Benedict XV in 1922 more or less ended with the papacy of Pius XI. By the time Pacelli succeeded Gasparri in 1930, major policy decisions devolved on the pope and the secretary of state. Wolf observed that by the early 1930s there are very few files detailing discussions and minutes of the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, the traditional congregation over which the secretary of state presided. In fact, there are no records of meetings to discuss any of the major events in Germany in 1933, the evolution of *Mit brennender Sorge* in 1937, or the Austrian *Anchluss* of 1938.

The pattern that emerges from the Vatican Archives is clear. Pius and Pacelli met to discuss a variety of issues. Pacelli took notes of the meetings and detailed the pope's comments and wishes, which he then implemented in a series of instructions that were sent to nuncios, other curial congregations, and foreign diplomats. There is no doubt that Pacelli regarded himself as the foremost expert on Germany and did not need to consult his subordinates in the Secretariat.⁵³

"I make him travel..."

The pope saw Pacelli as more than a protégé. He saw a successor, a man who would continue the proactive stance of Rome in its relations with governments of any and all political hues. Appointing Pacelli Papal Legate to the Eucharistic Congress in Buenos Aires was designed to get him known among those who would one day elect a new pope. Unashamedly, Pius told Domenico Tardini, undersecretary of the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs: "I make him travel so that he may get to know the world and the world may get to know him...he will be

a splendid pope.”⁵⁴ Certainly, by the time he was elected, Pius XII was the most travelled pope in history. His first trip was to Latin America—the continent where the Church in Mexico was still suffering and where the rightist governments of Argentina and Brazil posed as the models of Church–state harmony.

Argentina, 1934

Pacelli left Genoa for Buenos Aires on board the Italian liner *Conte Grande* on September 24, 1934. Cornwell has made much of the elaborate splendor of the trip, suggesting the Papal Legate was obsessed with all the trappings of Catholic triumphalism. There was no question that the Argentinean Eucharistic Congress was a spectacle; but in an overwhelmingly pious Catholic country, where emotional devotionism was normal religious practice, it would have been absurd to expect Pacelli’s visit to be anything less.

The Legate’s welcome was judged “the most regal and ornate ever seen in Argentina or anywhere else.”⁵⁵ He was escorted into Buenos Aires by President General Agustín Justo, who declared Pacelli the representative of “the foremost sovereign of the world, before whose spiritual authority all other sovereigns prostrate themselves in veneration.”⁵⁶ Justo’s language was florid, but expected, since the Church was so closely integrated into national life and the government needed the support of the Catholic traditionalists, who were growing markedly profascist in their sympathies. Church relations with the military-headed republic were harmonious; there was every reason to mark the Legate’s stay with proofs of that harmony.

Throughout the days of the Congress, Pacelli preached at masses where hundreds of thousands of people gathered to see and hear the representative of the pope speak of the *Regalita di Cristo*.⁵⁷ This theme was dominant in the thought of the pope; it was no surprise that at the close of the Congress Pacelli preached in the same vein. He decried the state of the modern world, comparing it to the “praetorium of Pilate” where many voices were raised in “apostasy and blackest ingratitude.” In a barely veiled condemnation of communism, and possibly Nazism, the Legate said: “There is the voice of anti-Christian political theory which, giving itself up to the pursuit of earthly goods, declares that the people is happy who possess these goods, even if it knows not God.”⁵⁸ Facing this onslaught was the Church, which surrounds Christ “like an army in battle array, defends and glorifies him, and proclaims him king.”⁵⁹

From Buenos Aires, Pacelli flew to Montevideo and then to Rio de Janeiro where he gave the Apostolic Blessing from Corcovado beneath the outstretched arms of Christ the Redeemer. As in Buenos Aires, Pacelli was received with full military honors in Rio.⁶⁰ To suggest Pacelli accepted the accolades as a personal tribute is nonsense. He accepted the homage

of the Catholic countries of Latin America in the name of the pope and as an act of submission to the Church and the True Faith.⁶¹ There were others however, such as James MacDonald, the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who hoped that Pacelli would use his newly enhanced position to help pressure Latin America to accept German refugees—Jews as well as Catholics.⁶²

Cardinal Pacelli returned to Rome via Barcelona where he met with General Domingo Batet, the military governor of Catalonia. Again, Cornwell makes much of the meeting, but all that can be reasonably discerned from the reception Pacelli gave was a gesture of Church support for the Spanish Catholic cause.⁶³ To read more into it is to ignore the Church's quite public statements deploring the anticlericalism and the persecution of the Church. The cardinal could hardly have done otherwise.

Lourdes, 1935

After Pacelli's visit to Argentina, a pattern was established. Pius XI saw the value of a visible presence of the papacy through the secretary of state. Never before had the pope been so active in addressing the Catholic world on contemporary matters as was Pius XI during the 1930s. Cardinal Pacelli faithfully executed the pope's directives. In April, he took the papal message to the Marian pilgrimage centre of Lourdes.

Lourdes was the site of the most famous apparitions of the Virgin Mary in modern times. It was at the grotto of Massabielle in 1858 that an illiterate peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, alleged she had received several visions of Mary. The emotional attachment of Catholics to Our Lady of Lourdes was strongly linked to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, proclaimed by Pius IX in 1854. Marian apparitions had been a part of Catholic tradition for centuries but had generally been regarded as expressions of popular piety. When Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he effectively tied Marian piety to both Catholic doctrine and papal authority. Lourdes overtook every other Marian shrine in Europe as a place of pilgrimage and devotion. It also became emblematic of the popular sentimental attitude of Mary's maternal protection of the person of the pope.

Pius XI had declared 1933 a special Holy Year to commemorate the 1,900th anniversary of the death and resurrection of Christ. It was to have ended at Easter 1934, but had been extended to an extra year in order to allow Catholics to reflect and pray for world peace. The formal end of the Holy Year was to be celebrated at Lourdes in a solemn Triduum (three-day celebration) of prayer and liturgy. Pius XI sent his legate to preside in his name. Cardinal Pacelli's journey to Lourdes in April 1935 assumed the proportions of a royal triumph.

The cardinal was met at the Italian–French border by Minister Marin, representing the president, and members of the French episcopate. Pacelli

was greeted as the representative of the pope, the first such representative to enter France in over a century. Gathered in Lourdes for the Triduum was a veritable cross-section of sacred and secular France, along with members of Europe's living and defunct Catholic royal and imperial houses. Clergy numbered in the thousands and represented the Church across Europe.

Peace was the message proclaimed at Lourdes over the three days. Pius XI was anxious to motivate Catholics into greater action in their own countries in order to act as counteragents and foils to communism and, to a lesser extent, fascism and Nazism. On the first day of the Triduum, the pope's voice was broadcast to the several hundred thousand pilgrims gathered in Lourdes. His message was an appeal to Catholics "of every race and every nation" who "know the blood of the Divine Redeemer" to "turn their thoughts and their hearts toward the Immaculate Mother of Sorrows . . . that peace may return to poor humanity."⁶⁴

In language similar to that used in Buenos Aires, and in faithful imitation of his master, Pacelli denounced the enemies of the Church. This time the emphasis on blood alerted Catholics to the dangers of Nazi race theory. The *New York Times* quoted one of the cardinal's homilies: "With the illusion of extolling new wisdom they are only lamentable plagiarists who cover old errors with new trumpery. It matters little that they mass around the flag of social revolution. They are inspired by a false conception of the world and life."⁶⁵

In the strongest terms, the legate condemned theories and "superstitions of race and blood" that rested "upon principles essentially opposed to those of the Christian faith." He closed by declaring that the Church "does not consent to form a compact with them at any price."⁶⁶ The great irony in Pacelli's words here lay in his close involvement in the creation of the Concordat between the Holy See and Germany in the first half of 1933.

I believe Pacelli and the pope were hoping that the situation in the Reich would calm down and be resolved. Declamations of Nazi race theories and anti-Christian semantics were judged on their theological, not political, premises. When Pacelli spoke of the Church choosing to stand by the "blood of Calvary," there was no thought that there would come a time when such a choice could be lethal in Germany. Nor was there any thought that anti-Jewish acts could compromise the lofty ideals of the Church. Traditional Catholic anti-Judaism made it difficult to make any positive act of support for the Jews. The criticism of Nazi biopolitics was not directed at National Socialism itself, but only those parts deemed to be irreconcilable with Catholic teaching. In doing this, Pacelli was supporting the statements of Cardinal Bertram of Breslau made in 1931, the published statements of his old friend Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich, and the carefully worded Fulda Pastoral letters of the German episcopate.⁶⁷

It is arguable that the circumspect language used by both the German bishops and Pacelli reflected a serious fear that too harsh a condemnation

of Nazism would alienate German Catholics and Catholic sympathizers outside the Reich. John Conway's history of the Nazi "persecution" of the Churches highlights an even greater sense of confusion held by many of the bishops: the Fulda Pastoral letters urged German Catholics to be loyal citizens of the Reich and actively assist in the rebuilding of Germany; Bolshevism was the real enemy of both the nation and the Church. This line of arguing remained consistent throughout most of the Third Reich.⁶⁸

Pacelli was too politically astute not to see the potential dangers for the German Church in a head-on collision with the Nazis. The way forward was through strict adherence to the Concordat, total neutrality in German politics, and a little quiet, persistent diplomatic protest at the growing persecution of the Jews.

Less than five months later, Hitler promulgated the Nuremberg Laws that stripped German Jews of their citizenship. There is no known comment on the laws uttered by Pius XI, Pacelli, or any German bishop. No word of condemnation of the Nuremberg Laws was ever uttered by Rome. It was concern over increasing Nazi harassment of the Church in Germany that occupied the Vatican's attention.

The United States, 1936

Democracy had been little understood by Rome, and the makeup of the Church in the United States had often caused some concern. Pius XI regarded the American Church as one of the most powerful and influential parts of the Universal Church. The separation of Church and state enshrined in the U.S. Constitution was an integral part of the national psyche, something Europe was only recently beginning to understand in the democratic constitutions created after 1918. With Europe sliding further and further into totalitarianism, and the democracies seemingly in retreat, the pope wanted his protégé to have greater contact with the leaders of American Catholicism since they were heads of a powerful and rich section of the Church. Their loyalty to Rome in the war against fascist extremism and communism would be essential. In October 1936, Pacelli went on vacation to the United States. No one seriously believed the cardinal was going for a holiday.⁶⁹

On board his ship as it arrived in New York on October 8, Cardinal Pacelli issued a press statement. In it, he repeated the now familiar phrases calling for world peace through a return to Christian values. Styling his comments for the democratic audience that awaited him on the other side of the Atlantic, the cardinal added: "The voice of the Pope represents not only the authoritative word of the head of the Catholic Church, but also expresses the dictates of reason and equity, of justice and prudence and humanity" (which made the silence over the Nuremberg Laws all the more condemnable). Political leaders must submit to the "dominion of God and to the majesty of Divine Law, natural

and positive, which takes precedence over all human legislation.”⁷⁰ Pacelli’s words made good copy in the United States. Several days later, on his arrival in New York, he made an explicit attack on communism, declaring that it was “an ill requiring the united defense of all persons and governments of good will.”⁷¹

For four weeks, Pacelli visited New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, St Paul, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati. He gave press interviews, addressed congregations, hosted dinners, met university students and alumni, and received honorary degrees. On every occasion he repeated the basic message: the Church wanted peace, “social peace and peace among the nations.”⁷²

On November 5, the cardinal lunched with President Roosevelt at Hyde Park.⁷³ During their conversation, Pacelli revealed his deep seated concern about the spread of communism. In 1963 Florence Kerr, President Roosevelt’s former head of the Works Progress Administration, who was a guest of the Roosevelts, spoke about the meeting:

Pacelli kept saying, “The great danger in America is that it will go communist.” FDR said, “The great danger in America is that it will go Fascist.” “No,” says Pacelli. “Yes,” said FDR. . . . [Kerr] said, “I think they are just as apt to go Fascist as they are to go communist.” “No!” says Pacelli, “they would go communist. Mr. President, you simply do not understand the terrible importance of the communist movement.” “You just don’t understand the American people.” [FDR] told this all over, what a wonderful time he had had with Pacelli.⁷⁴

The president and the cardinal remained in contact until Roosevelt’s death.

Lisieux, July 1937

More and more, the events in Germany occupied Pius XI and his secretary of state. Nineteen thirty-seven was a dangerous year, fraught with difficulties and diplomatic minefields, which the next chapter examines in detail. In the general course of his duties, Pacelli made more and more references to dangers to Christianity coming from bearers of a false cross. His trip to the shrine of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus became the most outspoken denunciation of anti-Christian doctrines.

Cardinal Pacelli left Rome on July 8 to travel to Lisieux in Normandy. The pope had appointed him Legate *a latere* for the consecration of the newly completed basilica of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus. While in Paris, Pacelli celebrated mass at Montemartre—the great white basilica built as atonement for national sin in the wake of the French defeat in 1871—and preached a widely acclaimed sermon in Notre Dame.

The substance of the cardinal's address was an exhortation to the French to return to the Catholic faith with renewed devotion and fervor. In the context of Vatican–French relations, which were good and strong, Pacelli's words struck a favorable chord. He said the Holy Father knew the aspirations and preoccupations of France, that the life of the French bespoke the mysterious ways of Providence witnessed in the great saints of the French church. He went on to say that France would remain great if it stayed faithful to the Faith, and he prayed that after twenty centuries of Christianity the current crises would not bring about “a more inhuman state than we knew before.” While the reference was oblique, his listeners did not doubt that Pacelli was referring to both Nazism and communism, the “inhuman” states. The cardinal made it even clearer in his reference to vigilance:

It is in times of crisis, my brothers, that we can judge the heart and character of men, the valiant and the faint-hearted. It is at these times that they show themselves for what they are and whether they embrace their calling and mission. We are at a time of crisis. We are seen by a world which turns its back on the cross, the true cross of God crucified and raised, by a world that has drunk from contaminated wells; we have seen enemies, with great strength... arise like Goliath in the Bible... who will inevitably fall.⁷⁵

The message was clear. The enemies of the Church, the followers of a “false cross,” would eventually be defeated.

If the address in Paris was somewhat diplomatic and more typical of Pacelli himself, the address at the basilica in Lisieux on July 11 was more after the style of Pius XI—blunt and direct. After blessing the new building, Pacelli spoke to over 200,000 pilgrims, 5 cardinals, 8 bishops, and 1,200 priests. In the course of his speech he said: “In all the Churches of a mighty and noble nation, whom evil pastors would mislead into the idolatry of race, the indignant protest of an eighty-year-old pontiff suddenly thundered forth, like the voice from Sinai, to recall the inalienable rights of God, the Incarnate Word, and the sacred magisterium of which he is the trustee.”⁷⁶ There was no mistaking the reference to the racial restructuring of Germany and the encyclical *Mit brennender sorge*.

Pacelli went on to remind his listeners that although suffering would come the way of the Christian, the pope would always speak in their defense:

[A]ll those who wish to live in Christ must suffer persecutions, but these weigh particularly hard on the present Pontiff, drawing from him as they afflict his children in various countries, cries of pain and of protest. Yet neither the revolutionary and sacrilegious violence of masses blinded by false prophets, nor the sophisms of doctors

of impiety, who would de-Christianize public life, could break the resistance or fetter the words of this intrepid old man.⁷⁷

The Nazi press interpreted the cardinal's words as a direct attack on National Socialist ideology, the Führer and Alfred Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century*.⁷⁸ From the perspective of the persecuted German Jews, Pacelli's comments could, at best, be seen as a voice of protest at the Nuremberg Laws and their application. More likely it was a general protest against racism *and the distress caused to Catholics of Jewish descent*, but vague enough not to disturb the Church-Reich relationship in Germany. It let church teaching be heard. This was the most direct public attack Pacelli ever made on Nazi racism.⁷⁹

Budapest and Rome, 1938

"Europe in 1938 seemed to be shaken by a gale of madness."⁸⁰ The year was punctuated by crises, each growing more dangerous than the last. Hitler's gambles between 1935 and 1937 had achieved enormous popular endorsement for the Nazi regime and caused a state of paralysis in much of the Catholic Church in Germany. Each victory for the Führer made Catholic resistance harder. Papal teaching and exhortation against "statolatry" mostly fell on deaf ears. Institutional racism and antisemitism had become accepted and tolerated throughout Germany and other European states, especially Poland, Romania, and Hungary. Italy was preparing to adopt Nuremberg-style race laws and French antisemitism was resurgent and vocal in the face of the stream of Jewish refugees seeking asylum. The Western democracies appeared impotent against both fascism and communism, uninterested in the refugee problem and divided over policies of appeasement. War seemed imminent. Pius and Pacelli swept themselves into a fury of diplomatic and religious activity in attempting to stave off armed conflict. As the odds grew increasingly more risky, Vatican diplomacy became more desperate. Stalin's purges made the Soviet Union too weak to engage actively in late 1930s continental power politics, but in the mind of the pope and his secretary this was only a temporary matter. A second European war would surely spell the end of Christendom, the advent of a Bolshevik bloodbath and an unimaginable persecution of the Christian Church.

It was in this climate that Pacelli went to Budapest for the Eucharistic Congress in May 1938. He had been drawn into the Austrian Anschluss débâcle in March and April because of the naivety of the archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Innitzer, with the Nazis. Innitzer had greeted the Anschluss in florid language, saying the Catholic Church welcomed integration into the Third Reich. Pacelli had forcefully reprimanded Innitzer and ordered him to issue a renunciation of episcopal support for the National Socialist government in Austria.⁸¹

At the same time, the ever-diplomatic cardinal secretary revealed a rare glimpse of his personal feelings toward the Nazis. In April 1938, Pacelli wrote a confidential memorandum to Joseph Kennedy, the U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom. In his letter, the cardinal wrote:

[T]he Holy See would always be willing to agree and to deal fairly with any political authority whatsoever, but before a real understanding is reached there must be at least the beginning of the evidence of good faith on the other side: evidence that so far has been completely lacking in this instance, for which the possibility of an agreement between the two Powers is out of the question for the time being.

Pacelli asked Kennedy to convey “to your Friend at home these personal private views of mine,” a reference to President Roosevelt.⁸²

Pacelli arrived in Budapest on May 24. He was welcomed by the Regent, Admiral Horthy, and accorded full honors. At the formal opening of the Congress, the cardinal said the theme of the gathering had been given by Christ in his commandment “Love one another as I have loved you.” In both his principal addresses, the Cardinal Legate made no direct reference to the political turmoil in Europe or to racism and religious persecution. In a world, all too ready to throw off divine law and religious truth, Christians must renew their faith in God and trust that evil will not prevail. Pacelli described the “lugubrious array of the militant godless shaking the clenched fist of the Antichrist against everything that we hold most sacred.”⁸³ Surrounded by those who actively hate the Church and those “who without being personally hostile to Jesus Christ allowed themselves to be tossed by the muddy waves of indifference and frivolity,” Christians must remind themselves of the fate of all other persecutors such as Herod, Pilate, and Nero. “Heroic fidelity to Christ alone can give the victory over such a desperate enemy.”⁸⁴

If the Cardinal Legate was not prepared to make direct references to the situation in Europe, his master had no such scruples. Pius XI made a broadcast speech to the Congress that the *New York Times* described as “militant”:

I am pleased to see not only Hungarians, but also the Catholic folds of the whole world have been asked to join in the Congress celebrations to make reparations for the many blasphemies of those who deny the existence of God. On seeing the sad confusion of divine and human rights, the failures of agreements and alliances and the deplorable fate of mankind, we can but welcome it when the misdirected intellects of misled people are drawn to eternal and unchanging ideas.⁸⁵

The speech was focused on the battle between the Church and its two principal enemies, Bolshevism and Nazism.

At the end of the Congress, the cardinal spoke of the Church's duty in the world. "The Church's duty in the apostolic service of justice is typified by universal love; it is, therefore, impossible for it to take sides and rigidly stand by any party."⁸⁶ It would be difficult to see how a diplomat of such political astuteness as Pacelli could not have known of Hungary's antisemitic legislation and the fundamental injustice that it had wrought on Hungarian society through application of Horthy's Christian National Principle.⁸⁷ Jews were being removed from Hungarian public life. Conversion provided a way out, but this was to prove a short-lived experience. European power politics precluded discussion on the "Jewish Question" in Hungary, or anywhere else for that matter.

It was to become another part of the tragedy of European Jewry that when antisemitic laws were passed in Italy two months after the Budapest Congress, the Catholic Church lost its greatest opportunity to speak unequivocally. The voluntary constraints of the Lateran Pacts, widespread European and Italian indifference to the fate of "foreign Jews," and the Vatican's insistence on observing diplomatic procedures to the letter meant that the only area of vocalized concern was related to "mixed marriages."

Hitler in Rome

Hitler's visit to Rome between May 3 and 9, 1938 afforded the Pope an opportunity to speak out clearly against Nazism. The scale of preparations prompted Pius to write to Mussolini wondering "whether so an extreme apotheosis of a confused enemy of the Catholic Church and the religion of Christ, is contrary to Article 1 of the Concordat as well as good sense?"⁸⁸ After the failure of last-ditched attempts by the Vatican and the Italian government to arrange an audience between the pope and Führer, Pius, on the penultimate day of the Reich chancellor's visit, announced he was retiring to the papal summer villa of Castelgandolfo in the Alban Hills, but let it be known he would return immediately to meet Hitler if the request was made.⁸⁹ He had, in the meantime, ordered all the Vatican museums closed for the duration of the visit. No Vatican property was to display any flag. No greater snub toward a visiting head of state was possible. As far as Pius XI was concerned, all had been said through the encyclical of 1937, through the statements made at audiences and through Pacelli's trips and public speeches. Mussolini was livid with rage at the "stubborn old man."

The dream of Benito Mussolini to re-create the Roman Empire and turn the Mediterranean Sea in "an Italian lake" set in process a series of events that changed the relationship between Italy and Germany. When Hitler and Mussolini first met in Venice on June 14–15, 1934 Il Duce commented that the Führer dressed like "a plumber in a mackintosh" and "sounded like a broken record when he raged about the Jewish Christ and

the nefarious activities of Germany's Catholics." Hitler returned to Berlin "radiant" at the genius of his Italian host.⁹⁰ A growing international democratic-led antifascism, and the furious outrage unleashed at the invasion of Ethiopia in 1936 convinced Mussolini to look more closely at the relationship between Italy and the neighbor across the Alps. Opportunism and puffed-chested strutting characterized much of Il Duce's courting of Germany. Hitler's visit to Rome in 1938 had Mussolini desperate to impress the uniformed Führer. The heir to the Caesars had become the imitator of the northern barbarians.

As a consequence, diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Berlin came close to ending in mid-1938. Pacelli closed correspondence with the Reich after yet another note was ignored by the German foreign office. The cardinal declared that "the behavior of the German government 'sinned against the most elementary rules of diplomatic courtesy and international conventions.'" The Reich government refused to reply, claiming the pope's snub of Hitler in May meant that communication between Berlin and the Holy See was not possible. Relations remained tense and silent until the outbreak of war in September 1939.⁹¹

Words Become Flesh

Nonetheless, there is evidence that the old pope was increasingly frustrated and angry at Mussolini's closer alliance with the Third Reich. In imitation of the Nuremberg Laws, Mussolini approved the publication of the *Dichiarazione della Razza* on July 14, 1938.⁹² German-style Jew-hatred was introduced into Italy, a country Il Duce had said had no "Jewish Question."⁹³ Between July and November 1938, more and more antisemitic newspapers appeared and gradually laws were passed restricting citizenship and professions. And while it was true that much of Mussolini's antisemitism was opportunistic, there was an element of xenophobia and savageness behind the linguistic gymnastics that declared Italians to be, not Latins, but Aryans.⁹⁴ It is reasonable to assume that the pope was disturbed, in no small part because what had been academic and seen through the lenses of diplomatic reports, newspapers, audiences with pilgrims and refugees, and interviews with bishops and nuncios was now personal and on the pope's own doorstep. People known to the Vatican administration were now being forced out of jobs. For the first time, the Vatican was confronted with the flesh-and-blood outcome of theological and academic anti-Judaism and antisemitism.

The anti-Judaism of Catholic journals such as *Civiltà Cattolica*, expressed while Jews cleaned the streets of Catholic Vienna with toothbrushes, "was not only anti-Judaism but [was] blind and deaf to the implications of current events in Europe."⁹⁵ In the bizarre editing that often characterised *Civiltà* in the late 1930s, the first formal papal condemnation of racism was published in full in the edition for June 1938. It appears that the editors

of the journal accepted and maintained the academic fiction of Catholic-condemned biological racism and Catholic-condoned political antisemitism.⁹⁶ It hardly needs to be said that such writing flew in the face of the Christian principles that the Jesuit editors claimed to embrace.

Susan Zuccotti has dealt comprehensively with the Italian antisemitic laws and the various papal responses. Citing Pius XI's various statements between July and September 1938, she observed that the word "Jew" or "antisemitism" never occurred in any statement issued by the pope or Pacelli. While Pius made at least three major antiracism statements in July alone, the general impression is one of a fulmination at Italian stupidity in aping the Germans. The pope wrote a public letter to the Prefect of the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, Cardinal Ruffini, urging all Catholic academics to refute racist theories. Although the letter was dated April 13, 1938, it was not released for publication until late June. Its contents were a strong contrast to the *Dichiarazione della Razza* published three weeks later.⁹⁷ The only time where Vatican reaction looked serious was the threat to Italy's marriage laws implied in the ban on mixed marriages legislated in November. This would violate one of the most important paragraphs of the 1929 Concordat, which recognized church marriage as the only valid form in Italy. The pope wrote to the king demanding that part of the law be changed. The king's reply was conciliatory but inconclusive.⁹⁸ At the same time Pius was arguing with Mussolini and the king, the Jews of Germany were being subjected to the most violent pogrom in modern history—the "Night of Broken Glass."

Spiritually We Are All Semites...

Pius XI was nearly 81 and in poor health for much of 1938. His once formidable presence in the Vatican was fading fast as heart disease and diabetes took their toll. The pope's physical decline set in motion the process that would lead to the election of a new pope. Pius's forthrightness and bluntness in speaking his mind was muted by the Curia's conservative bureaucracy headed by the secretary of state. This is not to suggest that Pacelli was pursuing a different policy from the one set out by the pope, but that his way of achieving Pius's aims was different in style: Pius's emotionalism was not Pacelli's way of doing things. In late 1938, though the old pope was still able to make some powerful statements, a climate change was under way.

In May 1938, the pope asked American Jesuit John La Farge to compose an encyclical letter about racism and antisemitism. La Farge had written extensively about racism in the United States. Pius had read his book *Interracial Justice*, a pioneering work that condemned segregation not only from theological and moral principles, but also on economic and anthropological grounds. When asked how he should write it, Pius was reported to have said "write as though you were pope." The story of the "lost

encyclical” has been told comprehensively in the cloak-and-dagger history of Georges Passelecq and Bernard Suchecky, *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI*. What was significant was the pope’s decision to speak out, using the language of racism and antisemitism.

La Farge and a team of Jesuits wrote the text in Paris during the summer months, delivering the final draft to Rome in late 1938, where the Jesuit General, Wladimir Ledochowski, passed it to Enrico Rosa for his “expert opinion”—a move that could only be interpreted as odd. Rosa had been editor of *Civiltà Cattolica* from 1915 to 1931. Until his death in November 1938, he remained a member of the editorial board. The editor was a theological conservative who agreed with the principle of “permissible antisemitism,” writing extensively on this topic throughout the late summer of 1938.

By the standards of the 1930s, the passages dealing with Jews and Judaism were moderate. They condemned racism on theological and scientific grounds but when La Farge and his colleagues came to the Jews, the baggage of the centuries proved too great to discard. Jews were a potential danger to the faith of Christians, which went part of the way to explaining some of the reasons behind contemporary Jew-hatred.⁹⁹

At the same time, the London *Tablet* was commenting on Hungarian antisemitism as it had done throughout the decade. The *Tablet* wrote that antisemitism had “always existed . . . for a very natural reason.” Because the majority of the population were landed farmers, the professions, business, and industry were left in the hands of Jews. Therefore, Nazi Jew-hatred found fertile ground among “ignorant people” who “do not stop to consider that it would lead to anarchy and chaos” to drive the Jews out of the economy by “force and thoughtless haste.”¹⁰⁰ This reflected the double standard applied to Jews, Judaism, and antisemitism found in journals such as the *Tablet* and many others which had considerable influence in shaping educated Catholic thought in the 1930s. It was simply accepted that there was “a Jewish problem.” From my reading of the *Tablet* throughout the 1930s, I conclude that the rabid antisemitism of Nazism was deplorable and had no *biological* justification—it was contrary to Catholic teaching—but it did have a certain *historical* and *economic* justification, and that was not contrary to Catholic teaching. This logic was not to change until news of Holocaust became known, and believed, from 1941 onward.

La Farge and his colleagues advocated “religious separation” between Christians and Jews—in more or less complete accord with the sentiments expressed in the *Tablet*. “Those who have placed race illegitimately on a pedestal have rendered mankind a disservice.” All the rhetoric of “racial purity . . . ends by being uniquely the struggle against the Jews.”¹⁰¹ The writers recognized and deplored the persecution of the Jews in no uncertain terms. “Denied legal protection against violence and robbery, exposed to every form of insult and public degradation, innocent persons are treated as criminals . . . traitors . . . outlaw.” This “flagrant denial of human rights” caused unimaginable suffering for the Jewish people, who

were forced to wander “from frontier to frontier.”¹⁰² The next paragraph pointed to the only “good” that has come out of the current crisis. I quote the entire section:

But however unjust and pitiless, this campaign against the Jews has at least this advantage, if one can put it so, over racial strife, that it recalls the true nature, the authentic basis of the social separation of the Jews from the rest of humanity. This basis is directly religious in character. Essentially, the so-called Jewish question is not one of race, or nation, or territorial nationality, or citizenship in the state. It is a question of religion and, since the coming of Christ, a question of Christianity. *How utterly misguided is such a policy toward the Jews, how harmful and ineffective for the very purposes it seeks to accomplish, can only be seen when we compare it with what the Church has ever taught and practiced in this connection, and with lessons of history.* (emphasis added)¹⁰³

La Farge and his colleagues were considered among the foremost social justice theologians in the Church at the time. This was the closest any Catholic statement came to a wholesale rejection of antisemitism. It is unlikely that the dying pope ever read the text. His successor most likely did read it and felt it inappropriate. The encyclical letter was never published.

Pope Pius XI made his most famous statement about the Jews on September 6, 1938. Seen within the context of the Italian antisemitic laws, the increased persecution of Jews in the Third Reich, and the flood of Jewish refugees clamoring for a safe haven, the pope’s words had a special poignancy. A group of Belgian pilgrims gave the pope an old illuminated missal as a gift. Opening the book at the Canon of the Mass, Pius read out the prayer that asks God to accept the consecrated elements in the same way he accepted the sacrifice of Abraham “our Father in faith.” The pope commented:

An awe-inspiring text: every time we read it, we are moved irresistibly: *Sacrificium patriarchae nostri Abrahae*—“the sacrifice of Abraham our Father.” Note that Abraham is called our Patriarch, our ancestor. Antisemitism is not compatible with the thought and the sublime realization expressed in this text. It is a deplorable movement, a movement in which we, as Christians, must have no part... By Christ and in Christ, we are the spiritual offspring of Abraham. No, it is not possible for Christians to take part in antisemitism. We recognize that anyone has the right to defend himself, to protect himself against anything that threatens his legitimate interests. But antisemitism is inadmissible. We are spiritually Semites.¹⁰⁴

Pilgrims reported tears in the pope’s eyes. However noble the sentiment, however, it was a statement of piety, not of condemnation of current

persecution, and it was not free from the pope's own residual anti-Judaism. But it was something. The pope's words were officially "unofficial," so they were not published in *L'Osservatore Romano* or *Civiltà Cattolica*. A number of Catholic papers in Europe reported the story.¹⁰⁵ They remained the only words of sympathy for Europe's Jews from the bishop of Rome. Kertzer wrote that "they were heartfelt and sincere, the cry of a man who saw a dark shadow growing ever darker across Europe."¹⁰⁶

Pius was sick and dying. His final act was to have been a speech to mark the tenth anniversary of the Lateran Pacts on February 10 and was rumored to be a fierce attack on Italy's foreign and domestic policies, especially the imitation of Nazi programs. The speech was never made. Pope Pius XI died during the night of February 9, 1939.

His successor was Eugenio Pacelli, a man of similar mind and heart but a man of vastly different temperament. The new pope was a man who believed that rational diplomacy combined with patience, faith, and careful strategy would save the Catholic Church and Europe's Christian heritage from the short-term scourge of Nazism and the far greater danger of communism. The Jews of Europe would always be second to the perceived needs of, and threats to, the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Cardinal Pacelli, Jews, and Germany, 1933–1939

It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit. Your fruit must endure, so that all you ask the Father in my name he will give to you.

John 15.16

I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and these shall feed you on knowledge and true doctrine.

From the Common of Pastors, Roman Breviary (1970)

The Cardinal Secretary of State and the Reich

In a letter addressed to the Foreign Office in August 1933, Ivon Kirkpatrick, the British chargé d'affaires to the Vatican, made several important observations about Cardinal Pacelli. The comments are a window into the way Pacelli saw the Church's relationship with the Third Reich. It also allows the historian access to that rarest of sources, Pacelli's personal feelings on the activities of Hitler, and the position of the Church.

Kirkpatrick asked the cardinal what he thought of recent events in Germany. Pacelli's comments were "extremely frank and made no effort to conceal his disgust at the proceedings of Herr Hitler's Government." The cardinal went on to express his admiration for the Austrian government's resistance to the Nazis but added that Austria needed the support of Britain, France, and Italy if it were to survive in the long term. As for Germany, protests were "not likely to have much practical result, for the Germans were determined to pursue their present policy and would not be restrained by anything short of force". Pacelli "deplored the action of the German Government at home, their persecution of the Jews, their proceedings against political opponents, the reign of terror to which the whole nation was subjected." Kirkpatrick suggested that the "revolutionary spirit" could soon pass and Hitler "would settle down." The cardinal secretary "replied with emphasis that he saw no ground for such easy optimism."

How was it possible for the Holy See to sign the Concordat in July, asked Kirkpatrick? The cardinal explained “apologetically how it was that he had signed a Concordat with such people. A pistol had been pointed at his head and he had had no alternative . . . the spiritual welfare of twenty million Catholic souls in Germany was at stake.” The Concordat ensured that the Vatican had a treaty on which to base protests in defense of the Catholic Church in Germany. “In any case, the cardinal added with a smile, the Germans would probably not violate all the articles of the Concordat at the same time.”¹

Less than a week later, Pacelli met with the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the American diplomat James MacDonald. His impression of the cardinal was somewhat different to that formed by Kirkpatrick. After MacDonald promised to keep their conversation private, Pacelli spoke in general terms about the Concordat. Then the conversation moved to the plight of refugees, particularly German Jewish refugees. MacDonald recorded his impression of the meeting and forwarded them to the American Jewish philanthropist Felix Warburg in a letter in September 1933:

“I was deeply disappointed by the attitude of the papal secretary of state. I talked with Cardinal Pacelli for nearly an hour [on August 24, 1933]. In the course of the conversation I brought up the question of the treatment of the Jews in Germany; the response was noncommittal but left me with the definite impression that no vigorous cooperation would be expected from that direction. Therefore I do not take seriously the press reports of the last few days to the effect that the Vatican has intervened vigorously on behalf of German Jews. The Church is so on the defensive in the Reich that it is hard pressed to define its own essential interest.”²

During the summer of 1933, Pacelli’s predecessor in the Secretariat, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri wrote a memorandum revealing just some of the reasons for signing an agreement with the government of the Third Reich.

As long as Hitler does not declare war on the Holy See or the Catholic hierarchy in Germany:

1. The Holy See and the Catholic hierarchy in Germany should abstain from condemning Hitler’s party;
2. If Hitler wants the dissolution of the Catholic Centre *as a political party*, he should be obeyed without fuss;
3. Catholics should be free to join Hitler’s Party, just as citizens of Italy are free join the Fascist Party;
4. German Catholics are equally free not to join Hitler’s Party, providing that it is always within the limits of the law, as is the case with Italian Catholics with respect to the Fascist Party.
5. I think that Hitler’s Party corresponds to nationalist feeling in Germany. Therefore a politico-religious struggle in Germany

over Hitlerism must be avoided absolutely, especially when the Eminent Cardinal Pacelli is secretary of state.³

The elderly Gasparri's advice was consistent with Pacelli's approach before and after his appointment as secretary of state and later as pope. Both men had witnessed the surrender of Italian clerical roles in political life, and they believed the pastoral claims of the Church far outweighed any justification or support for a political party, even the Catholic Centre Party in Germany. Rome's determination to avoid open conflict with the Reich was followed faithfully by the German episcopacy. Indeed, Archbishop Conrad Gröber of Freiburg had written to Pacelli in March urging a "certain elasticity" toward the "new conditions" in Germany. Provocations must be avoided and every effort expended to reach a *modus vivendi* with National Socialism.⁴ However, there is evidence to suggest that Pacelli was less than optimistic that a realistic solution would ever eventuate. In comments to James MacDonald on May 15, 1934 the cardinal secretary talked about the Concordat

stressing its importance as a legal basis for the Church's position, even if violated. Time and again he returned to the point that the local [Nazi] leaders are out of hand, that the mass movement of the party is beyond the control of the central authorities. Nor did he disagree with my view that the swing of this last movement is decidedly towards the left, with the effect of diminishing the authority of the conservatives such as Schacht, Schmitt and von Krosigk, and increasing that of the extremists. He spoke with particular emphasis of Rosenberg's new book as a pagan attack on all of Christianity. I, in turn, emphasized the community of interest between the Jews and the Catholics in the face of a common enemy.⁵

The Night of the Long Knives in June the same year ended any pretense at an independent "left wing" of the Nazi regime, but did nothing to allay fears in Rome or the nunciature in Berlin that any form of reconciliation with the Church was likely.

There have been many well-researched accounts of the history of the Vatican and the Third Reich. Many volumes detailing the circumstances surrounding the *Kirchenkampf* (church struggle) give interpretations of events from many angles. I do not wish to revisit these narratives, but rather to focus on those points where the Church was drawn into state-sponsored anti-Jewish actions. I believe Pacelli's *modus operandi* was clear and definite. The examination of his career as nuncio to Germany and as secretary of state showed a consistency in his understanding of the Catholic Church and its relations with the secular powers. His aim in all circumstances was to preserve the position of the Church. Whether he was acting as the papal representative in Germany or as the secretary of state with a global responsibility shared with the pope, Pacelli did nothing

that was outside his perception of the role of the “shepherds after [Christ’s] own heart.” His training and personal historical and social context made it highly unlikely that in his relations with Germany during the 1930s he would follow a path different from the one he had faithfully walked since his ordination in 1899. Germany’s Jews would always remain at least one step below German Catholics in the Holy See’s battles with the Reich government. The Concordat ruled out official interventions on behalf of any persecuted group except German Catholics. Relief for the persecuted would have to come from German Catholics. Apart from a few isolated cases, however, German Catholics remained morally indifferent to the plight of those outside the *Volksgemeinschaft*: the safety and maintenance of the Church would take precedence over the proclaimed ethical teaching of Catholicism and the increasingly marginalized Jews.

Reichskonkordat and Diplomatic Skirmishes, 1933–1936

Adolf Hitler despised Christianity with a passion that was surpassed only by his hatred of Jews. His relationship with the Catholic Church in Germany was marked by the same characteristics that shaped all his relations with groups outside the orbit of National Socialism, namely, a grudging respect for elements he wanted to appropriate into the party and a manipulative cunning and pathological dishonesty that would allow him time and space to destroy what he perceived as “enemy.” Persecuting Jews was relatively easy since the predisposition for state-sponsored harassment already existed among the people. Subduing the Catholic Church was a different matter. This would require skill, patience, and no small amount of misinformation, lies, deceit, and, where necessary, violence. However long the process would take, there was never any doubt in Hitler’s mind that it would happen: the Catholic Church would conform to his will, and he would do this via Rome and not Breslau, Munich, Cologne, or the nuncio.

Hitler had remarked in passing that he would not make the mistake in handling the Church that Bismarck made during the *Kulturkampf*. As a Catholic, he claimed to understand the workings of the Church better than Bismarck, a Protestant. Rather than battle the German bishops in a long-drawn-out affair, Hitler went straight to the Vatican and made the offer of a peaceful cohabitation between the Reich and the Church. Pacelli saw the offer for what it was, a “sword dipped in honey,” but was pragmatic enough to see the need to accept Hitler’s offer. He also saw the need to present a unified front with the bishops.⁶

Part of the tragedy of the German Catholic bishops was their reluctance, even refusal to believe that what they saw with their own eyes was exactly what Hitler wanted. Many of the bishops regarded Hitler as a bastion against Bolshevism and moral decline. Hitler’s address of February 1, 1933, affirming the place of Christianity in the new Germany, was

appreciated in the Vatican. Pius XI and Pacelli believed that this and similar statements were indications of a moderation in Nazi extremism. Between February and June 1933, the German bishops showed both their concern at the possibility of a revived *Kulturkampf* (indeed the older bishops had first-hand memories of Bismarck's persecution) and a strong dose of *realpolitik*. They would have to make some accommodation with the regime, so the positive statements made by Hitler about the Church were seized on as evidence of the possibility of a change in Nazi attitudes toward Catholicism, although some bishops, such as the chairman of the German Episcopal Conference, Cardinal Adolf Bertram, commented privately to Pacelli their fear that the government was intent on removing Catholicism from German public life.⁷ However, there was an almost desperate hope to believe that Hitler was guided by a more irenic spirit not at odds with Catholicism. As late as November 1936, Cardinal Faulhaber wrote after a three-hour meeting with Hitler that the Führer "lives, without any doubt, in faith in God. He recognizes Christianity as the foundation of Western Culture."⁸

On April 1, 1933, the government supported a party-endorsed nationwide boycott of all Jewish stores and businesses. In the days leading up to the boycott, Cardinal Bertram canvassed his brother bishops for their opinions on whether the Church should protest at the boycott. On March 30, the cardinal had been approached by Oskar Wassermann, director of the German Bank in Berlin and president of the Interfaith Association for Peace along with Father Bernard Lichtenberg, Provost of St Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin, for help in opposing the boycott. Bertram declined. In his letter addressed to both men, Bertram wrote that the action was

a purely economic struggle, alien to Church interests... It would be inappropriate intervention in affairs outside episcopal competence... Moreover, the foreign press which is predominantly in Jewish hands, has kept perfectly quiet about the persecution of Catholics in various countries."⁹

Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich telegraphed Bertram that any such protest would be "hopeless," a sentiment echoed in the nuncio's report to Rome on April 10 pointing out that antisemitism was supported by the Reich government.¹⁰ Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg expressed concern for converted Jews but not for the majority of German Jews. The bishops remained silent. At the same time, Faulhaber wrote to Pacelli offering a justification for the inaction:

We bishops are being asked why the Catholic Church as often in its history, does not intervene on behalf of the Jews. This is not possible at this time because the struggle against the Jews would, at the same time, become a *struggle against the Catholics*, and because *the Jews can*

help themselves, as the sudden end of the boycott shows. (Emphases added)¹¹

Faulhaber wrote a far more frank response to Father Alois Wurm, editor of *Seele*, who asked why the Church did not condemn racist persecution in forthright terms. He pointed out that while “things against the Jews are un-Christian,” the “German episcopacy was concerned with questions about Catholic schools, organizations and sterilization which are more important for the Church in Germany than the Jews...the Jews can help themselves.” The justification for this statement was clearly self-preservation. “Therefore, we do not have to give the government reason to turn from the Jews to us.” Faulhaber closed his letter to Wurm with a final justification based on the assertion that since “no one asked how to help us [the Catholic Church in Germany] why should the Jews should expect help from the Church?”¹²

What troubled the cardinal more was the impact of Nazi antisemitism on converted Jews, “even those who have been baptized for ten and twenty years and are good Catholics.” These sentiments appear to have been shared by all bishops.¹³ A pattern and precedent was set: converted Jews would receive as much help as the bishops were prepared to muster; all other Jews would have to rely on themselves. Pacelli, in Rome, and reliant on reports from trusted friends such as Faulhaber, had no practical alternative but to use the information provided in order to make Vatican responses to the worsening situation in the Reich. In early April, he instructed the nuncio, Orsenigo, to present the Vatican’s concerns about the treatment of the Jews—“anti-Semitic [sic] excesses”—to the government. This tells us that Rome had first-hand knowledge of Nazi anti-Jewish activities and that protests were sent through diplomatic channels from April 1933. From a reading of the material from the German bishops and the Reich government, there was no response to the Vatican protests.¹⁴

A week later, the *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service* was promulgated. Whereas the boycott was a single, relatively isolated event, the Civil Service Law had far wider implications and forced the Church to adopt a stance. Central to the new law was the so-called Aryan Clause. Part 3 of the law stated that all non-Aryans in the civil service were to be “retired.” In the amendment published on April 11, Part 3 was clarified: “A person is to be considered non-Aryan if he is descended from non-Aryan, and especially from Jewish parents or grandparents. It is sufficient if one parent or grandparent is non-Aryan. This is to be assumed in particular where one parent or grandparent was of the Jewish religion.”¹⁵ Rome was drawn in because of preliminary talks about a Concordat. Hitler had no need to worry about possible Catholic protests over the clause. Apart from some mild disapproval, not one bishop had spoken out against the law. Pacelli was at pains to avoid any clash with the Reich government that could adversely affect the Church, and had been warned by Orsenigo that any protest would be interpreted as a protest against

a Reich law.¹⁶ However, Cardinal Schulte of Cologne with Archbishop Klein of Paderborn and Bishop Berning of Osnabrück did issue a statement addressed to Hitler expressing their concern for many “loyal citizens” now condemned to days of “the most severe and bitter suffering.” Nuncio Orsenigo interpreted “loyal citizens” as “an allusion to the Jews” but went on to make the utterly indefensible statement that antisemitism was not integral to National Socialism.¹⁷

In March or early April 1933, the Jewish convert to Catholicism, Edith Stein wrote to Pius XI urging the pope to condemn the “war of exterminating Jewish blood.”

Not only the Jews but also thousands of Catholic faithful in Germany—and I believe in all the world—for weeks are waiting for and hoping that the Church of Christ will make its voice heard against such abuses in the name of Christ... We faithful children of the Church fear the worst for its worldwide image if the silence continues. We are also convinced that this silence cannot in the long run obtain peace from the current German government.¹⁸

The letter was sent on April 12, 1933, with a covering letter in Latin by Archabbot Raphael Walzer of the Benedictine Abbey in Beuron. Pacelli replied on April 20, 1933. In tactful diplomatic language, the cardinal secretary expressed his thanks for Walzer and the “Sender’s” letters, which had been passed on to Pius XI. Forced from her teaching position as a result of the “Aryan clause,” Edith Stein entered the Discalced Carmelite Monastery of Cologne in late 1933 taking the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.¹⁹

From across the Atlantic Rabbi William Margolis of Manhattan cabled the pope appealing to him

In the name of all that is sacred in Christianity... lift up your voice in unreserved condemnation of Hitlerite persecution. Your censure will go far to influence German government, particularly Catholic officials, to effect reversal of policy.

Arthur Schwarz in Vienna joined other rabbinic voices added to the growing cry for Rome to speak against the persecution of Jews inside Germany.²⁰ In the Secretariat of State Giuseppe Pizzardo penned a note that revealed the growing dismay and difficulty of formulating a response to the worsening situation for German Jews.

It seems to be a very delicate (*molto delicata*) matter upon which to make a reply. Would it not be better for the German bishops to take this step first? Perhaps afterwards, indirectly via the nunciature??

In any case, no reply was sent to Rabbis Margolis or Schwarz.²¹

On December 16, 1933 the *New York Times* reported, in an unsourced article, that Rome would not interfere with the application of the Aryan clause to German Catholics of Jewish ancestry unless “they were being subjected to unfair treatment as *a consequence of being Catholics*. Since this is not the case, the whole matter [the events surrounding the treatment of two Jewish Catholics] is regarded as being purely an internal German affair” (emphasis added). This statement of noninvolvement was a political statement designed to allay fears of rupturing the Concordat, but its bald and very public declaration was effectively the *only policy statement made on the Jews by the Vatican during the history of the Third Reich*. It was the only official statement in which the word “Jews” appeared.²² The author of the comments was Cardinal Pacelli. He was the only man other than the pope empowered to speak on issues as delicate as the Concordat.

The *New York Times* article was remarkable for another reason: it was a leaked report that accurately summarized the contents of a telegram sent by the German Chargé d’Affaires, Eugene Klee, to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin on September 12, 1933. The telegram was an account of a discussion between Klee and Pacelli over details related to the Concordat. Pacelli presented Klee with a list of concerns including “point 3 . . . dismissal of Catholic officials and Catholics of Jewish descent.”²³ Klee refused to accept “point 3” since it did not deal with Concordat matters. Pacelli acknowledged the diplomatic correctness of the refusal and asked that a separate memorandum be accepted which contained the substance of the concern over Catholics of Jewish descent. Klee replied with a forceful reminder that Vatican interference in German affairs would not be tolerated. Pacelli pointed out that the memorandum was written and offered at the express wish of the pope, who “was guided solely by religious and humanitarian points of view.” Later, Klee accepted a “note” which contained an assurance that the Holy See would not involve itself in the internal affairs of the Reich but which nonetheless expressed concern “on behalf of those German Catholics who themselves have gone over from Judaism to the Christian religion or who are descended in the first generation, or more remotely, from Jews who adopted the Catholic faith, and who for reasons known to the Reich Government are likewise suffering from social and economic difficulties.”²⁴

No mention was made of the majority of German Jews who were not Christians. This has to be seen in the context of the time. Not even the cardinal secretary of state, with his excellent command of German politics, could possibly have seen the unfolding events that would soon engulf German Jewry. What appears as disinterested language needs to be seen as an attempt to express concern, however ineffective it was. At the heart of the telegram Klee sent to Berlin was the Vatican’s concern to ratify all points of the Concordat. Once that was done, other matters could be addressed. Vatican attempts to express concerns about German Jews, of any religious tradition, were, after September 1933, rendered

diplomatically ineffective. The Concordat was Hitler's weapon to keep the Catholic Church subservient to the regime.

Reichskonkordat 1933 and the "Loaded Gun"

Between April 1933 and May 1934, Pacelli and the German bishops were occupied with the drafting and execution of the Concordat. Commentators have remarked on the swift passage of this document in comparison with the years, and sometimes decades, of negotiations that usually marked concordat processes. The speed with which the Concordat was proposed, negotiated, and signed was directed by Hitler. Rome did not ask for the treaty. Hitler wanted to break "political Catholicism" and knew Pius XI was not supportive of Catholic political parties, preferring Catholic Action instead.²⁵ Hitler also knew the pope had a loathing of Bolshevism and had praised the new chancellor as the only statesman in the world, apart from himself, to raise his voice against the communist danger.²⁶ The Führer had seen how the 1929 Lateran Pacts had settled the relationship between the fascist state and the Church in Italy and he was keen to have a similar settlement in Germany. The process was simple.

National Socialism had a record of anti-Catholic hostility. Hitler offered to formalize the position of the Church in Germany through a concordat, guaranteeing such things as the place of Catholic schools and organizations, recognizing Catholic canon law with regard to marriage, and the freedom of the pope to appoint bishops. In return, Hitler wanted the end of all manifestations of Catholic political life. At first glance, the "deal" looked similar to the Lateran Treaty. A deeper analysis, such as that which Pacelli made of the situation, revealed something more sinister. Refusal to negotiate would make Rome appear hostile to the regime and risk alienating many German Catholics who openly supported Hitler. Refusal would also legitimize Nazi assertions that Catholic organizations were opposed to the spirit of the New Order and posed a risk to state security. However, accepting the Reich government's invitation would be interpreted by Hitler and others as Vatican recognition of the National Socialist regime. Pius XI and Pacelli believed they had no option but to attempt to protect the Church in Germany by entering into negotiations.

There was another aspect of the Concordat that is not often mentioned. The treaty was a formal diplomatic document made between the Holy See and the official government of a sovereign state—Germany. By entering into a formal exchange of ambassadors as a part of the agreement, both sides surrendered any attempt at interference in the internal affairs of the respective states. The pope could not make statements about any matter outside those expressly mentioned in the Concordat. Hitler could not interfere in the internal workings of the Vatican. The trap had been skillfully set. Rome was damned if it signed and damned if it did not. Any Catholic protests in defense of Jews, Catholic or not, would have to come

from the German bishops or from sources outside the Reich. One source outside the Reich was *Il Duce*, Mussolini, who received a request from the pope sometime in the spring of 1933 asking him to speak with Hitler and urge him to restrain the antisemitic actions in Germany.²⁷ There is no record whether the request was heeded or not.

Hitler was reasonably confident that the bishops would not be rushing to defend the Jews. In an interview with Bishop Berning of Osnabrück, the Führer raised the “Jewish Question.” He was reported as saying:

I have been attacked because of my handling of the Jewish Question. The Catholic Church considered the Jews pestilent for fifteen hundred years, put them in ghettos, etc., because it recognized the Jews for what they were. In the time of liberalism the danger was no longer seen. I am moving back to that time in which a fifteen-hundred-year-long tradition was implemented. I do not set race over religion, but I recognize the representatives of this race as pestilent for the state and for the Church and perhaps I am thereby doing Christianity a great service by pushing them out of schools and public life.²⁸

The history of the Concordat demonstrated very clearly the determination of the Vatican to do all it could to protect the Church in Germany. It was the least odious option they had, a situation of which Hitler was well aware.²⁹

Biesinger’s analysis of the history of the Concordat reveals the complex set of forces operating between Berlin and Rome. Hitler wanted the activity of the Church restricted to “the sacristy” and he wanted all priests out of political activity as a prelude to the gradual suppression of Catholic youth groups and all other independent Catholic organizations. The negotiations took place against the rapid centralization of power in Germany after the Enabling Act of March 23 and the elimination of all non-Nazi political parties, including the Catholic Centre Party, the only remaining party that could offer resistance to Hitler. The corresponding violence directed at all opponents of the Nazis gave the bishops cause for concern. Rome was cautious but prepared to negotiate—without direct involvement of the German bishops or the nuncio.

Pacelli had cause to be concerned about the German bishops. A vocal minority, led by Cardinal Schulte of Cologne and Bishop von Preysing of Eichstätt, opposed the blanket ban on clerical political activity outlined in the Concordat. A unified front was essential if the Vatican was to win concessions from Hitler.

The Problem of Cesare Orsenigo

If Pacelli was worried about the disunity of the German bishops, he had greater cause for concern with Cesare Orsenigo, his replacement in Berlin

as Apostolic Nuncio. Thomas Brechenmacher argues that Orsenigo has been treated unfairly by historians. He lived forever “in the shadow” of his predecessor and he lacked Pacelli’s diplomatic skills. However, his reports demonstrated an often accurate insight into the workings of the Nazi regime. Between 1930 and 1939 the nuncio sent around 1,500 reports to Rome. Pacelli replied with another 2,000 documents. Brechenmacher estimates there are at least 2,000 more reports from 1939 to 1945.³⁰

Orsenigo believed in the Italian fascist ideal and hoped that the German variant would grow into something similar. His German secretary, Fr Gehrman, had visited Russia during the famine of 1922 and had returned to Germany with an opinion of Bolshevism that made him sympathetic to the Nazi party. Both men wished to avoid a repeat of the total breach between Moscow and Rome with Berlin and Rome. The nuncio held a “long-term perspective.” Chadwick described it:

History is long, tyrants are short. They rise, and kill people, and suppress monasteries, and close churches. But protest will change nothing; and soon tyrants come to a bad end, and the Church shakes itself after the persecution, and the Churches start to reopen. We bow to the storm, and put down our heads, and wait. For we have faith, and know that our day will come.³¹

While such an attitude may have been commendable for someone experiencing persecution, it was hardly appropriate for one who was charged to represent the interests of the Church to a government that was growing more and more hostile to Catholic Christianity.

Orsenigo reported to Rome on the events that were transforming the Reich under the Nazis. His correspondence was hesitant and lacking in clear-cut expression. Orsenigo had little confidence that German Catholics would resist Hitler and doubted whether anything the bishops could say would do anything to change what he saw as virtual apostasy. And yet, the nuncio’s uncritical acceptance of Hitler’s assertion that a Germany without Christianity was unimaginable points to a flight of wishful thinking that most of his episcopal colleagues in the Reich, and Rome, had abandoned.

Conscientious and cautious, always fearful of giving offense, Orsenigo was taken seriously by neither the Führer at Berlin nor by the cardinal secretary of state at Rome. Pacelli excluded his predecessor [sic] as nuncio from all important negotiations about Germany (including the Concordat), which he concentrated in his own hands.³²

Cesare Orsenigo’s greatest lacunae as nuncio lay in his silence about the persecution of the Jews. In his book *Hitler, La Santa Sede agli Ebrei*, Giovanni Sale compiled a selection of documents from the Vatican Secret Archives from 1930 to 1938. Of the 136 documents 95 relate directly to

the Berlin Nunciature. Only four contain references to Jews. It seems that the timid nuncio was more concerned for the negative consequences of National Socialist anti-Christian action for German Catholics, and was reluctant to do anything that would make life difficult.

When the government antisemitic program began to take shape in early April 1933, making life for German Jews “difficult,” the pope, through Pacelli, firmly told Orsenigo “to look into whether and how it may be possible to become involved . . .” in helping.³³ Cardinal Pacelli had to rely on sources other than the nuncio for accurate assessments of the persecution of Germany’s Jews.

One case in particular exemplifies Orsenigo’s pusillanimous attitude.

On April 28 1933, the nuncio received a visit from a representative of the Berlin Jewish community who had been advised by Cardinal Pacelli to go directly to the nunciature. The visitor asked for the Church’s help to ease the persecution of the Jews, admit Jewish school students expelled from state schools admittance to Catholic schools, and invite Catholic hospitals to manage Jewish hospitals in danger of closure. On the first point, Orsenigo said that the Church had done everything possible. On the second, the nuncio said admitting Jewish children to Catholic schools would violate the principles of the confessional school system and was therefore impossible. However, his guest was not to read any antisemitism into this refusal! Lastly, the question of hospital management required agreement with the government for the protection and maintenance of any subsidies and would probably be better handled by the Order of Malta or the League of Charity. The nuncio reported that his visitor went away “satisfied.” Besier’s comment aptly summarizes the utter inadequacy of Orsenigo’s report to Pacelli.

The first principle of love to the neighbor and the second—the refusal to accept Jewish children into Catholic private schools, in order to preserve their Christian identity—stood in a certain tension to each other seemed not to strike the Reich nuncio. Only in the third conversational complex, charitable work did Orsenigo see possibilities of cooperation.³⁴

Orsenigo’s only notable success was the appointment of a chaplain-general to the Wehrmacht. All this begs the question of why Pius XI kept the man in Berlin. The best answer I can find was that Orsenigo was, from the Nazi perspective, the best man for the job—he would never cause trouble. From the Vatican side, I can only imagine that the action of removing Orsenigo could give Nazi extremists the opportunity to repudiate the Concordat and begin greater anti-Catholic actions. In any case the nuncio remained consistent in his timidity. During the war, complaints about Orsenigo reached Rome. The most damning was a relayed message from the archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Innizter, who accused the nuncio of being timid and ineffectual. These remarks were in the context of writing

to Maglione, the secretary of state from 1939, about the worsening situation of the Jews in the Reich.³⁵

Reichskonkordat: the End of “Political Catholicism”

Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen, a devout conservative Catholic, led the German delegation to Rome on April 7, 1933 to work out an agreement with Cardinal Pacelli, acting on behalf of Pius XI. After initial discussions, a basic format was agreed on and von Papen returned to Berlin on April 18, leaving Ambassador Diego von Bergen to continue discussions. Of the 34 articles in the Concordat, Article 31 became the major problem for both sides. Under the proposed article, the government and the bishops were to decide the status of Catholic organizations such as youth groups, health and welfare associations, and unions. Hitler’s blanket demand for total exclusion of all clerics from politics was clear only in theory. What defined “politics”? Many of the bishops wanted more time given to sorting out the difficulties with Article 31. Catholic organizations were left without a clear definition of where they stood under the Article—were they political or religious?³⁶

Pacelli sent the draft Concordat back to Germany for presentation at the annual Fulda Conference at the end of May 1933. The bishops eventually agreed to support the Vatican’s draft in order to avoid giving the government an excuse to end negotiations. For many of the bishops, several weeks of escalated anti-Catholic violence had led them to fear for the safety of the Church unless all Hitler’s demands were met.³⁷ The Concordat was signed at the Vatican on July 20 by a pleased von Papen and a very reserved, and darkly realistic, Pacelli. Formal exchange of documents on September 10 ratified the Concordat and made it law.

Pacelli was under no illusions that the Reich government would adhere to the provisions of the Concordat, but he believed, and argued, that it was the only way to guarantee the Church an officially recognized voice in German domestic life. Article 31 remained an unresolved issue and became a source of constant friction between the bishops and the government. At stake were the large Catholic youth organizations that were classified as religious by the bishops and “political” by the government. The battle for Catholic youth was long, protracted, and deadly.³⁸

Hitler had scored a major coup. While the Vatican insisted the Concordat was not a papal blessing on the National Socialist government, the popular interpretation perceived it as such. On the same day as the Concordat was initialed in July, the Reich cabinet passed the *Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Offspring*, which began the implementation of the regime’s racial program. Shortly after the September exchange, Germany withdrew from the League of Nations and the disarmament conference. The perceived success of the Concordat raised the international prestige of Germany and its chancellor. International media reaction was largely positive at first,

although as the years passed, the temper of writing became increasingly critical of the German government's blatant disregard for the Concordat.³⁹ Not that any criticism unduly worried the Führer. The Church matter was resolved as far as he was concerned. Now that the Concordat was signed, the program of gradual suppression of the Catholic Church in Germany could begin anew.

In Rome, the pope and Cardinal Pacelli read the ever-increasing reports of Concordat violations with growing unease. Between October 1933 and March 1937, Pacelli wrote over seventy diplomatic notes and memoranda to the German ambassador to the Holy See, von Bergen, or directly to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin. Nearly all concerned breaches of the Concordat, and were couched in terms of "confidential negotiations" that had characterized Pacelli's "conflict avoidance" strategy.⁴⁰ It is important to note that Rome's ability to protest at these violations was in no small way impeded by the conservative and cautious leadership of the German episcopacy. Cardinal Adolf Bertram was seventy-five in 1933. "A man of polished written statements rather than of resolute decisions, and at the same time deeply rooted in the tradition of loyalty to the state, he had no bold resolves."⁴¹ Pacelli considered Bertram to be a "Prussian state bishop" whose actions would never show independence or assertion for the rights of the Church. Bertram was never a match for the duplicity of the Nazis. Loyal and obedient to the Holy See, he was also loyal and obedient to the Third Reich, and he held to the Concordat as the legal solution to curbing the effects of the "Church struggle." Therefore negotiations between state and Church continued.⁴²

Promemoria 1934

Of all Pacelli's diplomatic protests sent to Germany before 1937, the Promemoria of May 14, 1934 was the most detailed and critical.⁴³ In the document, he outlined the Church's concerns over breaches of the Concordat in uncompromising language. Pacelli believed the Reich still wanted the Concordat for political purposes and so the strongly worded protest was an attempt to force Hitler to curb the anti-church measures and allow the implementation of Article 31 according to the Church's interpretation.

Pacelli placed the blame for the delay in negotiations aimed at resolving outstanding Concordat issues squarely on the Reich government. While never disputing the legitimacy of the state, the cardinal emphasized that it was the government's duty to respect the rights of the Church and all German Catholic citizens, who must be guaranteed complete freedom of worship. This was a thinly veiled attack on the growing neopagan movement led by such radicals as Alfred Rosenberg. Further, said Pacelli, it was not within the competency of the state to authorize investigations of any kind against bishops or Catholics who held anti-Nazi opinions.⁴⁴

The Catholic Church in Germany had always been open to cooperation with the government. It went so far as to tolerate the dissolving of the various political parties and other non-Nazi or anti-Nazi organizations. However, the cardinal argued, the Church demanded that the Reich government intervene and end the anti-Catholic and anti-Christian persecution that was detracting from the greater danger of Marxism and Bolshevism.⁴⁵ This led Pacelli to attack the government's gradual suppression of the Catholic youth movements. German youth were being subjected to a barrage of anti-Catholic propaganda that blasphemed the Christian faith, made a mockery of Catholic religious practice, vilified the pope, bishops, and the clergy, and asserted that Christianity was a derivative of oriental Judaism and responsible for the decline of Germany. Pacelli closed this section with the question: "What is the Government doing, and what are the State authorities doing, to counter this?"⁴⁶

While assuring the government of the Church's intention to observe the Concordat, Pacelli rose to the defense of Catholic organizations and appealed for their preservation. Here entered the first element of realpolitik. The cardinal was secretary of state to a sovereign who had no way of carrying out threats. The institution of the Church was entirely at the mercy of the state. Pacelli's appeal to the government to honor the Concordat was based on Christian principles of morality. When arguing from Catholic theology, Pacelli was on surer ground and was unhesitating in his statements. This was most evident in the simple refutation of Nazi racism: it was a "substitute religion," wrong and "crazy."⁴⁷ He added that he did not believe the actions of the state reflected the mood of the German people. The negative opinion expressed toward the Church was due to uncontrolled propaganda that urgently needed more strict supervision.⁴⁸

The remainder of the Promemoria detailed concerns over education, insults directed at some bishops, the suppression of the Catholic press, interference in the clergy's exercise of pastoral care, and other similar breaches of the Concordat. All these things were known in the international press and would do Germany no good. The cardinal rejected the use of sterilization as contrary to Catholic moral teaching. He closed with a renewed appeal to negotiate Article 31.⁴⁹

The May Promemoria was ignored, along with most of the other notes Pacelli sent to Berlin. Rome continued to hope that the Nazi regime would moderate its anti-Catholic and anti-Christian bias and reach an accommodation with the Church. It was not to be. However, as noted above, the Vatican had no way of enforcing its will and relied totally on appeals to the "good nature" of the chancellor. Six weeks after the Promemoria was sent, the infamous "Blood Purge," or "Night of the Long Knives," ended the first stage of Hitler's move to acquire total control over the Reich. The purge was a "multi-purposed strike against several foes, principally the SA leadership, whose aggressive conduct and paramilitary pretensions were undermining Hitler's relations with the armed forces," and completed

what Burleigh described as “the demise of the rule of law”⁵⁰ Once the internal threats within the party were removed and Hitler was without rival in the party hierarchy, the next step in the implementation of the New Order could begin. On June 29–30, 1934, Hitler ended all practical pretence of keeping the Concordat. It was a useful tool when he needed it, otherwise it could remain effectively obsolete.

Rome was silent about the “Night of the Long Knives.” Among those murdered were the prominent national secretary of German Catholic Action, Erich Klausner, Adalbert Probst, national director of the Catholic Youth Sports Association, and Edgar Jung, and editor of the Munich Catholic weekly *Der Gerade Weg*. Exiled author Waldemar Gurian described the silence of the German bishops as the destruction of the “last moral authority in Germany.” It was to be nearly two years before a public comment was made on the deaths. Bishop von Galen of Munster preached on the deaths of Catholics in Germany who could be rightly called “martyrs for their Faith.” Ironically, it was the same von Galen who told his deans in October 1935 that the Church would not involve itself in “purely political aspects of Nazi rule.” If this was the degree of confusion and ambiguity of the German episcopacy, men presumably educated and reasonably well informed, the confusion at the lower levels of the hierarchy must have been staggering.⁵¹

The Chancellor declared to the Reichstag on July 13 that during the purge “I was responsible for the fate of the German people, and thereby I became the supreme judge of the German people!”⁵² Between 1934 and 1937, Pacelli’s most vigorous statements directed against Nazi racism came in his sermons and speeches delivered in international forums.⁵³

Vatican Diplomatic Protests and Snubs

One way the Vatican did express its disapproval of the regime was at the annual New Year diplomatic reception given by the president and, after 1934, by Hitler. The nuncio was the doyen of the diplomatic corps and the responsibility for expressing the good wishes of the corps to the chancellor fell to Orsenigo. The text of Orsenigo’s address was vetted by Pacelli and the pope. The address for New Year 1934 was edited by the secretary of state, who said that “the praises contained in the address [should] undoubtedly be moderate, in consideration of the grave difficulties to which the Church is now exposed in Germany.” The address for 1936 had all references to Hitler as “Duce” eliminated. Orsenigo was instructed to take holidays during the 1936 Nuremberg Party Conference and in 1937 he was advised not to attend the reception for Hitler’s birthday.⁵⁴

Between mid-1934 and March 1937, as Germany began to re-arm and pursue an aggressive foreign policy, Pius XI and his secretary of state kept sending letters of protest to Berlin about the continual violations of the Concordat. The position of German Jewry grew steadily worse,

but the attention of the German Catholic Church was focused almost entirely on its own preservation, even though there was no evidence to suggest the Nazis were planning the destruction of the Church *per se*. “Preservation” became a moral smokescreen used to avoid facing the ever-increasing immorality of the regime. The passing of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935 is a telling example. Pius and Pacelli had no *legal* or diplomatic grounds on which to comment. This was not the case for the German bishops, all of whom bar one remained conspicuously silent. The exception was Archbishop Conrad Gröber of Freiburg, who wrote of the laws:

Every people bears responsibility for the success of its existence, and the absorption of entirely alien blood will always constitute a risk for a nation which has proved its historic worth. Consequently, the right to safeguard the purity of the race, and to devise measures necessary to that end, can be denied to no one. The Christian religion simply demands that the means used shall not be contrary to moral law and natural justice.⁵⁵

I have found no refutation of this thinking and therefore assume that Gröber was not alone in believing the Nuremberg Laws to be morally acceptable. Nuncio Orsenigo sent a two-page report to Rome days after the Congress describing the escalation of anti-Bolshevik and anti-Jewish propaganda. At the end of the report he wrote

I do not know if Russian Bolshevism is the work exclusively of the Jews; but here they have found the means to make it believed and to consequently act against the Jews. If the National Socialist government has a long life, the Jews are destined to disappear from this nation.⁵⁶

The only major Christian protest at the Nuremberg Laws occurred in Holland four days after the Laws were passed. Ten thousand Dutch Christians, led by Dr James Buskes of Amsterdam, demanded the German bishops condemn the decrees. Buskes declared that “if the Christian Churches in Germany did not oppose this present Nazi legislation they would cease to be Christian Churches.”⁵⁷

As has by now been made clear, Pacelli’s primary concern was the well-being of the Church. Cardinal Faulhaber counseled Pacelli to avoid direct confrontation with the government over racial issues for fear that the Nazis would turn on the Church. Faulhaber was convinced that the persecution of the Church in Germany was designed not only to break any opposition to the New Order but to destroy it completely. This conviction is significant because Faulhaber and Pacelli had been good friends for nearly twenty years. Pacelli relied on the reports sent by the German bishops to frame his responses to Berlin. As far as the pope was concerned,

the situation in Germany was a persecution of the same kind as that in Russia, Mexico, or Spain and was motivated solely by *odium fide*. It was perceived as a battle between good and evil.⁵⁸

Encyclicals and Chicago, 1937

In Vatican–German relations, 1937 was the lowest point in the history of the Concordat. Hitler’s ambition to crush any ecclesiastical resistance had largely succeeded. The policy of centralization pursued by Rome for nearly seventy years was paying dividends—but not of the type the pope had imagined. Germany’s bishops were effectively paralyzed. Protests to the government were largely ignored and recourse to Rome became more and more common. Pacelli responded to the bishops’ telegrams and letters with regular messages delivered to the Willhelmstrasse. Nearly all of them were ignored.

Pius XI was increasingly anxious over the state of the Church in Germany. He believed that the Church was caught between a dictatorship built on fundamentally anti-Christian ideologies and a Bolshevik alternative. “The totalitarian claims of National Socialism upon the German citizen were absolutely incompatible with any limitations imposed by ecclesiastical law or by any international treaty with a religious association.”⁵⁹ Between January 16 and 21, 1937, the pope—with his secretary of state and German cardinals Bertram, Faulhaber and Schulte, and Bishops von Preysing and von Galen—formulated a carefully worded denunciation of aspects of Nazism that were particularly repugnant to Catholicism.⁶⁰ From the outset, the encyclical was never intended to be a condemnation of all aspects of Nazism, much less an outcry against Nazi antisemitism *per se*.

Mit brennender sorge, March 14, 1937

Secretly smuggled into the Reich in readiness for Palm Sunday 1937, *Mit brennender sorge* (“With Burning Anxiety”) was a document of skillfully weighed words. It is easier to say what this encyclical was not. It was not a condemnation of Nazi antisemitism. The word “Jew” does not appear in it. Pius XI wrote in the same vein as in *Non habbiamo bisogno* in 1930. Careful to condemn only those parts of Nazism that clearly contradicted Catholicism and violated parts of the Concordat, the pope was at pains to show he was writing because he had no other choice.

The encyclical was directed to supporting the German bishops: “At a time when your faith, like gold, is being tested in the fire of tribulation and persecution, when your religious freedom is beset on all sides, when the lack of religious teaching and of normal defense is heavily weighing on you, you have every right to words of truth and spiritual comfort” (*Mit*

brennender sorge 6; hereafter page references will be placed in the text). It was to the bishops that the pope addressed his concerns about Nazi ideology. The Reich government was attacked only by implication and there is enough ambiguity in some paragraphs to suggest that the pope allowed a margin of movement for the government to protest that the violations of the Concordat were the work of nonauthorized agents.⁶¹

Before addressing specific violations, the pope directed his attention to the ideological tenets of Nazism that were clearly at odds with Christianity. He named and condemned “pantheistic confusion” and neopaganism. This led Pius to make his principal statement condemning “statolatry”:

Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the State, or the depositories of power, or any fundamental value of the human community—however necessary and honorable be their function in worldly things—whoever raises these notions above their standard value and divinizes them to an idolatrous level, distorts and perverts an order of the world planned and created by God. (8)

Any attempt to take an idea of “a national God, of a national religion, or an attempt to lock [God] within the frontiers of a single people, within the narrow limits of a single race” must be resisted (11). Again, these words had to be read within the context of the self-understanding of the Catholic Church as the only religious institution able to speak with authority on humanity’s relationship with God. In this model, Jews were expected to submit with religious humility.

A vigorous defense of the Old Testament followed. Referring to government attempts to remove religious education from the schools, the pope thundered:

Whoever wishes to see banished from the Church and school the Biblical history and the wise doctrines of the Old Testament, blasphemes the name of God...and makes limited and narrow human thought the judge of God’s designs over the history of the world: he denies his faith in the true Christ, such as he appeared in the flesh, the Christ who took his human nature from a *people that was to crucify him*. (16, emphasis added)

The defense of the Hebrew Bible was made out of belief that the Old Testament prepared the way for the New. It was *not* a defense of the religion of the Jews.

Pius developed his theme of redemption through Christ as revealed in the sacred texts to repudiate “the so-called myth of race and blood” (17). He went on: “The Church founded by the Redeemer is one, the same for all races and nations.” Therefore the Church must be prepared to resist evil. In a paragraph that described a vision of an uncompromising

Church, the pope urged German Catholics to keep a strong hold on their faith and await deliverance:

A Christianity which keeps a grip on itself, refuses every compromise with the world, takes the commands of God and the Church seriously, preserves its love of God and of men in all its freshness, such a Christianity can be, and will be a model and a guide to a world which is sick to death and clamors for directions, unless it be condemned to a catastrophe that would baffle the imagination. (19)

Pope Pius reiterated several points of Catholic theology and issued encouragement to the clergy and religious of Germany. The Nazi system of government, its laws, and official antisemitism were not mentioned.

The Nazi response was as swift as it was predictable. Police confiscated as many copies of the encyclical as they could, church publications were suspended and the morality and currency trials that had been suspended in July 1936 were resumed.⁶² A diplomatic note was sent to Rome from Berlin accusing the Vatican of inciting German Catholics against their government.⁶³ Pacelli's response was a carefully worded reply, on April 30, which pointed out that the Reich's memorandum made no mention of any part of the encyclical. The secretary of state declared that any claim the Nazis might have against the Catholic Church could be adequately refuted with documentary evidence gathered since the signing of the Concordat in 1933.⁶⁴

Hitler's personal reaction to the encyclical was publicly measured. At a May Day rally, the Führer railed against powers outside Germany that sought to interfere in the business of the Reich. They would not prevail.⁶⁵ Privately though, the Führer raged at any mention of the encyclical. Being "bested" by clerics made Hitler all the more determined to bring the Church to heel.⁶⁶ Some petty persecution of Catholic media followed and there was continued pressure on Catholic youth groups to dissolve. But by and large, the Nazis left lay Catholics alone, preferring to make life difficult for the clergy. I suspect this was, in part, because of the encyclical that was published less than a week after *Mit brennender sorge*.

If there was any doubt as to where Pius XI and Cardinal Pacelli believed the primary enemy of the Church was to be found, the encyclical *Divini redemptoris* removed it.

Divini redemptoris, March 19, 1937

While the pope believed that some accommodation may have been possible with Hitler to the point of turning "blind eyes" to aspects of the regime, no such process was possible with Stalin and Bolshevism. *Divini redemptoris* was to be the official teaching on communism until the 1960s. It was uncompromising in its denunciation of the ideology and practice

of what Pius XI, and Pius XII, held to be the greatest threat to humanity and the Christian faith. Here it is important to see the encyclical within its context.

The pope held Nazism and communism in an unequal theological and ideological abhorrence. His political instinct was to see Nazism as a more immediate threat to Catholicism than Bolshevism, which was perceived as having a more “long-term” danger. Victories of Europe’s socialist parties in France and Spain in 1936 gave the pope a greater cause for concern. As Europe slid further into extremist and polarized politics, and as the Western democracies vacillated on a united front to counter Hitler, Pius grew more anxious that the position of the Church was being undermined by governments that were unwilling to defend either “traditional Christian values” or that were openly hostile to the Catholic Church. This anxiety became more acute when the Berlin-Rome Axis was signed in November 1936. Treading an ever-narrowing line between proclamation of Catholic teaching and the need to protect the interests of the Church, Pope Pius XI thundered against communism in a more energetic way than he had ever spoken before about any political system.

Communism was wrong because it proposed a false messianic ideal. It contained “a pseudo-ideal of justice, of equality and fraternity in labor,” which lured “the multitudes entrapped by delusive promises.”⁶⁷ The pope wrote that by proclaiming that reality was limited to the empirical and was forever caught in a cycle of conflict between forces, communism had no place for God—and therefore robbed humanity of its inherent dignity and with it, morality, family life, and the true destiny of the human race:

In such a doctrine, as is evident, there is no room for the idea of God; there is no difference between matter and spirit, between soul and body; there is neither survival of the soul after death nor any hope in a future life . . . Communism strips man of his liberty, robs human personality of its dignity, and removes all the moral restraints that check the eruptions of blind impulse. (9–10)

Elevating economics to the first place in human life would lead to “a new era and a new civilization which is the result of blind evolutionary forces culminating in a humanity without God” (11–12). The only end of communism was the ruin of human society through terror and violence.

Pius made his most uncompromising statement midway through the encyclical. Lest anyone be unsure, he declared:

Communism is intrinsically wrong, and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever. Those who permit themselves to be deceived into lending their aid towards the triumph of Communism in their own country, will be the first to fall victims of their error. And the greater the antiquity and grandeur of the Christian civilization in the regions

where Communism successfully penetrates, so much more devastating will be the hatred displayed by the godless. (58)

While the pope professed his affection for the people of Russia, he made it clear beyond any doubt that the Soviet system was anathema and without any redeeming feature.⁶⁸ The Christian had to resist the seductions of communism by fidelity to the teachings of the Church and collaboration with the hierarchy. Governments had an obligation to provide a just and moral social order that cared for all members of society in accordance with both natural and divine law. To this end, Catholics were called on to be active in Catholic Action, vigilance, and prayer (29, 33–5, 70–3).

Pius XI made no mention of Jewish links to Bolshevism. While there is some evidence suggesting that he did not dismiss the idea of a “Judeo-Bolshevist” conspiracy, it is doubtful that he gave it more than a passing thought.⁶⁹ Others had been more forthcoming on the subject. Cardinal Alfred Baudrillart, rector of the prestigious Catholic Institute in Paris, was reported in the Nazi daily *Völkischer Beobachter* (*The Peoples’ Observer*, the main Nazi newspaper) as saying that Jewish communists were sent by Moscow to Spain to foment antireligious propaganda. The Nazi paper alleged that the cardinal feared the same could happen in France. Austrian bishop Hudal, resident in Rome, was of the view that Bolshevism was a “sign of nihilism, of decadent Jewry devoid of all religious commitments” and praised Nazism as the ideology that opposed communism without compromise. Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich went further in November 1936, when he argued that the pope’s anticommunism was religious in tone but was in fundamental agreement with the “political, economic, and racial [i.e. Jewish] aspects of the danger of Bolshevism” as understood and proclaimed by Hitler.⁷⁰ It would have come as some surprise to Faulhaber to know that the pope and his secretary of state as well as Cardinal Bertram regarded Bolshevism and Nazism as variants of a godless-authoritarian and dehumanizing totalitarianism.⁷¹

Cardinal Mundelein, May 18, 1937

In the United States, there was a growing sense of alarm at the treatment of the Church in Germany. The American bishops were loyal to Rome and increasingly distressed at the hostile nature of the Nazis and their attacks on the German bishops and the pope. A democratic political culture that was built on a history of national welcome for the “huddled masses yearning to be free” spurred anti-Nazi protest. Addressing a gathering of 500 priests of the Chicago Archdiocese, the cardinal archbishop, George Mundelein, spoke of the persecution of the Church in Germany. Making direct reference to Nazi attacks on confessional schools and the morality and currency trials that were continuing in the Reich, Mundelein accused the “crooked Propaganda minister” Goebbels of using atrocity propaganda against Catholics in a manner

similar to the type used in the 1914–1918 war. It was the cardinal's comments about Hitler that launched a diplomatic crisis. Mundelein described Hitler as "an Austrian paper-hanger, and a poor one at that."⁷² Berlin sent a sharp note to Rome demanding disciplinary action against the archbishop. Pacelli said the Vatican could not act until the Reich government acted against the "malicious slander and defamation, against the disgraceful calumnies directed at churches, ecclesiastical institutions, the pope, the cardinals, bishops, priests etc, which appear day after day in German newspapers and periodicals and in the speeches of prominent personages."⁷³ Berlin recalled von Bergen. In a parting note to Pacelli, the German ambassador wrote that until Rome acted against Mundelein there would be no progress in resolving issues between the Reich government and the Church.⁷⁴

The pope's silence in the matter was deliberate. Pius allowed Pacelli to speak for him and gave him latitude to steer the course of events in the way he thought best. This was a great vote of confidence for the cardinal secretary. The *New York Times* reported on May 21 that in a cautiously worded "semi-official" statement, the Vatican expressed its approval of Cardinal Mundelein's statement, "which is considered entirely in line with the Pope's encyclical on the same subject." It went on to say that Rome would not comment on particular aspects of the cardinal's speech. In a piece of clever diplomatic writing, the Vatican source, undoubtedly Pacelli, said:

The speech Cardinal Mundelein made about the religious situation in Germany is an act the Cardinal made on his own initiative without being in any way necessary for him to reach a previous understanding with the Vatican... The Cardinal, therefore, retains entire and full responsibility for his words. This does not mean at all that the Vatican disapproves in any way of the Cardinal's speech, because what the Holy See thinks of the German religious situation has been so clearly expressed in a pontifical encyclical that there is no need for further elucidations.⁷⁵

The affair simmered for the next two months, with Rome refusing to denounce the cardinal and Berlin refusing to halt clerical immorality trials. The fact that neither side called for the cancellation of the Concordat suggests that both sides still saw value in maintaining some form of diplomatic contact—which suggests that even more outspokenness was possible. Rome had the final word in the form of Pacelli's formal letter to the German government refusing to issue apologies for Mundelein and stating again the Church's causes for complaint.⁷⁶

Von Bergen returned to Rome in early July and the matter appeared closed—until an address to a group of American pilgrims by the Pope on July 17 looked set to reignite the diplomatic crisis. The pilgrims came from Chicago and Pius praised Mundelein as an example of a fearless bishop who defended the rights of the Church.⁷⁷ Von Bergen protested

that the pope's comments were inflammatory. Pacelli responded by saying the Secretariat was taken by surprise with the pope's comment. Several days later, von Bergen reported to Berlin that Pacelli's office had arranged for a slight change in the pope's text published in *L'Osservatore Romano*.⁷⁸ The affair ended as abruptly as it had started when Hitler halted the immorality trials. Plans were under way for the Anschluss with Austria, and Hitler needed all the positive sentiment he could muster in order to win over Catholic Austrians. Open persecution of priests would not help.⁷⁹ Vatican-Berlin relations, while never "normal," were at least workable.

The Vatican and the "Fourth Estate"

A comment about the way the Vatican perceived the media is needed here. I think Pius and Pacelli saw the American tradition of free and untrammelled speech as a distinctly non-European and non-Catholic way of operating. Mundelein's comments were useful and appreciated in Rome, but apart from the occasional blustering by the pope, always "interpreted" and "recast" by Pacelli, Vatican diplomats did not work that way. Whatever their personal sympathies toward the Jewish population and other victims of Nazism and fascism, the pope and his secretary of state felt that the Church had said all that needed to be said in defense of the truth—even if Pius XI was inclined to speak more bluntly than Pacelli. Power politics demanded that both men walk a fine line between appeasement and confrontation in order to maintain the Church's position throughout Europe. It was one thing for an American cardinal to sound off at Hitler, quite another for the Vatican to vent its displeasure.

Another aspect of the Vatican's muddled approach to the media was reflected in the attitudes toward *Civiltà Cattolica*. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Jesuit publication continued its traditional anti-Jewish polemic. The editor of *Civiltà* met fortnightly with either the pope or the cardinal secretary of state to discuss the contents of the next edition. Consequently one can only assume that both Pius XI and Pacelli knew of, and approved of, the vicious anti-Jewish articles regularly published in the journal. At present, I simply do not know how extensive Pacelli's association was with the editor of *Civiltà*. The regular meetings were a part of his office as secretary of state. At the very least, this made him complicit in the Judeophobia of the journal—whether he agreed with the content or not—and the fact of his silence over the content makes him blameworthy. It reveals a major problem for the defenders of Pius XII. In Pacelli's rarefied life as secretary of state and professional clerical diplomat, the anti-Jewish diatribes of *Civiltà* were academic, theologically consistent, and sanctioned by the authority of an ancient tradition. I doubt that he would have made a connection between the brutality occurring on the streets of Berlin or Vienna and the polemic in the Rome-based periodical.

Keen to show that its Judeophobia was qualitatively different from Nazi antisemitism, *Civiltà* pointed to the Jewish nature of Bolshevism, the strange phenomenon of Zionism, and the perplexing question of nationality. Mario Barbera, one of *Civiltà*'s most anti-Jewish authors, was obsessed with the power of international Jewry. "In fact the Jews have had overwhelming predominance in modern life, and thus at the same time have been the ones who have most influenced the materialistic, immoral, and irreligious conception of life." In the same article, Barbera made the astounding statement that Catholics should do all in their power to create a climate for the conversion of Jews! Hungary's antisemitic laws were hailed by Barbera as a model for Christian Europe because they were based on defense of Magyar tradition, not race.⁸⁰ Barbera's journalism remained constant throughout the interwar years, and, with the official and papal status enjoyed by *Civiltà*, had to be seen as at least one official Catholic point of view on the "Jewish Question."⁸¹

"Kristallnacht", November 10–11, 1938

The Mundelein controversy illustrated the most effective tool the Vatican had for demonstrating its dissatisfaction with the Nazi attacks on the Church. "Silence" from Rome when anti-Nazi comments were made was interpreted accurately as endorsement of the speaker or writer. The point was never lost on Hitler or Goebbels. This pattern became fixed from 1937 onward. It was Pacelli's *modus operandi* throughout the most violent antisemitic attack in modern European history—the "Night of Broken Glass," insultingly styled "*Reichskristallnacht*" by the Nazis—of early November 1938 and the ensuing pogrom. However, this rather positive assessment must be placed by the reality that the persecution of the Jews of Germany and Austria had been a marginal issue for the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs and its Prefect, Cardinal Pacelli, since 1933.⁸²

The reluctance of nearly every government to take in Jewish refugees from Germany flew in the face of vigorous Vatican action to provide whatever relief it could.⁸³ After the pogrom, Pacelli appealed directly to nuncios around the world, in the name of the pope, to do whatever they could to help converted Jews get out of Germany. Amid the flurry of activity, the ailing pope intervened and widened the work to include all Jews. Between mid-1938 and the last weeks of Pius XI's life, when the situation for the Jews of Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Sudetenland, and Italy had turned into state-authorized persecution on a hitherto unimaginable scale, the Vatican finally discarded its ancient Judeophobia and threw itself and its agencies into the work of rescue.⁸⁴

The failure of the Evian conference in July 1938 pointed out the vast gulf between governments and nations ready to condemn the Nazis, but who were unwilling to offer concrete solutions to the principal victims of

the Third Reich. Powerful resurgent antisemitism in Poland, France, and Britain, paranoid antisemitism in Latin and North America, and the odd Australian “we have no racial problem” kind of antisemitism, meant the Jews were increasingly isolated. The sarcasm of the *Völkischer Beobachter* needed no explanation: “Nobody wants them!” While it was perhaps a case of too little, too late, the Vatican-sponsored refugee committees were nonetheless an attempt to do something. In comparison, no other government, with resources far exceeding Vatican funds, was as actively involved.

The focus of most Vatican-sponsored refugee work was, not surprisingly, “non-Aryan Catholics.” This was not surprising because of the well-established *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* (Aid Association of German Jews), which had been operating since early 1933. The Nazis had retained the Weimar system of organized relief whereby each religious tradition was responsible for the care of its own members and congregants. The “church tax” levied by the state was to be used, in part, for social welfare. Therefore Catholics cared for Catholics, and Jews cared for Jews.⁸⁵ The Nazis actively encouraged Jewish emigration, with “rich” Jews expected to help “poor” Jews.⁸⁶ Convinced that antisemitism throughout the world was on the increase, the Foreign Ministry in Berlin advised on January 25, 1939 that “it must be an aim of German foreign policy to strengthen this wave of Antisemitism.” The memorandum continued: “The poorer the Jewish immigrant is and the greater the burden he constitutes for the country into which he has immigrated, the stronger the reaction will be in the host country, and the more desirable the effect in support of German propaganda.”⁸⁷

The increased impoverishment of Germany Jewry, including baptized Jews, meant that the strain on emigration facilities was close to unbearable. The German bishops in 1935 had made the *Sankt Raphaelsverein* (St Raphael Society) the Catholic agency responsible for assisting *katholische Nichtarier* (non-Aryan Catholics). An annual allowance of RM 27,000 was made in the church budget for the operation. The agency relied completely on church support. The government, naturally, made no contribution. Fr Max Joseph Grösser, president of the *Raphaelsverein*, reported that between April 1, 1937 and March 31, 1938, the organization helped 967 Catholics of Jewish ancestry get out of the Reich. By the end of the year, almost another 1,000 had gone. Writing just after the Anschluss, Grösser reported that 160,000 to 180,000 non-Aryan Catholics were now added to those in Germany.⁸⁸ Unless foreign governments provided help in the form of visas and assisted passage, the fate of most German and Austrian Jews, converted or not, remained in an increasingly impoverished and violent limbo.

In the wake of *Kristallnacht*, international condemnation rang loud.⁸⁹ From Rome, Pacelli and the pope read reports of the *aktion* and the anti-Catholic attacks that flowed on from some participants. Orsenigo telegraphed from Berlin with details about the “antisemitic vandalism.”

And in a very frank, and accurate, observation, he added that the “suspicion was that the order or the permission to act came from the top.”⁹⁰ In particular, the pope was disturbed by the vicious attack on November 11 on the residence of Cardinal Faulhaber whose opposition to National Socialism—a change after his earlier, cautious, support—had earned him the particular ire of the party.⁹¹ The pogrom had given some of the more anti-Catholic agitators within the Reich the excuse to settle scores with those they considered to be “allies of the Jews.”⁹² The Reich Concordat made it diplomatically inappropriate to protest on what was *legally* a German domestic issue that did not involve the Catholic Church. The pontiff and his secretary of state resorted to an active silence as other bishops and cardinals spoke out in defense of the Jews and against anti-semitism with their comments reported in *L'Osservatore Romano*.⁹³ This would impress on the Nazis that it was not only the Vatican that found the behavior of the Reich abhorrent.

In Milan, Cardinal Idelfonso Schuster condemned what he called “this new Nordic heresy” and railed against the “racial myth.” “It is in the name of this twentieth century myth that the descendents of Abraham are today expelled from the territory of the Reich, and that the only revealed religion is the butt of its attacks.”⁹⁴ Cardinals Joseph Van Roey of Malines, Belgium, Jean Verdier of Paris, and Manuel Cerejeira of Lisbon unambiguously condemned both the attacks in Germany and the promotion of “racialism.” However, the word “Jew” does not appear in any of the statements.⁹⁵ Across the western democracies public protests drew huge crowds and days of prayer announced.⁹⁶ In the United States, a national broadcast by leading members of the American hierarchy and laity, condemned the pogrom but also linked persecution of the Jews to the persecution of the Church in Russia, Mexico, Spain, and Germany. The broadcast entered into an air of surrealism with the comments of Bishop John Gannon of Erie who urged “the Jews in Germany to pray and sustain the persecution as best they may, following the examples of Christ, who let persecution spend itself on him in order to triumph eventually.”⁹⁷

This is another problem with making judgments about the papacy’s response to events such as *Kristallnacht*. It was not uncommon to permit a major bishop or cardinal from another country to make a public statement on an issue that the pope felt would be more forceful coming from a part of the Church other than Rome. On the feast of the Epiphany in January 1939, the bishop of Cremona, Giovanni Cazzani, preached against the “pride of race” of the Jews. He argued in favor of what I have discussed above as “permissible Antisemitism.” *The Tablet* commented that “it seems more than a pity that members of the Hierarchy should make statements which appear to be in conflict with what is still known to be the Vatican view.” A papal reprimand was not likely since Pius XI was deathly ill, but a rebuttal was possible from another bishop. The Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Adeodato Piazza, effectively rebuked the Cazzani by saying that “St Peter never closed the door to his former co-religionists, and in this

spirit the Church has ever set the example of moderation.” The sermon was praiseworthy up to that point, but then the cardinal mentioned that the Church had always shown tolerance toward the Jews even “when she was fighting Jewish schemes and plots.”⁹⁸ The old suspicions and myths ran deep.

Rome remained similarly silent, as Jews who arrived in Italy after 1919 were given six months to leave the country. There was no official statement released by the pope or his secretary in opposition to Italy’s race laws, but there was much behind-the-scenes activity among informal contacts between the Vatican and the Palazzo Venezia on behalf of converted Jews and Jews in marriages with Catholics. This was “legitimate” church intervention since it concerned provisions in the Lateran Pacts.⁹⁹ The pope also let his thoughts be known to the chaplains of Catholic youth organizations, describing race theories as “peculiarly loathsome . . . un-Christian and irreligious.”¹⁰⁰ Again, it was at least some attempt to help Jews, a fact that did not go unnoticed by radical fascists.

The ferociously anticlerical fascist Roberto Farinacci was well aware of the Vatican attempts to help Italian Jews. In a lecture given in Milan in early November 1938, entitled “The Jewish Problem throughout the History of the Catholic Church,” he asked his audience why the Church had reversed its traditional hostility toward the Jews. This turnaround “created in fascists, a profound spiritual tragedy.” He promised that fascism would overcome this problem and warned the Church “not to meddle in political questions which are the concern exclusively of Fascism.”¹⁰¹

In Britain, church protests were more direct. Dr Cosmo Lang, Anglican archbishop of Canterbury wrote to *The Times* on behalf of all Christians in Britain in giving “immediate expression to the feelings of indignation with which we read of the deeds of cruelty and destruction which were perpetrated Thursday in Germany and Austria.”¹⁰² On November 22, a public meeting in Liverpool was addressed by the Catholic and Anglican bishops. The Catholic bishop, Dr Richard Downey, outlined the concerns of Christians:

I believe in the competence of a sovereign State to order its internal affairs . . . That is our justification for protesting against the savagery which Germany declares to be her internal policy and therefore purely her own concern. The treatment which she is meting out to the Jews constitutes at once a crime against humanity and a menace to civilization. Therefore it is the *world’s* concern.¹⁰³ (*italics original*)

The Liverpool meeting was followed by a gathering in London on December 9 where the archbishop of Westminster expressed his solidarity with the pope and Cardinal Faulhaber in defense of justice, tolerance, and religious liberty, and in condemnation of “that hatred called anti-semitism.”¹⁰⁴ Cardinal Hinsley had written to the pope on November 26 asking for a message for the meeting. Pius was ill and unable to send a

personal response but instructed Pacelli to cable the cardinal, authorizing him “to interpret the mind of the Supreme Pontiff.”¹⁰⁵

I have no doubt that Pacelli shared the dying pope’s growing concern at the pace of anti-Jewish persecution, but with the increasing anti-Catholic menaces of the Nazis along with the other trouble spots directly affecting the Church, his ability to respond to Jewish needs was extremely limited. While there is evidence that his ethical concerns lay with those suffering, his diplomatic concerns precluded responses that lay outside regulated channels. He was further restricted by the reality that the Church could only act and react according to the willingness of its members. Translating papal condemnations of antisemitism into action in Germany was never to go beyond the sermons of a few brave clergy such as Father Bernard Lichtenberg, Dean of St Hedwig’s Cathedral in Berlin. At mass on the morning of November 10, he said to the congregation:

What took place yesterday we know; what will be tomorrow, we do not know; but what happens today that we have witnessed; outside [this church] the synagogue is burning, and that also is a house of God.

The silence of the German bishops during the “*Kristallnacht*” was loud.¹⁰⁶

With the growing threat of war and the potential for further German aggression on the Continent, the Vatican mobilized itself in pleading for peaceful resolutions. Upon his election in March 1939 the new pope, Pius XII, appealed for peace. The situation facing the Catholic Church in Germany and Austria was grim, but not deadly—yet. Hitler’s brazen disregard for international agreements and contempt for the Western democracies made the Church more determined to find ways to avoid open conflict. Overtures from Berlin toward Moscow pointed to “deals with the devil” that could only bring greater evil to Christian Europe. The plight of the Jews grew worse and more perilous. Lacking any means of enforcing its religious worldview, and speaking in a language that many simply did not understand, the Vatican and the pope were extremely limited in what action they could take. Words calling for justice, peace, and mercy were the pope’s tools, and herein lay the conundrum of Pius XII, one of the most experienced and competent diplomats in Europe. He would be judged by all sides and parties on the basis of what, when, why, and how he spoke or did not speak. It is a paradox I return to in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Habemus Papam¹

The impartiality of the Vicar of Christ . . . is not to be equated with insensibility or lack of feeling and silence, where considerations of morality and humanity demand a qualified word.

Pius XII to the Bishops of Germany (August 6, 1940)²

[Myron] Taylor talked of the opportunity and the necessity of a word from the Pope against such huge atrocities by the Germans. He said that from all sides people are calling for such a word. I assented with a sigh, as one who knows the truth of this all too well! I said in reply that the Pope has already spoken several times to condemn crimes by whomsoever they are committed . . . Taylor said, "He can repeat". And I could not but agree.

Notes of Monsignor Domenico Tardini (September 22, 1942)³

Parameters, Peace, Partiality, and Protocols

It is not my intention to examine the whole pontificate of Pius XII. That would take me beyond the bounds of this exercise. I am exploring the primary aims and objectives of the papacy throughout the war, and how these were related to the growing knowledge of the persecution and extermination of the Jews. What did the pope himself have to say about these aims? How did he propose to fulfill these aims? How did these aims change as the war engulfed more and more people? How did these aims change, if they did at all, as the news of the "Final Solution" became known? What was the nature of papal neutrality and the role Pius saw for himself? The year 1942 was a vastly different time from 1939. From an examination of these questions, I believe a consistent pattern is clear. The actions that had marked the man throughout the period 1917–1939 remained, in essence, unchanged. I am convinced that 1942 was the crucial year for the pope in formulating a response to the slaughter taking place in eastern Europe. For this reason, I have chosen the months from mid-1942 to the Christmas address of 1942 as a case study in how Pacelli came to know and deal with

information arriving in Rome. This will allow me to explore the second case study: the Rome *aktion* of October 1943, which was, for all intents and purposes, the Holocaust in microcosm.

Mediator and Peacemaker, March to December 1939

On his sixty-third birthday, March 2, 1939, Eugenio Pacelli was elected pope and took the name Pius in memory of Pope Pius X and in honor of Pope Pius XI. His election was regarded positively by most, including Mussolini.⁴ From the outset of his papacy, Pius called for peace in the world. His first message, broadcast via Vatican Radio, was a plea for a peace “which arises from justice and charity.”⁵ This theme was continued in the pope’s first Easter sermon in St Peter’s. Recognizing that “a fearsome anxiety possesses the souls of men, as though worse dangers yet were hanging over them in direful menace,” Pius asked how peace was possible while “even men with a common nationality, heedless of their common stock or their common fatherland, are torn apart and kept asunder by intrigues and dissensions and the interest of factions?” Addressing the whole Catholic world, the Pontiff lamented the lack of reason and trust between nations that led to the violation of “solemnly sanctioned treaties.” The only path to true peace lay in the world’s return to the “King of Peace, the Conqueror of Death” through “our loving Mother the Church.” Alongside peace there must also be justice so that

[l]awfully constituted authority...be given that respect and obedience which is its due; that the laws which are made shall be in wise conformity with the common good; and that as a matter of conscience, all men shall render obedience to these laws. Justice requires that all men acknowledge and defend the sacrosanct rights of human freedom and human dignity...Justice, finally, requires this too, that the activities of the saving Catholic Church, the unerring mistress of the truth...the chiefest nurse of civil society, shall not suffer any disparagement, still less any prohibiting impediment.⁶

Throughout the last months of peace, Pius attempted to broker a settlement between Germany and Poland as well as holding an international peace forum with himself as mediator.⁷ The pope was under no illusions about Hitler’s contempt for the Church, but he continued to hope for some form of reconciliation with the Reich.⁸

He was convinced that the confrontational approach of Pius XI had not succeeded—that during his reign things had only become worse. Pius’ *modus operandi* was to be diplomacy, compromise on nonessential issues, and gentle persuasion through quiet and persistent appeals to Christian moral norms and the goodwill of nations. In the language of the late 1930s, Eugenio Pacelli had more in common with the appeasement politics of

Neville Chamberlain and Cardinal Bertram than the confrontational tone of Winston Churchill and Bishop von Preysing. Reserving questions related to Germany to himself rather than Cardinal Luigi Maglione, the secretary of state, Pius appears to have believed that only he correctly, or accurately, understood Hitler, the National Socialists, and the nuances of the Third Reich. In many respects, he would have been right in thinking so; however, it meant that the “German Question” was placed outside and above all other aspects of papal foreign policy. As far as the Jews of Europe were concerned, antisemitism was not unique to Germany; it was only the worst case on a continent growing steadily more extreme in its antipathy toward Jews. Even in Italy, the situation for Jews was worsening. Pope Pius’ coronation day, March 12, 1939, was the last day for all foreign-born Jews to leave the country. The contrast with the pomp and ceremony in the Vatican was contrasted with scenes of desperation on the Italo-French border:

It seems to me Europe is dying . . . Is there no end? Will no one help, no nation, no government? This agony cannot go on without disastrous consequences. And these tortured creatures, are they to perish.⁹

The pope’s primary concern was not the rescue of German Jewry but the care and preservation of the Catholic Church. At all times, the pope respected the Concordat, even after the Nazis had all but abandoned it. None of the Pontiff’s diplomatic initiatives over the spring and summer of 1939 was fruitful, but he continued to believe that diplomacy could succeed and that the role of the bishop of Rome was relevant for the preservation of peace in Europe and the world. As the sense of pessimism continued to grow, many believed that “If armed conflict [did] come to Europe, none will be able to say the Vatican has not done everything possible to prevent it.”¹⁰

In private, it was a different matter. Pius let his personal opinions be known to a select few outside his immediate circle. A U.S. State Department’s report filed in 1939 gave an evaluation of Pacelli’s anti-Nazi credentials: “He opposed unilaterally every compromise with National Socialism. He regarded Hitler not only as an untrustworthy scoundrel but as a fundamentally wicked person. He did not believe Hitler capable of moderation, in spite of appearances, and he fully supported the German bishops in their anti-Nazi stand.” Pius remained consistent in his private animosity toward Hitler while preserving the public diplomatic position he had maintained since the signing of the Concordat in 1933.¹¹

In the last days of August, Pius, convinced that only a superhuman effort could avoid a war between Germany and the rest of Europe, broadcast a passionate appeal to world leaders:

We, armed with nothing more than the word of Truth, and above all public disputes and passions, speak in the name of God . . . It is with the strength of reason, not the strength of arms, that justice makes

its way. Empires not founded on Justice are not blessed by God. Statesmanship divorced from morality betrays those very ones who wish it so. The peril is imminent, but there is still time. Nothing is lost with peace. Everything is lost with war... May the strong hear Us... May the powerful hear Us.¹²

A week later, Germany invaded Poland. Two weeks later, on September 17, the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the East. Whatever direction this new war would take, it was to be different from any other conflict and put enormous pressures on existing moral frameworks for the conduct of war. For the European powers, the pope was a figure of secondary importance, regarded as having little influence on the stage of international affairs, but one who could be useful for propaganda purposes, although this varied from country to country. Germany tended to regard Pius as fundamentally anti-Nazi and sympathetic to Britain and France; Britain and France were wary of the Vatican as being too close to Mussolini and supportive of Italian foreign policy, especially with regard to Ethiopia; Poland felt Pius was too pro-German on account of his many years as Nuncio; and Soviet Russia was totally uninterested one way or the other.

The Role of the Catholic Church in tempore belli

Throughout his diplomatic career, Eugenio Pacelli had always stressed the supranational nature of the Catholic Church. This was the traditional theological application derived from Christ's injunction that his followers were "in the world, but not of it" (John 17.15–16). The Church could never take one side or other in the political disputes of nations. It must always remain above conflict. But this did not preclude the Church from speaking out in defense of faith and morals—this was a divine mandate. On his Name Day in June 1939, Pius addressed the assembled cardinals on the place of the Church in the current climate:

The Church is not the child of this world. But she is in the world, she exists in its midst, and from it she receives her children. She has her part in the alternations of joy and sorrow. And it is in the midst of the world that she suffers, strives, prays... that we may lead a quiet and a peaceful life in all piety and chastity... But throughout the course of history, facing those things that fall across that course, the forward march of the Church has become more difficult and arduous than in times past... She is surrounded by humanity, that seems neither [*sic*] to know how to decide which side to take.

Pius ended this section of his address by stating unambiguously the obligation of the Church and, more particularly, the obligation and responsibility

of the Vicar of Christ:

But for all that, the bounden duty of Our apostolic ministry cannot permit these external obstacles, whether fear of being misinterpreted or of Our intentions and aims being misunderstood even when their object is good, to hinder Us in the salutary work of pacification, which is proper to the Church. The Church permits not herself to be turned aside or restrained by any private interests . . . she dreams not of busying herself in the territorial disputes of States . . . For all that, she may not, in these hours when peace suffers the greatest dangers . . . forbear to speak maternally and, should conditions permit, offer maternally her services to stay the imminent irruption of force, with its incalculable material spiritual and moral consequences.¹³

Gentle diplomacy and the uttering of statements that hedged around the crucial issues of the day—namely the threat of German aggression against Poland because the latter would not surrender the Corridor—were inherently weak. The pope would not utter a word that could be directly construed in a negative way against Germany.

Upon the outbreak of hostilities, the pope indicated the Vatican would be a neutral state but always available to act as a mediator between the belligerents.¹⁴ The pope's energy was taken up with the preparation of his first encyclical letter, which was issued in late October 1939, *Summi pontificatus*.

Horrified by the first-hand descriptions given to him by the former nuncio to Poland, Filippo Cortesi, the primate, Cardinal August Hlond, and reports from escaped Poles at the dismemberment of Catholic Poland, Pius spent weeks laboring over the drafts of the encyclical.¹⁵ He weighed every word carefully in order to avoid any suspicion of violation of papal neutrality, but also to avoid any suspicion of not proclaiming Catholic moral teaching with regard to the prosecution of war. Two days before the encyclical was promulgated, Pius accepted the credentials of Stanislaus Girdvainis, the Lithuanian ambassador to the Holy See. In his reply to Girdvainis, the pope spoke of his role as the Supreme Pastor. While avoiding involvement in “purely secular controversies,” Pius made it clear that the work of saving souls “does not allow Us to close Our eyes, when precisely for the preservation of souls, new and incommensurable dangers loom; when on the face of Europe, which is Christian in all its fundamental traits, the sinister shadow of the thought and work of the enemies of God stretches out more menacingly and nearer.”¹⁶

This was an example of the Pontiff's carefully weighed words. His listeners in Rome regarded the phrase “enemies of God” as referring to Bolshevism first and foremost, an astonishing conclusion when Pacelli's condemnations of Nazi race rhetoric and the denunciation of atrocities committed in the early months of the war were well known in London.¹⁷

Others, such as the English historian Christopher Dawson, held that the “enemies of God” encompassed the Nazis as much as the Bolsheviks:

[T]he Pope’s spiritual office itself forbids him to shut his eyes when it is precisely the salvation of souls that is threatened by new and incalculable danger...Of course this passage specifically refers to the advance of Communism in Eastern Europe. But Communism is by no means the only representative of the spiritual evils of totalitarianism, though it avows its anti-religious and anti-Christian attitude more openly and directly than the totalitarian state in Germany has done. The difference...is one of tactics rather than of ultimate aims.¹⁸

In effect, Dawson said what the pope could not, and would not, bring himself to say.

Summi pontificatus

In October 1939, the most visible victim group of the Nazis, created because of the war, were the Poles—Catholic Poles primarily—not Jews. Throughout the Church during the first 12 months of the war, it was Poland that dominated the news. A veritable decapitation of Polish culture and religious life was under way as official German occupation policy. Thousands upon thousands of Polish clergy and intelligentsia were murdered and imprisoned by the Nazis. It was a precursor to the later genocide of the Jews.¹⁹ The sufferings of Polish Catholics were published in Catholic and secular newspapers from Britain, the United States, France, and even, in edited form, Italy.²⁰ When the encyclical *Summi pontificatus* was published on October 20, the principal references to victims of the war concerned Poles.²¹

The encyclical was long—12,500 words—and written in Pacelli’s customary florid style. At the beginning of the letter, Pius declared quite simply, using words from John 18.37 that he was “to give testimony to the truth.” “This duty necessarily entails the exposition and confutation of errors and human faults; for these must be made known before it is possible to tend and heal them.” Consequently, he declared he would not allow himself to “be influenced by earthly considerations nor be held back by mistrust or opposition, by rebuffs or lack of appreciation of Our words, nor yet by fear of misconceptions and misinterpretations. We shall fulfill Our duty” (19–20). From there he launched into a condemnation, without naming any particular government or country, of all the principles of totalitarian society that characterized both Nazism and communism. It was the strongest attack on the two ideologies since *Mit brennender sorge* and *Divini redemptoris* in 1937. However, both systems went unnamed, weakening the overall impact. No amount of sympathy for Poland could

be effective without some word, however circumspect, about the cause of Polish suffering.

The pope deplored the “rejection of a universal norm of morality . . . and the forgetfulness of the natural law, which has its foundation in God” (28), the entrapment of peoples “led astray by a mirage of glittering phrases” (31), which led people away from “the consciousness of universal brotherhood aroused by the teaching of Christianity” (49), and “forgetfulness of the law of universal charity” (51). The outcome was the creation of civil authority accorded “an unrestricted field of actions that is at the mercy of the changeful tide of human will, or of the dictates of casual historical claims, and of the interests of a few” (52). Once this has occurred and the “authority of God and the sway of His law are denied”, the

civil authority as an inevitable result tends to²² attribute to itself that absolute autonomy which belongs exclusively to the Supreme Maker. It puts itself in the place of the Almighty and elevates the State or group into the last end of life, the supreme criterion of the moral and juridical order, and therefore forbids every appeal to the principles of natural reason and of the Christian conscience. (53)

The “blood of countless human beings, even non-combatants, rais[ing] a piteous dirge over a nation such as Our dear Poland” was evidence of the outcome of this philosophy (71–3, 106). Therefore all Christians must show that “the obligation of Christian love, the very foundation of the Kingdom of Christ, is not an empty word, but a living reality.” The war had opened up an enormous demand for Christian charity. Pius wrote that he had every confidence that all Catholics “will be mindful in imitation of the Divine Samaritan, of all these who, as victims of the war, have a right to compassion and help” (109).

Reaction to the letter was predictable: the British and French approved it as a total condemnation of Hitler and Nazism.²³ Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), allowed it to be read from pulpits but banned publication in the Reich. He also allowed it to be circulated in Poland, but only after the word “Poland” had been replaced with “Germany” in an attempt to subvert Catholic loyalty to the pope.²⁴ The Foreign Office in Berlin communicated its displeasure to von Bergen in Rome, telling him that the pope had surrendered his neutrality.²⁵ Polish reactions were mixed.²⁶

I have no doubt that Pacelli meant what he wrote and that in his own mind he lived according to the standards he set for himself in the encyclical. He cemented the Church’s response to the war in his Christmas address two months later. The pope’s proposal outlined five points:

1. All nations have a right to independence and life without fear of external aggression. When disputes arise they should be settled equitably and justly.

2. Nations must be mutually and progressively disarmed.
3. The setting of international borders should “conform with the maximum of human wisdom for all parties concerned” and account should be taken of past experiences in order to avoid past mistakes. International juridical bodies should be established to oversee, implement, revise and correct agreements between nations.
4. The “real needs and just demands of nations and peoples as well as of ethnical minorities” deserve respect and attention, and where necessary accommodation.
5. Lasting peace is only guaranteed through obedience to the divine law and respect for moral justice.²⁷

The official position of the Catholic Church, therefore, was to speak the truth without fear or favor and urge all Christians to do whatever was in their power to help the victims of the war. Because no distinctions were made as to which victims were to be assisted, it is reasonable to assume that Jews were as entitled to the help promised by the pope as anyone else. I am also reasonably convinced that this is what Pius would have had his readers understand.

Boundaries of Ideology

Before we can look in more detail at Pius XII’s 1942 Christmas address and his responses to the *aktion* of 1943, it is important to establish the “boundaries of ideology.” That is, were there limits to the legitimate concerns of the pope? He was the Vicar of Christ. Upon his shoulders rested responsibility for the Universal Church: the preservation of the “Deposit of Faith,” the Tradition “given to us by the Apostles”; faithful instruction in Faith and Morals; and the Shepherding of Christ’s Faithful within the bounds of the visible ecclesial body embodied within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by Christ and governed through Peter and his successors, the bishops of Rome. Integral to the pope’s role was the mandate to “feed my sheep”—understood in Catholic theology to mean the responsibility and duty to keep before Catholics and all people the admonitions of the divine and natural laws. From this flowed the pope’s pastoral duty of care to strengthen his brother bishops in their apostolic ministry so that the entire Church could work for the “salvation of souls.” Again, by his own definition, caring for Jews came under obedience to the divine and natural law—the Fifth Commandment—You shall not kill.

All of these elements were covered in *Summi pontificatus* and the Christmas address of 1939. To have expected Pius XII to have made a statement naming names and places, atrocities and the perpetrators, and making a definitive judgment on the morality of one side or other in the war is to misunderstand both the man and the theology of his office. At

the same time, for the pope to avoid any mention of the German invasion and the deliberate destruction of Polish life suggested a reluctance to impede relations between Rome and Berlin and so damage the position of the Church in the Reich. This dimension of papal language became more and more frustrating as the war dragged on. The pope *never named any perpetrator, victim group, or bystander* in 1939 or in any other public address before the end of the war. It was left to the readers to interpret for themselves what, or whom, the pope was writing about.

The valid historical question is: “Was the pope consistent in the application of his own standards?” If this is not appreciated within the contexts outlined in earlier chapters, any attempt to make a judgment of Pius and his role during the Holocaust will fail. I believe that Pius XII was consistent in the *public* application of the proclaimed neutrality of the Holy See up to October 1943, but was manifestly inconsistent in the *private* application of moral responses to the ever-widening killing process. The October *razzia* marked a significant change in the papal response to the Nazi killing process, a point that will be explored later in this chapter. It is on these two “hinges”—neutrality and compassion—that an understanding of the pope’s action and words can be made.

Neutrality and Compassion

Politically, the Vatican was bound by the Lateran Pacts to remain strictly neutral in the event of a war involving Italy and other powers. The only exception was the prerogative reserved by the Holy See to speak out on moral questions.²⁸ In the pope’s own words, his responsibility was to do all he could to bring the war to an “honorable end,” to ease the pain and suffering of the victims of war, plead with the belligerent powers to observe the laws of war and respect life, honor, property, and religion, and urge all sides to care for prisoners of war.²⁹

It was in the area of care for prisoners of war, refugees, and displaced persons that Pius undertook his most visible pastoral and public initiative. Within a few weeks the pope reorganized the Vatican Information Office with the mandate to offer “universal and impartial” service for all who asked for help. Placed under the supervision of the Monsignor Giovanni Montini and the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, the office was directed by the Russian-born bishop Alexander Evreinoff. Between September 1939 and October 31, 1947, over 21 million letters and telegrams passed through the office. Vatican Radio broadcasted over one and a quarter million messages between June 1940 and May 1945. The Vatican Information Office became an international clearing house for the families of prisoners seeking news of their fathers, husbands, and sons; for people of every culture, religious tradition, and political background seeking news of family members. And for Jews. During the war years the Vatican received and acted on thousands of letters requesting

help to locate Jewish families caught in German-occupied Europe. The collection of selected documents in *Inter Arma Caritas* (2004) demonstrates the efforts undertaken by the staff of the Vatican Information Office.³⁰ All letters and telegrams were answered, if possible, with news positive or negative. The sheer scale of the work of the Vatican pointed to the most energetic and consistent attempt to locate and find Jews across Europe undertaken by any government or nongovernment agency during the war years.³¹

The most vigorous diplomatic display of papal disapproval occurred in March 1940 when the German foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, visited Pius. Hitler wanted assurance that Rome would not make any public declaration against the Reich and that the pope's influence could be used to strengthen the resolve of pro-Nazi Catholics. Requests from the Vatican to send an apostolic visitor into Poland and the release of priests and hostages held in concentration camps were all refused by the minister. Pius, whose comments to Ribbentrop demonstrated how well informed he was, gave the Führer's representative a long list of grievances concerning the Church in Germany and Poland.³² The *New York Times* reported the pope's "stern demand . . . that Germany right the injustices she has done before there can be peace." During the audience, Ribbentrop stayed largely mute as the pope spoke about his horror at the suffering of the Poles. Throughout the interview, Pius referred to a large bound set of documents giving highly detailed reports of German atrocities. The newspaper went on: "It was also learned today that the Pontiff, in the burning words he spoke to Herr von Ribbentrop about religious persecution, also came to the defense of the Jews in Germany and Poland."³³

This was the strongest public expression of papal outrage at German aggression and attendant violations of the natural and moral law. From April 1940 onward, the pope would only employ diplomatic means as his public vehicle of protest. Away from public scrutiny, and, it would appear, without documentation of processes, Pius quietly and forcefully encouraged all who could to help those in need, and that included Jews, baptized or not. A growing body of peripheral and anecdotal material suggests that the pope was active in rescue organization for the Jews. For this reason, I am sympathetic to the claims of Marchione and Rychlak, but can go no further without documentation.

Another aspect of the Vatican's neutrality was contained in its own description of activities carried out in the name of the pope. The word "Jew" did not appear in Cardinal Maglione's 1941 account of the Holy See's position. It was an example of moral evasion, particularly damning as the principal victim group of the Germans at the time of writing were now the Jews of Europe. In the first part of the letter, Maglione outlined the Vatican's political status with regard to the war:

The Holy See, remaining by its very nature outside and above the armed conflict, is, nevertheless, profoundly sensible to the great

suffering which follows in the wake of war. Therefore, without entering the sphere of purely political or military affairs, the Holy See has constantly had as its supreme and animating principle that human and Christian charity which embraces all men as brothers: consequently it has not only sought, whenever the occasion presented itself, to turn men's minds and hearts toward those noble and salutary sentiments, but has also dedicated a great part of its activity to alleviating, insofar as possible, the widespread sufferings caused by the war.

Up to this point, the Cardinal's text reflected the public platform of the Holy See. In the second part of the memorandum, he listed, as examples, various groups who had received Vatican assistance.

In harmony with this fundamental program, the Holy See has endeavored, above all, to carry out its beneficent activity wherever there was need of it, for the relief of every form of misery and privation, without distinction as to race or nationality, on behalf of Catholics as well as non-Catholics, recognizing in their common suffering a special title to the benevolent interest of the Apostolic See. Thus, to cite but a few instances, the Holy See has done everything possible for the prisoners of war and in a very particular manner has sought to mitigate and ameliorate the unhappy lot of the peoples most grievously tried by the war, as, for example, the Poles, the Dutch, the Belgians, the French, and, more recently the Greeks.³⁴

What makes this document so disturbing is the simple fact that it was a memorandum written to D'Arcy Osborne, the British minister, to the Holy See. There was no political or military danger in confiding to Osborne. The absence of the word "Jew" suggests that Jews were an "invisible" victim group, understood, if at all, as Poles, Dutch, Belgians, French, or Greeks.

Observing political neutrality was one aspect of Vatican diplomacy during the war. Another was addressing the moral questions that arose. Broadly speaking, papal protest at Nazi atrocities can be classified under four headings:

1. Instruction and reminders of Christian doctrine. The abuse and killing of defenseless people is wrong. These are crimes that cry out to God for vengeance (for example, the Christmas address 1939).
2. Exhortations and direct admonitions to the clergy and the faithful of the Church. The pope's letters to the German bishops throughout the war point to this in a general way. While there were occasional mentions of specific issues related to the prosecution of the war, these were few and far between. The most famous occurred in the 1943 letter to Bishop Konrad von Preysing of Berlin.³⁵
3. Exhortations and direct admonitions to responsible authorities. There is ample evidence of the activity of the nuncios, the secretary

of state, Maglione and Pius himself writing and appealing to heads of state on behalf of hostages, prisoners of war, refugees, and so on (for example ADSS 6, 8, 10 *passim*). The concerns of the pope covered an enormous range of peoples, situations, and war zones. Limited resources meant that Vatican responses were often restricted to Italy. Outside Italy, the pope had to rely on the goodwill and good faith of the Catholic people.

4. Diplomatic action via nuncios and the secretariat of state. The most limiting disability of the Holy See was its inability to enforce its will. The Vatican was totally dependent on the willingness of governments and local leaders to accept moral responsibility for their actions. As an officially neutral state, the Vatican constantly balanced its statements between all warring powers. Consequently, the major diplomatic statements were couched in archaic diplomatic terms designed to express a general moral point but not make any particular judgment of the party concerned.

Applying the same categories to what was possible for the Jews of Europe, “a pattern of possibilities” emerges:

1. Instruction and reminders of Christian doctrine. The public addresses made at Easter, the Pope’s Name Day, and Christmas made frequent mention of the immorality of killing the defenseless. Jews certainly came under this heading, but were never named apart from general references to the “innocent” and those “persecuted for reasons of race.”
2. Exhortations and direct admonitions to the clergy and the faithful of the Church. The Christmas address of 1942 was the closest Pius ever got to making an unequivocal public statement condemning the murder of the Jews. The message was not lost on those prepared to read carefully, and according to the popular news reports of the day, the pope’s reference to the Jews was recognized without ambiguity.³⁶ However, the address was largely read and listened to outside Occupied Europe. Of greater potency was the communication Pius maintained with the bishops of Germany and throughout Occupied Europe.
3. Exhortations and direct admonitions to the responsible government authorities. There is ample evidence of the activity of the nuncios, Secretary of State Luigi Maglione, and Pius himself writing and appealing to people such as Priest-President Josef Tiso in Slovakia, Regent Horthy in Hungary, Premier Antonescu in Romania, Minister Laval and Marshal Pétain in Vichy, as well as Mussolini and Hitler, pleading for a halt to transports “to the East,” for provision of basic health care and adequate food, and permission for religious practice for the inhabitants of the ghettos and camps. The results of “direct admonitions” varied according to the nature of the

country, local antisemitism, its relationship with Nazi Germany, and the stage of the war. Despite some success in halting aspects of the “Final Solution,” the appeals of the pope and his legates were largely unsuccessful. Certainly most of the admonitions sent to Berlin were ignored.

4. Diplomatic action. The published record demonstrates a constant level of activity of information being received and responses communicated. This area of Vatican activity will remain largely speculative while the archives relevant to the war remain closed. This area remains the single greatest lacuna facing historians.

Until the archives of the Secretariat of State are opened for the period 1939–1945, historians cannot compile a complete picture of what the Vatican did or did not do for the Jews of Europe. The published documents are a valuable source but only give an end result, not the details of the processes that led to that result. The International Catholic Jewish Historical Commission (ICJHC) came to grief on this point in July 2001. In their 47 Questions arising from the *Actes et Documents*, the commission repeatedly asked for access to more documentation that would illuminate and explain particular points.³⁷ Historians need to see the memoranda that flowed between different offices of the Secretariat, notes made by Pius, Maglione, Montini, Tardini, and others, and agendas and records of meetings between Vatican officials, nuncios, and diplomats. Until then, the most an historian can say about the pontificate of Pius XII is that the evidence tells us he had a highly accurate picture of the Nazi killing process from mid-1941 and that the Vatican was engaged in a series of protests to heads of states in attempts to halt deportations, with the exception of Vichy, and rescue at least some, primarily baptized, Jews.

There are a growing number of archival sources that have been found in the last decade that continue to shed light on the inner workings of the Vatican’s relief efforts. The New York–based Pave The Way foundation was alerted to a cache of documents in the town of Avellino, near Naples. Between October 1940 and July 1942 Pius XII sent donations amounting to 21,000 lire to help Jewish internees. Cardinal Maglione informed Bishop Giuseppe Palatucci of Campagna on October 2, 1940 that the pope had sent 3,000 lire for “those who suffer because of reasons of race”—a reference that would only refer to Jews. A second letter of November 29 was more explicit. Monsignor Montini (the future Pope Paul VI) wrote to the bishop to tell him that the pope was forwarding another 10,000 lire “to distribute in support of the interned Jews.” These documents are valuable in demonstrating several examples of papal intervention to help Jews; in this case interned foreign-born Jews in Italy. However, it is not sufficient evidence of an explicit plan of rescue.³⁸

In the light of what I have outlined above, and mindful of the limitations the historian operates under at present, I examine the period from late 1941 to Pius’s Christmas address in December 1942. This is the critical

timeframe where papal responses to the murder of the Jews can be judged most clearly. From this juncture I will make a case study of the October 1943 *grande razzia* (“the great raid”) in Rome.

1942: What Was Known and When

Nineteen forty-two was the turning point for the Jews of Europe. Since the outbreak of war in September 1939, the European Jews who found themselves under German domination joined the Jews of Germany and Austria as the primary victims of Nazi violence. Dispossessed, despoiled, and deported, walled up in ghettos, stripped of all legal protection, persecuted at whim and exploited as expendable slave labor, the Jews lived in a terrifying and murderous isolation from the rest of humanity. No other victim group of the Nazis was as isolated and vulnerable as the Jews.

At Villa Wannsee, just outside Berlin, a meeting was held on January 20, 1942 to formalize and systematize the killing process that had been in operation on a massive scale since mid-1941. The entire apparatus of Germany’s modern industrialized economy was to be harnessed for the murdering of Jews. While there is some debate on when the order was given to exterminate every Jew under German control in Europe, there is no argument that the execution of the order was given the highest priority by Hitler, Himmler, Göring, Heydrich, and Eichmann. From January 1942 until the end of the war, murdering Jews was an authorized, legal, and state-sanctioned activity of the Third Reich. It was government policy to ensure that every Jew in the German sphere of influence was physically eliminated.³⁹ The “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” was to be carried out with deception, euphemism, and misinformation. No one was to know of this “unwritten and never-to-be-written page of glory in our history.”⁴⁰ Those who did hear of it found it next to impossible to believe that such a thing could be possible. It was only the process that was to be kept secret—Nazi antisemitism had been publicly trumpeted for years. Statements by Hitler and Goebbels had consistently referred to the Jews disappearing forever. Nazi euphemisms ensured that the true meaning remained cloaked. These reports were published in the official press of the Reich and were available across Occupied Europe, even in Rome.⁴¹

Sanchez observes that the memory of atrocity propaganda in the 1914–1918 war made many people skeptical of rumors of German killing. Stories of men, women, and children being herded to their deaths were simply too fantastic to believe. The papal secretary of state, Luigi Maglione, told the American envoy, Harold Tittmann, in October 1942 that

reports of severe measures taken against non-Aryans have also reached the Holy See from other sources but that up to the present time it has not been possible to verify the accuracy thereof. However, the statement adds it is well known that the Holy See is taking advantage

of every opportunity offered in order to mitigate the suffering of non-Aryans.⁴²

I believe it is possible to read Maglione's comment as a general, nonspecific, awareness of the mass murder of Europe's Jews.

This raises another issue. Maglione's possible skepticism could also have been due to the erratic nature of wartime postal services, diplomatic and otherwise. A cursory glance at the documents recorded in *Actes et Documents* demonstrates something of the volume of mail that arrived in Rome throughout the war. A further examination reveals that information often arrived in piecemeal fashion at different times from different places. Information dispatched from occupied countries could take months to reach the Vatican, if it reached it at all. The Allied blockade of Europe, the constant threat of spies intercepting messages, the fragility of diplomatic pouches and the constant disruption caused by the war impeded communications to the extent that letters, always written in neutral and guarded language, took long and circuitous routes to reach the addressee.

However, *Actes et Documents* also reveals considerable activity on the part of papal diplomats such as Angelo Roncalli in Istanbul, Angelo Rotta in Budapest, Giuseppe Burzio in Slovakia, and many others who relayed information to Rome in ever-more graphic dispatches.

Neutral countries were also affected. In the case of the 1944 "Auschwitz Protocols" written by two Slovakian escapees, copies of the report were read by a number of nuncios and delegates who reported, in customary couched terms, its contents to the Vatican. Rome knew of the existence of the protocols in May 1944, but did not receive them, via Switzerland, until October, after the liberation of Rome by the Allies. In June the pope telegraphed Regent Horthy appealing for a halt to the deportation of Hungarian Jewry, before he could have read the protocols.⁴³

There was also a popular and enduring myth that the Vatican had a vast network of informants who passed information to the pope. In fact the pope relied on the translation of BBC broadcasts made by the British minister, Osborne, to get the most up-to-date reports on the war. Even so, Pius, along with many others in the Vatican, read the reports with the same degree of skepticism as they read the Axis press.⁴⁴ What is clear however is that the nature of reports grew steadily worse as the war dragged on. It was the near impossible task of verification that slowed the curial responses as well as a terrible mental inability that such things were possible.

Pope Pius XII was not alone in finding reports of organized mass killing hard to believe. The war that was being waged across the Continent was beyond anything Pacelli could bring himself to imagine. Again, he was not alone in this regard. The pope had no army and no power to enforce his will beyond appeals to the Tradition of the Catholic Church and the belief embraced by millions that he was the visible head of the Church on earth. Beside this was the element of unbelief that the mass

murder of Europe's Jews was indeed state-sponsored policy. Most Italians, including the educated classes, had little understanding of, and even less sympathy for, antisemitism, especially the German variety. Consequently, there was great skepticism over the true nature of the "Jewish Question" or the "Final Solution." This was also true for many within the Vatican advising the pope on appropriate action.

Croatia

Pius, by now familiar with stories of German savagery, also knew of the genocidal activities occurring in Catholic Croatia against Orthodox Serbs and Yugoslavian Jews. Phayer contends that Pius was anxious not to impugn the new Croatian state with accusations of mass murder, and risk alienating a Catholic state. The Vatican entrusted the issue of dealing with the regime's murderous policies to the young Alojzije Stepinac, archbishop of Zagreb who protested long and loud against the slaughters of both Orthodox Christians and Jews.⁴⁵ It appears that Rome was prepared to believe that the outrages of the Ustasha were an aberration of Ante Pavelic's new state. Pius knew of the killings and knew that Catholic priests and some members of religious orders were involved. The carrot of Vatican diplomatic recognition for the new Croat state was offered in place of the stick of a public condemnation of the genocides. The policy was a total failure, as the success of Josef Tito in 1945 proved. Serb vengeance on the Croats was in no small way directed at the Catholic Church.⁴⁶ The pope's representative in Croatia, Abbot Giuseppe Marcone, had written to Maglione in July 1942 describing how difficult it was to get information about the Jews in Croatia. He added that the Germans were applying pressure on the Pavelic regime to deport the Jews into Germany. Marcone claimed that two million Jews had been deported and killed already.⁴⁷

Euthanasia, Ghettos, Camps, Murder "in the East"

Rome also had some idea of the extent of the euthanasia program operating in Germany. Pius, according to Ambassador Bergen, had asked for masses to be celebrated for those "inmates of insane asylums and homes for the aged in Germany [who] have been eliminated by being put to sleep or by restriction of food rations."⁴⁸

By June 1941 at the latest, Rome knew for certain that Europe's Jews were being herded into ghettos and concentration camps, forced to perform backbreaking labor, and deprived of most of the basic amenities needed for subsistence living. In fact the Vatican had, by June 1941, nearly as clear a picture of the scope of killing as the British and Americans. Details may have been accented or nuanced differently, but the substance of the reports bore an alarming similarity. Of course, it was impossible

for Pius to compare notes with Churchill or Roosevelt, but it did suggest that the news that Osborne and Taylor⁴⁹ brought to the Holy See was not unfamiliar. From an ever-widening range of sources, including the well-informed Polish minister, Kazimierz Papee,⁵⁰ news of increased anti-Jewish persecution, new racial laws and the suspension of negotiations for Brazilian visas was reported to Rome, along with the appeals for help in lifting the Allied blockade around Greece in order to let food ships reach Piraeus and Patras.⁵¹

It was not only news of mass murder “in the East” that reached the Vatican. Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna wrote to the pope and Maglione in February 1941 telling them that the Reich government had changed its policy of enforced migration to one of wholesale deportation to Poland without regard to age or religion.⁵² Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania enacted more repressive anti-Jewish legislation, all of which was reported to Rome, along with news of more deportations, subhuman living conditions in transit camps, and incidents of brutality and inhuman repression.

Vichy France and Tortuous Logic

The Church responses to the situation in Vichy France represented some of the most tortuous logic employed to avoid a blanket condemnation of the antisemitic measures legislated by the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, Xavier Vallet. Protests at anti-Jewish persecution, particularly when it involved baptized Jews, were sent to Rome, along with details about the appalling conditions of the transit camps and prisons. When anti-Jewish laws (Aryanization of Jewish property, racial definitions, arbitrary arrest and threats to “mixed” marriages) were enacted, protests from French Jews led Vallet and the Nuncio, Valerio Valeri, to refer the matter to Rome. In effect, Vallet wanted a Roman interpretation of the Vichy regime’s antisemitism. I doubt he would have bothered if he suspected the answer from the Vatican was other than the one he wanted. Rome’s response was a combination of traditional anti-Jewish theology and diplomatic jargon that avoided a head-on confrontation with the Vichy government:

In principle there is nothing in these measures which the Holy See would find to criticize. The Vatican considers that a state applying such rules is making legitimate use of its power, and that the spiritual power should not interfere in the internal policy of states in such matters. Moreover, the Church has never professed that the same rights should be accorded to all citizens or recognized as theirs.

The only “defense” of the Jews offered was a warning that any attempt to classify baptized Jews as Jews and not Christians would constitute a “contradiction between French law and the doctrine of the Church.”⁵³ This was one time when a direct word from the pope could have had

a significant impact on the fate of French Jews caught in Vichy France. Instead, a mangled and utterly inadequate pseudotheology was used to justify a blatantly discriminatory law.

“The German regime is evil, almost diabolical”

What changed the trickle of news into a flood was the German invasion of Russia on June 21, 1941. Operation Barbarossa heralded a fundamental change in the Nazi approach to the “Jewish Question.” The mobile killing units—the *Einsatzgruppen*, the mobile gas vans, and the wholesale massacres carried out with the help of local antisemites—meant that knowledge of the extermination process was becoming more and more widespread. Much of that knowledge was piecemeal and could not be verified by independent agents, but a pattern emerged of deportation, concentration, and unparalleled brutality, including mass murder. Italian soldiers fighting with the *Wehrmacht* became occasional unexpected witnesses to Nazi killing of Jews, and, generally, found German behavior toward Russians, Jews, and Christians, abhorrent.⁵⁴ Among the Italians were chaplains, one of whom, Pirro Scavizzi, wrote to Pius in May 1942 describing the situation of the Jews in the Ukraine—“nearly all dead”—and for the Jews of Poland and Germany—mass murder. While some of the details were more myth than fact, the substance of the letter was accurate. In an audience Scavizzi had with the pope, the priest wrote that Pius wept like a child as he listened to accounts from Russia.⁵⁵

From Ukraine, the Greek-Catholic archbishop of Lwów, Andrezej Szeptyckyj, wrote to Pius on August 29, 1942. His letter typified the horror that many of the bishops of eastern Europe witnessed first-hand. Szeptyckyj had originally welcomed the Germans as liberators and had, with other Ukrainian dignitaries, written to Hitler in February pledging commitment to Ukrainian-German cooperation. At the same time, he wrote to Himmler deploring the anti-Jewish “actions” and the drafting of a Ukrainian militia to assist with the killing.

Redlich attempted to explain the period from July 1941 to February 1942, when Szeptyckyj protested to Himmler, and August 1942, when he wrote to the pope, as a hiatus during which the permanence of Nazi terror became clearer to him. I think this is erring on the generous side. Over 30,000 Jews were slaughtered in the first weeks of German occupation, followed by the usual process of incarceration into ghettos with attendant starvation and destruction through forced labor. I suggest that the archbishop’s “conversion” only came about when he was personally confronted with evidence of the killing process in the person of Jews such as Rabbi David Kahana, a personal friend, who pleaded with Szeptyckyj to help save Jewish lives. Redlich adds the archbishop’s concerns at the seductive and devastating effect of Nazi biopolitics on his fellow Christian Ukrainians as further evidence of his growing awareness of the true nature of the “New Order.”⁵⁶

The Metropolitan's letter to the pope came as the Germans began deporting the Jews of Lwów. Few were under any illusions as to what "relocation" meant. Szeptyckyj told the pope:

Today the whole country agrees that the German regime is evil, almost diabolical, and perhaps even more so than the Bolshevik regime. For at least a year no day has passed without the more horrible crimes being committed, assassinations, stealing, rapes, confiscations, and extortions. The Jews are the first victims, more than two hundred thousand of them having been killed in our small country.⁵⁷

The outcome of the correspondence with Pius is unclear; certainly there was no public word from Rome.⁵⁸ In November 1942, Szeptyckyj issued a pastoral letter condemning all forms of killing and the bloodlust unrestrained murder can induce. Similar statements against wholesale murder were made in pastorals issued by the archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, in July and October 1943. Again, there was no reaction from the Vatican that could offer either of these bishops as models of Catholic leadership.⁵⁹

When lone episcopal protests were made, they were isolated and not taken seriously by the Germans. The united protest made by the Dutch bishops in July 1942 became the catalyst for the deportation of baptized Jews, including Edith and Rosa Stein.⁶⁰ Protests made by French bishops, in particular Archbishop Jules-Géraud Saliège of Toulouse and Bishop Pierre Marie Theas of Montauban, infuriated the Vichy government and prompted Xavier Vallet to complain to the pope.⁶¹ The *New York Times* reported shortly after that Pius had written to Pétain indicating that he supported the actions of the French cardinals and bishops on behalf of the Jews. Unfortunately this letter is not contained within *Actes et Documents*.⁶² German reaction to the French bishops' protests elicited a curious response from von Bergen in Rome. On August 18, 1942, he wrote to the Foreign Office in Berlin telling them to take no notice of protests from the nuncio or the French bishops. "No more far-reaching importance should be attached to this step than to other, similar steps which the Vatican has taken for humanitarian reasons in response to requests, no matter whence they came."⁶³

By mid-1942, the information was incontrovertible: Jews in German-occupied territory were facing a deadly future. But it was still far from clear whether the killing was intended to physically remove every Jew from the German sphere of influence. What was clear to Nuncio Orsenigo in Berlin was that the Nazi government would listen to no appeal on behalf of Jews by the Church, no matter how senior the cleric might be.⁶⁴

February 1942: Memorandum from Berlin

The position of the Nuncio in Berlin was curious. Orsenigo frequently complained to Montini and Maglione in Rome that it was near impossible

to get any information on the fate of deportees. I find it difficult to believe that a man in close communication with the bishop of Berlin should be so out of touch with information already available to the German bishops. Margarete Sommer, head of the Hilfswerk beim Ordinariat Berlin (Special Relief of the Diocese of Berlin), had, with von Preysing's knowledge, written a comprehensive memorandum on the situation of deported Jews, baptized or not. The report was composed on February 14, 1942, five months before Orsenigo's letter to Montini in July 1942, where he claimed it was difficult to get news. Sommer gave explicit descriptions of the process of killing Jews. She named ghettos (Lodz, Riga, Kovno, and Minsk), methods of killing (machine-gunning of people lined up before open pits), and the manner of death of many believers (Jews reciting psalms and Catholics praying the Rosary and kissing the crucifix).⁶⁵ In a letter to the pope written in June 1942, Archbishop Gröber described scenes parallel to those mentioned by Sommer. It would appear that information was at hand if one was willing to see it.⁶⁶

Italy and Slovakia

The two instances where the Vatican intervention was vigorous were in Italy and Slovakia. Italian reluctance to obey their German allies and surrender Jews living under Italian administration found a ready response in the Vatican, which exerted pressure on Mussolini.⁶⁷ Il Duce did not pursue the matter and Italian military personnel ignored and subverted German attempts to deport Jews who were often helped to safety to the Italian zones in southern France, Slovenia, Dalmatia, and Greece.⁶⁸ Slovakia was different. Its head of state was a Catholic priest, Josef Tiso. When the Slovakian parliament passed anti-Jewish laws in September 1941, the papal chargé d'affaires, Monsignor Giuseppe Burzio, was instructed to protest.⁶⁹ Maglione summoned the Slovakian minister in Rome, Karel Sidor, and expressed his anger at the passing of the laws.⁷⁰ The protest did nothing to stop preparations for deportations that were planned for March 1942. When Burzio reported to Rome that some 80,000 Slovakian Jews were to be sent to Poland he was instructed to go directly to Tiso and appeal to his priestly sentiments. The appeal came to nothing and the deportations went ahead. With mounting frustration, Burzio continued to report his efforts to halt the trains. He concluded his report by saying that the deportees sent to Poland "at the mercy of the Germans is equivalent to condemning a great part of them to death." Maglione wrote on the telegram: "I do not know what steps to take to stop this madness! And the madness of these two: Tuka who acts, and Tiso—a priest!—who lets him do it!"⁷¹ His frustration was shared by Domenico Tardini, in the Secretariat of State, who wrote: "It is a great misfortune that the President of Slovakia is a priest. Everyone knows that the Holy See cannot bring Hitler to heel. But who will understand that we can not even control a priest?"⁷²

In the Christmas address of 1941, Pius spoke with unaccustomed force to the enemies of the Church. While his language was his usual nonspecific form, the pope condemned the idea of total war and the violations of the natural and moral law that were binding on all humanity. The continuing persecution of the Catholic Church, despite all protests, was a source of great anxiety to the pope, who “in order to avoid even the appearance of being moved by partisanship . . . [had] maintained hitherto the greatest reserve.” For those hoping for a ringing denunciation of Nazi evil, the build-up led to a disappointing conclusion. Pius appealed to the Catholic people throughout the world to be wary of any confusion—the truth was only to be found within the Catholic Church. Only a return to true religion would safeguard the world. His blessing was imparted to all humanity, especially prisoners, deportees and “to the millions of wretched who, at every hour, must bear up under the gnawing pangs of hunger.”⁷³ In the ensuing twelve months, the voices pleading with him to speak plainly and unambiguously on behalf of the victims of the war, and in particular the Jews, grew more insistent.

November 1942: Riegner in Geneva, Denial in Rome

By November 1942, the pope had effectively the same information on the murder of Europe’s Jews as the Allied governments. The final pieces of information that unequivocally confirmed the industrialized killing process, and that became the catalyst for American and British actions, were telegrams from the American Legation in Berne to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, in Washington. Howard Etling, the vice-consul, had been approached by Gerhardt Riegner, secretary of the World Jewish Congress based in Geneva. Riegner told Etling in great detail of the German extermination plans.⁷⁴ Riegner had contacted the Swiss nuncio, Filippo Bernardini, in March with details from a number of sources outlining the deliberate extermination of the Jews. The memorandum prepared by Riegner, passed on to Rome by Bernardini, was not included in the published *Actes et Documents*, nor does it appear that it was acted on.⁷⁵

Riegner’s news came at the same time that both the American and British governments, in conjunction with a Brazilian initiative within the Vatican, were applying greater pressure on the Holy See to issue a clear condemnation of Nazi atrocities.⁷⁶ On September 26, Myron Taylor delivered the most graphic report of the killing of the Jews to Cardinal Maglione. Contained within the memorandum were details of the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, mass executions at specially prepared camps such as Belzek (*sic*), continuing deportations across Europe, and the belief that there were no Jews left alive in eastern Poland or occupied Russia and a very few left in Lithuania. Taylor asked: “I should like to know whether the Holy Father has any suggestions as to any practical manner in which

the forces of civilized public opinion could be utilized in order to prevent a continuation of these barbarities.”⁷⁷ Maglione’s reply was staggering: “I do not believe we have the information to confirm—in particular—this very serious note. Is it not like that?”⁷⁸ It begs the question of just what did the cardinal think happened to the 80,000 Slovakian Jews deported to Germany and how much more information did he need to confirm the substance of Taylor’s report?

Two weeks later, Maglione communicated a formal reply to Taylor’s letter. The secretary of state could not have made the reply without at least the tacit approval of the pope. In his response, the cardinal said that “reports concerning severe measures taken against Non-Aryans” had reached the Holy See “from a number of different sources.” He did add that the Holy See was taking every possible action to help mitigate the sufferings of the non-Aryans.⁷⁹ The comment of Harold Tittmann, chargé d’affaires, was blunt:

I regret that [the] Holy See could not have been more helpful but it was evident from the attitude of the Cardinal that it has no practical suggestions to make. I think it is perhaps likely that the belief is held that there is little hope of checking Nazi barbarities by any method except that of physical force coming from without.⁸⁰

Maglione’s virtual denial of atrocity evidence further pointed to the Vatican’s obsession with secrecy and caution, which mirrored the same refusal to exchange information that characterized relations with many of the bishops in Europe, including curial cardinals.⁸¹ Would his response have been any different if the victim group was not Jewish? I fear the answer would have been “no.” The pledges of humanitarianism made throughout the war by the pope and senior members of the Curia were beginning to look very thin.

The secretary of state was the servant of his master and acted according to the will of Pius XII. Did Pius really believe that he was being wise and astute in allowing the Americans and British, the only powers outside Europe able to actively influence the direction of the war, to believe that the Vatican *did not know* or *believe* the ever-growing number of reports of extermination, gas chambers, prussic acid, and mass graves?⁸² Was there a fear of communicating knowledge of any Vatican rescue activity to diplomats such as Osborne or Taylor lest it compromise individuals or agencies acting with papal authority and approval? Certainly Osborne kept pressing for a papal statement in defense of the Jews. In one exchange between Maglione and the British minister, less than a fortnight before the Christmas address of 1942, the cardinal commented:

After discussing concerns about bombing of civilian targets, Osborne asked ‘But why has the Holy See not intervened against the terrible massacre of the Jews?’ I replied that the Holy Father had in his

messages already claimed for all humanity, without distinction of race or confession, the right to life, to a peaceful existence, and sufficient participation in the goods of the earth. He [Osborne] was unaware, I added, of how much the Holy Father had done and was doing to alleviate the suffering of the poor Jews. They send good wishes and thanks to the Holy See frequently for what the Holy See has done for them. The Minister insisted on this point: it is necessary for the Holy See to intervene for the massacring of the Jews to stop.⁸³

I suggest that the pope was exercising his customary wariness and desire for total certainty while ensuring that nothing compromised the façade of his public neutrality and his private support for attempts to help and rescue. I also suggest that his course of action was unduly influenced by the fear that an outspoken word would compromise the faith and integrity of too many Catholics who were benefiting from the persecution of the Jews either as active participants or bystanders. If this was the case, I must judge Pius' strategy a diplomatic and pastoral disaster of unprecedented proportions. In many ways, this dilemma represents the greatest argument for the speedy opening of the Vatican archives relevant to Pacelli's papacy.

I have hedged my bets because I believe there is simply insufficient documentation to reach a satisfactory conclusion. While I agree with Phayer that the evidence before the Vatican was substantial enough to warrant a clear condemnation of Nazi atrocities by October–November 1942 *at the latest*, I differ on areas of responsibility. Historians simply do not know at this point what role Pius had in the formulation of Maglione's reply to Osborne, or to the Americans, Taylor and Tittmann. In any case, the erosion of the pope's moral authority and credibility was growing worse. Phayer offers a cogent argument for suggesting the charge of “renunciation of moral leadership” finally pushed Pius into playing “catch-up” with the United Nations in condemning the extermination of European Jewry.⁸⁴

December 1942: The Christmas Address

From the end of October, the war news began to change. Stalingrad was holding out against the Wehrmacht; the British had taken El Alamein; the Allied forces had landed in North Africa, and, significantly, the “Nazi war on Jews” was given substantial press.⁸⁵ Osborne kept passing BBC reports to Pius in the hope that Pius would say something in the Christmas address. The Allied governments had agreed to a joint declaration on behalf of the Jews. Amid much suggestion and counter-suggestion between London, Washington, and Moscow, a statement was hammered out. It was released in the three capitals on December 17, 1942.⁸⁶ Osborne was only able to hand a copy to Maglione on December 29, although the details of the communiqué were known

before Christmas. The British minister conveyed the hope of His Majesty's government that "the Pope might endorse the Declaration in a public statement." Failing that, the British government asked the pope to use his influence "either by means of a public statement or action through the German Bishops, to encourage German Christians, and particularly German Catholics, to do all in their power to restrain these excesses."⁸⁷ Maglione replied that the Holy See could not publicly mention particular atrocities, but only atrocities in general; privately it "had done everything possible."⁸⁸

Pius XII broadcast his Christmas address on the eve of the feast. His words were transmitted by Vatican Radio across the globe. It was a long speech reported in full in the *New York Times* on the Christmas day. The pope addressed his text to "My dear children of the whole world," telling them that "the Church would be untrue to herself, ceasing to be a mother, if she turned a deaf ear to her children's anguished cries, which reach her from every class of the human family." This was a clear recognition of the new level of "crimes against humanity" committed by warring parties. It was a general description, but one that covered the horrors now well known from Europe. This was also the first and clearest acknowledgement that the information concerning the Jewish tragedy passed on to Rome by nuncios and ambassadors had reached the pope.⁸⁹ However, lest anyone be under the impression that the bishop of Rome was going to lend his aid to one side over another, Pius stated very concisely that the Church "does not intend to take sides for any of the particular forms in which the several peoples and States strive to solve the gigantic problems of domestic order or international collaboration, as long as these forms conform to the Law of God." To the astute listener—the German Foreign Office listened carefully to the broadcast—the phrase "conform to the Law of God" was a telling indictment of Nazism and communism.

Pius spoke of the Church's responsibility to "proclaim to her sons and to the whole world the unchanging basic laws," made all the more necessary because of the suffering of so many people known to the pope, who felt himself bound to them "by an immense desire to bring them every solace and help which is in any way at our command."⁹⁰ He went on to denounce authoritarian systems of government that denied the dignity of the human person, "herding" them as "if they were a mass without a soul," and called on all who desired peace and justice to find the truth that, "even in matters of this world . . . the deepest meaning, the ultimate moral basis and the universal validity of 'reigning' lies in 'serving.'"⁹¹ Turning directly to the war, Pius proceeded to name "not a few who call themselves Christians" who "share in the collective responsibility for the growth of error and for the harm and the lack of moral fiber in the society of today." All peoples of goodwill are called to work for the restoration of society so that it is brought back "to its centre of gravity, which is the law of God" and "service of the human person" through the "common life."

This was the vow owed by humanity to all who had died in the war, to mothers, widows, orphans, and exiles.

Toward the end of the address, the pope made his most explicit reference to the destruction of the Jews: "Mankind owes that vow to the hundreds of thousands of persons who, without any fault on their part, sometimes only because of their nationality or race [*stirps*], have been consigned to death or to a slow decline."⁹² It has been on this paragraph that much ink has been spilt. The pope was clear in his own mind that he referred to "Poles, Jews and hostages."⁹³

Editorials in Britain and America expressed a satisfaction that even though the pope was "more than ever a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent," he had spoken like "a preacher ordained to stand above the battle, tied impartially . . . to all people and willing to collaborate in any new order which will bring a just peace."⁹⁴ Diplomats on both sides of the Atlantic and those immured within the Vatican mused that the speech was most likely the best they would ever get.⁹⁵

On the Axis side, Mussolini sneeringly remarked that the pope's address was "all platitudes" worthy of the parish priest of Predappio.⁹⁶ The RSHA in Germany interpreted the speech as "one long attack on everything we stand for . . . God, [the Pope] says, regards all peoples and races as worthy of the same consideration. Here he is clearly speaking on behalf of the Jews." Von Ribbentrop instructed von Bergen to inform Pius that any sign of the Vatican's renouncing its usual neutrality would be met with retaliation from Germany. Bergen responded by saying that "Pacelli is no more sensible to threats than we are." Berlin was also concerned that copies of the pope's address were being secretly smuggled around the Reich by resistance circles. As Germany prepared for "Total War," any threat to internal cohesion and morale had to be crushed without mercy.⁹⁷

There is a degree of convergence between the public word stated by Pius in the Christmas address and the private activities that were continuing with the limited resources at the Vatican's disposal. Where the convergence becomes a divergence is in the early months of 1943, when it was much clearer that an Allied victory was possible, and more and more reports of horrendous persecution of the Jews reached Rome. Pius XII had achieved a moderate diplomatic victory in his appeal to end the slaughter of innocents of whatever race: the Nazis were still killing Jews and other *Untermenschen*, but they were aware that the pope knew something of what was happening in the East. This was sufficient to have parts of the Nazi hierarchy annoyed, but few in Berlin doubted for a moment that the "Final Solution" would be in any way affected. What would startle the "desk killers" into a reappraisal would be a direct intervention of the pope into the actual machinery of death. Such were the fears felt in the *Willhelmstrasse* (government district in Berlin) in the summer of 1943 when Himmler gave the order for the application of the *Endlösung* in Italy.

Rome, October 1943

The *grande razzia* launched against the Jews of Rome presents the historian with an illustration of the Holocaust in microcosm. From a global perspective, it also gives the most detailed picture of the papal responses toward the murder of the Jews. In this episode, the public neutrality and the private partisanship of Pius XII were highlighted like no other moment in the killing process. The documentary evidence is unambiguous: that of the events of October 16–17 and the consequences of the *razzia* the pope had as clear an understanding of what was going on as anyone with access to the amount of data that had been passed on to the Vatican over the previous two years. The sheer physical proximity of the events, quite literally “under his very windows,” made it impossible for the bishop of Rome not to know what was happening to the Jews of his home city. From this starting point, it is possible to consider the evidence within the framework built up in this and the previous chapter.

A number of academic works deal with the events of the Roman *razzia*. Widely regarded as the best historical summary, Owen Chadwick’s 1977 essay “Weizsäcker, the Vatican and the Jews of Rome” is a concise and balanced reading of the historical data available at the time.⁹⁸ Since then, there has been little new evidence to add to the record. Susan Zuccotti’s *Under His Very Windows* (2000) is arguably the most detailed study of the Vatican’s responses to the Holocaust in Italy.⁹⁹ Her research is exact and detailed, and has provided historians with an appreciation of the complex networks of rescue, and the motives and attitudes that characterized many Italian Catholic dioceses, religious orders, and individuals across the country, both before and after the Armistice of September 1943. However, there is one major flaw in her work: the search for the papal order to rescue Jews.

Did Pope Pius XII give an instruction ordering the convents and monasteries of Italy and Rome to lift canonical cloister and give fleeing Jews refuge? To the best of my knowledge the answer is “no.” It would be completely out of character and contrary to the received information for Pacelli to have done so. In the same manner, it was quite acceptable for Catholics to use the pope as their moral justification or model for particular works of charity. There have been many instances when citing “the mind of the Holy Father” has been used as an appeal to authority to encourage others to support demanding and difficult activities. Rescuing Jews was an extension of the “works of charity” and would hardly have been forbidden by the pope.

This does not excuse what was a monumental moral difficulty, nor does it in any way seek to trivialize the enormity of the *razzia* and its deleterious effects on the Jews of Rome. However, I believe the issue of an instruction is, ultimately, irrelevant when viewed within the context of Pius’s *modus operandi* throughout the entire war. The question of a papal

instruction was central to Zuccotti's thesis and I believe it has skewed her analysis of the data.¹⁰⁰

Italy's Collapse

By mid-1943, it was becoming clearer that Italy's days as a partner of the Axis were limited. November 1942 to February 1943 was, literally, a "winter of discontent" with stirrings of industrial unrest in the north and major government crises in the south. Through March and April, strikes paralyzed industry across the country. Foreign minister and Il Duce's son-in-law, Galeazzo Ciano, "knew that the monarchy, the Papacy, business leaders, and the police were all ready to listen to any plan to extract Italy from the war."¹⁰¹ The king and Mussolini were barely on speaking terms, and all political sides were looking about for an alternative government that would keep the country stable and keep the Germans out. Militarily, the Italian armies were floundering. On May 13, 1943, the Axis armies had surrendered in North Africa. Less than two months later, on July 9, the joint Anglo-American invasion of Sicily began. By July 16, half the island was under Allied control and the fascist regime was tottering. At the last Grand Council meeting in Rome on July 24, Mussolini was deposed and, on the following day, arrested. An interim government was commissioned by Vittorio Emanuele under the leadership of Marshal Badoglio, who publicly promised to continue the war as an ally of Germany while privately working to secure armistice arrangements with the Allies.¹⁰² On September 8, the armistice was announced. So vague were the terms, and so poorly communicated, that many Italian troops simply laid down their guns and went home.¹⁰³ Rome, despite the presence of numerically superior Italian forces, was essentially unprepared for a German attack. The royal family and most of the government fled the capital the next day, leaving the pope, who had stated clearly his intention to remain in the Vatican, as the only remaining leader in the city that had been declared "open" a month earlier, on August 14.¹⁰⁴ Vatican City was sealed; St Peter's was closed for the first time in living memory and the Swiss Guard issued with machine guns—clearly the pope did not share the general excitement that had gripped Rome; he well understood the superiority of German forces over the disorganized Italians.¹⁰⁵

The Germans were under no illusions about the Badoglio government and had been building up troops along the Brenner Pass throughout the 45 days of the post-Mussolini regime to supplement the 18 Wehrmacht and SS divisions in the country. Marshall Albert Kesselring's men moved swiftly and, by September 14, had "completely disarmed 56 Italian divisions and partly disarmed 29 others, with the capture of seven hundred thousand soldiers and an immense amount of war material."¹⁰⁶ The Germans also began the systematic looting of the gold reserves of the Italian State Bank.¹⁰⁷

On September 3, the Allies crossed the Straits of Messina and landed in Calabria. For the next four weeks, their advance north continued with little impediment encouraging the, ultimately false, hope “that Rome will shortly be evacuated by the Germans.”¹⁰⁸ The Germans occupied Naples on September 12 and began conscripting men for forced labor. Anticipating their liberation, Neapolitan partisans launched an uprising two weeks later. The German response was nothing short of an orgy of wholesale and wanton destruction of the city’s infrastructure and cultural patrimony. What was not destroyed was planted with trip-mines and time-bombs. When the Allies finally entered the city on October 1, they found a “mutilated” wreck.¹⁰⁹ Pope Pius was horrified lest such a disaster befall the “Eternal City.”

In the meantime, Mussolini had been rescued by Hitler and was “restored” as leader of the Republic of Salò. The Third Reich annexed Trieste, Pola, Fiume, Gorizia, and Udine. In the Trieste suburb of San Sabba, in what had been a rice factory, a concentration camp was established under the command of SS General Odilo Globocnik, former head of Operation Reinhardt in Poland. From there, between October 1943 and November 1944, he sent at least twenty-two transports of Italian and foreign-born Jews to Auschwitz, many rounded up by the Italian Fascist Police.

“Papa Pacelli,” *Defensor Civitatis*

Within the Vatican, the dominant concern had been the safety of the city of Rome. Throughout much of the first half of 1943, Maglione and many of the nuncios had appealed to both Churchill and Roosevelt, asking that Rome be spared bombing. On July 19, Rome was badly bombed, and Pius took the unprecedented step of visiting the damaged area in person.¹¹⁰ The photos of the pope, arms spread cruciform over the kneeling people, created the image of the *Defensor Civitatis* (the defender of the city) and the bishop of Rome who would not leave his people abandoned. While Il Duce and the king were nowhere to be seen, Papa Pacelli, a Roman “born and bred,” remained with the people. Trucks marked with papal colors brought food and supplies into the city; Vatican kitchens baked bread and under the supervision of religious women, and operated soup kitchens to help relieve the dreadful food shortages that gripped Rome.¹¹¹ When the city was bombed again in August, Pius rushed to be with the people and announced that Romans were welcome to seek refuge from air raids in the Vatican City.¹¹² It was a powerful perception that created an accompanying myth that was only partly broken by the *razzia* in October. Pius wrote to Roosevelt stressing the neutrality of the Holy See “which places Us above any armed conflict of nations” and voicing the hope that “all may recognize that a city, whose every district, in some districts every street has its irreplaceable monuments of faith or art and Christian culture, cannot be attacked without inflicting an incomparable loss on the patrimony of Religion and Civilization.”¹¹³ Believing that an eye witness

of the destruction wrought on Rome by Allied bombs would be a more persuasive than a written letter, Pius sent Enrico Galeazzi to Washington in August 1943 to appeal directly to Roosevelt. His mission ultimately was unsuccessful, but it does beg the question why the pope did not send an appeal on behalf of the persecuted Jews.¹¹⁴

The perception that Rome was the domain of the pope appears to have pervaded the German military as they occupied the city. On September 26, foreign minister, von Ribbentrop, promised German respect for Vatican neutrality and extraterritorial properties in return for a Vatican statement testifying to appropriate behavior on the part of the German military.¹¹⁵ German troops were warned to avoid any confrontation with the people, and especially with the Vatican. Vatican neutrality was to be respected, and while people entering the Piazza di San Pietro could be stopped and searched, they were not to be hindered from attending mass in the basilica. I am convinced that it was the perception of the pope as being “master of his own house” in Rome that caused considerable anxiety among the German diplomats and regular military in the weeks prior to the October *aktion*. The reaction of the ambassador, Ernst von Weizsäcker, after October 16–17 points to a near disbelief in the perceived lack of papal response to the round-up of the Jews.

What then did the pope know of German intentions toward the Jews of Rome? In early August, a representative of the World Jewish Congress in London wrote to the pope and urged him to help Jews in the north of Italy move south toward the advancing Allied armies.¹¹⁶ On his same day the previous June, Pius had alluded again to the process of destruction occurring “beyond the Alps”:

Do not be astounded, beloved brethren and sons, if We lend Our ear with particularly profound sympathy to the voices of those who turn to Us imploringly, their hearts full of fear. They are those who, because of their nationality or their descent, are pursued by mounting misfortune and increasing suffering. Sometimes through no fault of theirs, they are subject to measures which threaten them with extermination.¹¹⁷

Although the statement was as general as the Christmas address of 1942, it was still an indication that Pacelli knew what was happening. To expect that the Germans would be less harsh in Italy would have been natural for many, but not the pope. He understood his enemy too well. I believe Pius expected the Jews of Rome to be threatened, but not taken. The perception of “Roman inviolability” held by many of the Germans was, I think, also held by the pope.¹¹⁸

September–October 1943: “Get the Jews out of Rome . . .”

Throughout the first half of September, Himmler and his Italian agent, Karl Wolff, began preparations for the deportation of Italian Jews.¹¹⁹

Breitman suggests that orders for the deportation of the Roman Jews came later in the month, after Wolff was established in Rome and had brought 100 policemen from a battalion in northern Italy to supplement the SS presence.¹²⁰ The transfer of German police and SS did not go unnoticed in the Vatican. A note made by a member of Maglione's staff reported a growing sense of alarm among the city's Jews. On September 18, Ugo Foa, president of the Roman Jewish community, met with the Secretariat. A group of about 150 foreign Jews was living in the Scuola Israelitica, where they would be found immediately. They had not fled to the south because they did not speak Italian. Would it be possible to hide them in religious houses? The Secretariat advised they flee to the Marches or the Abruzzi.¹²¹

The Germans implemented the pattern of terror, extortion, and threat with consummate ease from September 26. Obersturmbannführer Herbert Kappler, the Gestapo chief, summoned Foa and the head of Delasem, Dante Almansi, and demanded fifty kilograms of gold within 48 hours. Although the community struggled to make the deadline, they raised the required amount that was then dispatched directly to Kaltenbrunner.¹²² Learning of the demand, the pope let it be known that the Vatican was prepared to lend whatever was lacking should the need arise.¹²³ Zuccotti made the point that this offer had one catastrophic consequence, "for it inadvertently contributed to the Roman Jews' sense of security in the shadow of the Vatican. The Holy Father seemed to care about them, and he would never permit their arrest and deportation."¹²⁴ Weizsäcker was surprised that the Jews believed Kappler and were not fleeing the city. His deputy, Albrecht von Kessel, who shared the ambassador's abhorrence at anti-Jewish measures, took the message to leaders of the Jewish community as well as the Swiss embassy: "If the Jews don't at once evaporate, they'll be deported... I beg you take my warning seriously. Do everything you can to get the Jews out of Rome."¹²⁵

Berlin had cause for concern; not from the Vatican but from their own embassy. Consul Eitel Freidrich Möllhausen telegraphed von Ribbentrop directly on October 6 expressing Roman Commandant General Stahel's opposition to the seizure of the Jews and their "liquidation." It was the first time the word "liquidation" had ever been used about Jews in an official document. Von Ribbentrop was livid; his name was directly associated with the murder of Jews.¹²⁶ One day later, the Rome consul telegraphed the Foreign Office again, passing on Kesselring's suggestion that the Rome Jews be kept in the city for work.¹²⁷ Möllhausen was summoned to Berlin and the embassy was told to keep out of SS affairs with regard to the Jews.¹²⁸ Unknown to the Germans, Möllhausen's telegrams had been intercepted by the Office of Strategic Services, decoded, and passed onto Washington. Weizsäcker passed on the contents of the telegram to people who would ensure it made its way into the Vatican.¹²⁹

Himmler, ever suspicious of the Rome embassy, ordered Adolf Eichmann to organize the deportations. The expert "desk killer" sent

Hauptsturmführer Theodore Dannecker south to oversee the liquidation of the Roman Jews.¹³⁰ Dannecker promptly demanded Kappler hand over lists and addresses of the Rome Jews. The final word for the *razzia* was given on October 11. Obergruppenführer Ernst Kaltenbrunner, head of the Reich Security Office, cabled Kappler and ordered the “thorough eradication of the Jews in Italy . . . without further delay.” Postponing the “expulsion” would give the Jews time to disappear “by moving to the houses of pro-Jewish Italians.”¹³¹ Again, the Germans did not know that the telegram was intercepted by the OSS.

Ultimately, the careful diplomacy of Weizsäcker—which had as its objective the smoothing of relations between Berlin and the Holy See so that the much-prized neutrality of the pope was not jeopardized—nearly came to naught when the Gestapo and SS launched the *razzia* on October 16. In the Vatican, there was more concern expressed at a report that Kesselring had asked for an extra 3,000 SS troops to conduct house searches, beginning on October 18. The person who delivered the report asked if the Vatican could intervene.¹³² While the substance of the report was not accurate, the date was nearly right. Information appears to have been deliberately leaked to the Vatican through a variety of sources—all pointing toward something sinister that was going to happen to the Jews, and happen soon.¹³³

One hundred and thirty miles south of Rome, the Allies crossed the Volturno river and continued their increasingly slow crawl northward. Kesselring created a massive defense line centered on Cassino. The Gustav Line was to halt the Allies until May 1944—too late for the Jews of Rome.

Warning the Jews of Rome?

The most chilling aspect of the whole affair, prior to the actual *razzia*, was the knowledge the pope and the Secretariat of State possessed: that deportation meant near certain death. Why then, did Pacelli, Maglione, Montini, Tardini, and others not warn Jewish leaders? While the Jews of Rome may not have believed the truth about the German intentions, this cannot excuse the Vatican from withholding this information. Unless there are documents within the archives, or elsewhere, that point to an attempt to warn Foa and Almansi of the impending *razzia*, the moral damage to the papacy remains substantial. What is clear is that despite an absence of public leadership from the Vatican, Italian Christians rescued Jews and hid them.¹³⁴

While many Catholics believed there was a directive from Pius to rescue and hide Jews, there is not one shred of written or oral evidence that points to any instruction. To search for such evidence is akin to seeking a written command of Hitler to murder all the Jews of Europe. It would be odd if such a document existed.

The works of charity, in their most basic form, were the foundation of all papal and Catholic relief work. The paradigm was the scene of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25.40, where the Son of Man in glory will judge the nations: *I assure you, as often as you did it for one of the least of my brothers or sisters, you did it for me.* Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting prisoners, and giving refuge to the needy were the hallmarks of the Christian's response to those in need. These works, done for the least and weakest, were considered done to Christ himself. The Gospel text made no discrimination based on membership of the Church. Charity, the highest law of the Christian Church, was a universal value: all who asked for help were entitled to receive it since the mission of the Church was always directed at "the salvation of souls," Catholic or not. Pius ordered the Vatican and Catholics throughout the world to do all they could for the relief of the victims of the war in 1939 and repeated the same injunction throughout the conflict. It is on this point that I disagree with Zuccotti.

Il grande razzia, October 16, 1943

The *razzia* was launched in the early hours of Saturday morning, October 16, 1943. Gestapo and SS men surrounded the Roman ghetto and Trastevere and hunted down 1,259 Jews out of a total 8,000 presumed to be living in the city. The *razzia* was launched on the Sabbath during *Sukkoth*. It followed the standard SS pattern. The ghetto area was surrounded, with major access points blocked. The 365 SS moved into position from 4 am and commenced the *Judenoperation* at 5.30 am. Another 200 SS were stationed at different parts of Rome waiting to commence arrests at the same time as in the ghetto. When the raid started, many Jews believed it was a forced labor abduction and so many men and older boys were sent out of the ghetto through the warren of small alleys and the passageways that connected many of the buildings. This explained why the majority of those arrested were women, children, the ill, and elderly. People were given twenty minutes to collect documentation, clothing, and food sufficient for a journey, and be ready to leave. The scenes in the ghetto were witnessed by many Catholic Romans, who were appalled at what they saw. German accounts afterward wrote that many non-Jewish Romans tried to help the Jews escape.¹³⁵

Of the 1,259 captured Jews, 252 were released from the Collegio Militare that breasted the walls of the Vatican. The remainder remained in horrific conditions, without food or drink. They were, quite literally, less than a kilometer from the Apostolic Palace and within 100 meters of the Vatican gardens on the other side of the wall.¹³⁶ Pius knew of the raid by no later than 8 am, when Princess Enza Pignatelli Aragona Cortes arrived in a German embassy car driven by one of Weizsäcker's attachés. If the account of their meeting is true, Pius expressed his surprise that the

Germans had reneged on their promise not to harm the Jews.¹³⁷ Could the pope have been so naïve as to believe the promise of a Gestapo man?

Maglione and Weizsäcker

Maglione was instructed to meet Weizsäcker immediately. The record of the meeting was made by the Cardinal afterward and contains a strange twist. If Pacelli had ordered Maglione to protest at the arrest of the Jews, which was taking place as they met, then it was a very weak protest. The text demonstrated this:

Having learned that the Germans had made a raid on the Jews, I called the German Ambassador to come and see me and I requested that he intervene on behalf of these poor people. I spoke with him as well as I could in the name of humanity, of Christian charity... Excellency, who has a gentle and good heart, see if you can save these innocents. It is sad for the Holy Father, sad above all, that right here in Rome under the eyes of the Common Father, so many have been made to suffer only because they belong to a particular race... The Ambassador, after a few moments of reflection, asked me: "What will the Holy See do if these events were to continue?" I replied: The Holy See does not wish to be put into the position of having to speak a word of disapproval.

Weizsäcker went on to say how he had admired the attitude of the Holy See, maintaining a perfect equilibrium throughout the war. He ventured, that since the "ship is nearing port"—an allusion to the Allied progress and the eventual liberation of Rome—was it wise to risk endangering the safety of the Holy See? After all, the ambassador said, the arrest of the Jews had been authorized by "the highest source." The conversation ended with the cardinal secretary telling Weizsäcker that if it felt it necessary, the Holy See would voice a protest. Nonetheless, Maglione asked the ambassador to do whatever he could "for the poor Jews" and "as for the rest, I leave it with you and your judgment." Further, Maglione left it to Weizsäcker to decide whether to report the conversation or not.¹³⁸ Whatever term can be used to describe this meeting, "protest" is not one of them.

Throughout the rest of the day the Vatican stepped aside. Any rescue attempt for the Jews would not come from the Secretariat of State lest Vatican neutrality be impugned. Weizsäcker along with von Kessel, junior diplomat, Gerhart Gumpel and, possibly, General Stahel drafted a letter that was sent to the pope's nephew, Carlo Pacelli who took the letter to Bishop Hudal, "a Vatican outsider whom the Nazis thought was an insider" for his signature.¹³⁹ The letter urged suspension of the arrests of Roman Jews "in the interests of the good relations that have

existed until now between the Vatican and the High Command of the German Armed Forces.”¹⁴⁰ Phayer observed that “the Hudal letter and the Weizsäcker telegram of October 16 reveal that in the crisis of the day, the Vatican and German diplomats worked together to try to protect Rome’s Jews.”¹⁴¹

Perceptions on the German side maintained the charade of a potential disaster ahead if the pope spoke out. Weizsäcker wanted Berlin to believe this to be a very real threat. The ambassador’s telegram to Berlin on October 17 conveyed this impression:

I can confirm the reaction of the Vatican to the removal of the Jews from Rome, as given by Bishop Hudal... The Curia is dumb-founded, particularly as the action took place under the very windows of the Pope, as it were. The reaction could perhaps be muffled if the Jews were employed on work in Italy itself. Circles hostile to us are turning the action to their own advantage to force the Vatican to drop its reserve. It is being said that in French cities, where similar things happened, the bishops took up a clear position. The Pope, as Supreme Head of the Church and Bishop of Rome, could not lag behind them.¹⁴²

Evidently Himmler believed that the damage the pope could inflict on German interests outweighed the obsession for hunting more Jews in Rome. The *aktion* halted.¹⁴³ Kappler was unhappy that the roundup had netted only a fraction of the Jews. He blamed the “hostile influence” of the pope and the Curia, who had for a long time “been assisting Jews to escape,” for helping to create an anti-German atmosphere among the Romans.¹⁴⁴

Vatican officials appear to have been stunned that the *razzia* happened at all, but were determined to maintain the public façade of neutrality. Phayer is critical of Maglione and, therefore, Pacelli. They wanted the German embassy “to deal with the crisis, thereby relieving the Vatican of the need to do anything.”¹⁴⁵ Several days later, on October 19, Maglione issued the statement testifying to German good conduct that Berlin had requested in late September.¹⁴⁶

Preserving the Myth of Neutrality and Independence

Pius XII knew well that his position was precarious and that maintaining the Vatican’s independence while surrounded by the German army would be dangerous. The securing of German recognition of Vatican sovereignty and the immunity of extraterritorial properties in late October gave space to hide nearly five thousand Jews.¹⁴⁷ Giving sanctuary to this number of men, women, and children could not have been done without at least the approval of Pius—canon law regarding papal enclosure obliged monks

or nuns to seek permission from the pope before lifting their cloister. It would have been impossible otherwise.¹⁴⁸

Another explanation lies in the fact that the threat of a German invasion of the Vatican State was believed to be plausible enough to warrant careful preparations for an immediate evacuation. Papal documents had been specially hidden under marble floors throughout the Apostolic Palace and diplomats inside the Vatican destroyed their ciphers. Whether the threats had any substance or not was irrelevant. In such an environment, Pius was hardly likely to commit instructions for the lifting of enclosure and cloister to paper if he felt there was a likelihood of a German occupation of the Vatican. Added to that was the danger of sending instructions through the diplomatic and regular mail services. It was common knowledge that the German secret police monitored the Vatican with extraordinary care.¹⁴⁹

Phayer describes the pope's action (or lack of it) in October as indicative of his "policy of control," which set out the Vatican's priorities for surviving the war and the peace.¹⁵⁰ Convinced that he could not stop or even slow down the murder of Europe's Jews, Pius moved to do what he believed he could achieve. From multiple sources, including *Actes et Documents*, five issues emerge. They are listed in order of demonstrable priority.

Pius XII wanted:

1. Rome protected from and spared aerial bombardment.¹⁵¹ Failure to spare the city would result in a papal protest, which did occur after the bombing of the city on July 20. "No such threat of protest was ever made regarding the fate of the Jews."¹⁵²
2. "Open City" status granted to Rome by both sides.¹⁵³ Pius feared Rome could become a "second Stalingrad" and suffer the same fate as Naples.¹⁵⁴
3. Any attempt at a Communist uprising in Rome defeated, particularly during the period between the retreat of the Germans and the arrival of the Allies.¹⁵⁵ The pope would rely on German and Italian fascist police to protect the city, to the point of blaming Roman partisans for German violence.¹⁵⁶
4. To avoid any behavior that would give Hitler an excuse to violate Vatican neutrality and imprison the pope. A letter affirming German good conduct in Rome and toward the Vatican, requested by Berlin on October 9, was issued on October 19.¹⁵⁷
5. To keep the remaining Jews in Rome hidden and alive.

In March 1943, Bishop von Preysing had written to Pius describing the horrors of air raids. He also described the far greater horror of the destruction of the Berlin Jews whose "probable fate... was suggested by Your Holiness in the Christmas broadcast."¹⁵⁸ In October 1943 through to the end of the German occupation in June 1944, the pope placed, quite clearly and without ambiguity, the salvation of the city first, and then the salvation of the Jews.

Sunday October 17 was the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The epistle was taken from Ephesians 4. During the mass, these words were proclaimed: "So then, putting away falsehood let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another." (v25) There is no record of Pius XII's homily preached that Sunday; it is doubtful the Pauline text was his focus.

On Monday, October 18, 1943, 1007 Roman Jews were trucked to Tibertina station and pushed into waiting cattle cars. Their destination, known to British intelligence who had decoded the German radio message, was Auschwitz. Transport X70469 left Rome and travelled north, passing through Padua, the Brenner Pass, Vienna, and Prague before crossing into Poland. When the train arrived in Padua at noon on October 19, a message was sent to the bishop. He was asked to relay information to Rome telling the pope of the conditions on the train and the desperate need for help. It took Bishop Carlo Agostini *five* days to write and send a note to the Vatican, by which time most of the deported Jews were dead.¹⁵⁹ The train from Rome arrived in Auschwitz late on October 23. The following morning the selection took place. Of the 1,007, all but 196 were gassed on arrival. Throughout the whole *Judenoperation*, through the transport to Auschwitz, and during the torment of those who escaped *selektion*, the Jews of Rome believed that the pope would save them. Of the remainder, only fifteen returned to Rome after the war.¹⁶⁰

The bishop of Rome made no public comment on their fate. Behind the walls of St Peter's it was another story. The published record shows that attempts were made to find out what had happened to the deportees, while a wide-ranging exercise in hiding continued. Pius was very much aware of what was happening "beneath his very windows."¹⁶¹ The private rescue operations that were known of in the Vatican did not originate there, but the Vatican, and therefore Pacelli, did not oppose any request to hide Jews (or other refugees). Without access to documents to show otherwise, I believe this was, in part, to avoid any incrimination of Pius, as well as to avoid any unnecessary paper-trails that could lead directly to the pope. It also pointed to the papal policy of encouraging, and expecting, bishops and local authorities to make decisions based on what they saw as the best course of action.

This "policy," which appeared to be an extraordinary devolution of centralized Roman power, was outlined by Pius in his letter to Bishop von Preysing in Berlin in April 1943. The pope wrote that the best course of action to be taken in defense of the victims of war (presumably, including the Jews) could only be determined by the local authorities who understood local conditions and the possibilities of retaliation. Pius wrote that he had done all he could to help, but the current time precluded him from doing more than pray.¹⁶² Allowing for the stylistic formulas made necessary because of the insecurity of correspondence, the letter does reveal a frustration and sadness in Pacelli, an impotence that he found difficult to cope with, since so many people expected him to act and speak out.¹⁶³

This does not answer the specific question of what he could or could not do, but it does give an insight into Pacelli's mind and his concern for those faced with the grim realities of persecution. Nor does it answer the most pressing question: why, when information from various sources had let the Vatican know the Germans were so convinced the pope would speak about the Jews of Rome, did he not say something?

Circumlocution and Pressures

In any case, there were no more German raids against the Jews living and hiding in Rome. *L'Osservatore Romano* published its only comment on the events of October 16–18, 1943, a week later with the customary circumlocutions:

As is well known, the August Pontiff, after having vainly tried to prevent the outbreak of war...has not desisted for one moment from employing all the means in his power to alleviate the suffering which, whatever form it may take, is the consequence of this cruel conflagration. With the augmentation of so much evil, the universal and paternal charity of the Supreme Pontiff has become, it might be said, ever more active; it knows neither boundaries nor nationality, neither religion or race.¹⁶⁴

Weizsäcker wrote to Berlin on October 28, saying that despite being “under pressure from all sides,” Pius had not allowed himself “to be drawn into any demonstrative censure of the deportation of the Jews from Rome.” I have little doubt that Weizsäcker was writing what Berlin wanted to read. The ambassador would have known that the Vatican was actively hiding Jews throughout Rome.¹⁶⁵ I am also convinced that he would have been aware some of the “pressure” sources inside and outside the Vatican.

Among those exerting “pressure” was Rabbi David Panzieri, who had taken the place of the chief rabbi, Israel Zolli, who was in hiding. Panzieri appealed to Pius to intervene on behalf of the deported Jews.¹⁶⁶ There was also internal criticism of the Vatican's public silence. Tacchi-Venturi, Vatican liaison officer to Mussolini, wrote to Maglione on October 25, 1943, expressing his concern at the perceived lack of action:

In a special way I have been begged to arrange that the Holy See make some urgent intervention so that at least it might learn of the final end of the Jews...deported last week... A step of this kind by the Holy See, even if unfortunately it does not obtain the desired effect, will be worthwhile without a doubt to increase the veneration and gratitude towards the August Person of the Holy Father, always the avenger of suppressed rights.¹⁶⁷

What could Pacelli have done? I am led to think that he did what he *believed* was possible, entrusting action to others so that the fiction of papal neutrality was preserved.¹⁶⁸ The distinction between public and private action has been argued throughout this chapter, and I believe it holds the key to understanding Pius XII. The final word on the Roman *razzia* belongs to Lello Di Segni, one of the 15 survivors:

Well, you see: this is the way I look at it. In the times of the SS, in the times of the Nazis, I don't know if the Vatican could do anything. Perhaps they could have done something through diplomatic channels; but diplomacy was no use with those people. Who could say anything to them? I, too, might be critical of [the Pope], yet, in my small way, in my own point of view, I say, yes, he might have done something, but what could he do? Against that sort of being?¹⁶⁹

The conundrum Di Segni expressed is what I suggest is the central problem that has emerged. If Pius XII could have said something, even something he believed would have changed nothing, was he morally impelled or obliged to say it? This question must now be answered.

CHAPTER NINE

Blessed Eugenio?

I am afraid that history may have cause to reprove the Holy See for a policy accommodated to its own advantage and little else. And this is very sad, above all when one has lived under Pius XI.

Eugene Cardinal Tisserant to Emmanuel
Cardinal Suhard (June 11, 1940)¹

He was a complicated man with a complicated task—especially as he saw it. To help humanity without discrimination; to advance the cause of peace without assisting the forces of evil; to protect Christianity, above all Catholic Christianity, when Hitler’s Germany was at the same time the persecutor of the Church and the enemy of the Church’s enemies . . . How could one steer a clear, just course through such a vortex of moral ambiguities?

Saul Friedländer, “Pope Pius XII and the Third Reich”²

Getting the Question “Right”

The most common question I am asked about Pius XII is: “Well, is he as bad as Cornwell makes him out, or do you think he should be canonized?” The question reflects the popular noncritical appreciation of Pacelli and the war years. For many, the interest in Pius XII has been shaped by several decades of sensationalism that have generated more heat than light. Black-and-white answers are momentarily pleasing, but give no long-term or honest satisfaction. If I have learned anything from this study, it has been the enormous complexity of the subject and the seemingly endless interplays between the Catholic Church, the papacy and its agencies, secular governments and their agencies, and the all too human tragedy of victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and beneficiaries of the Holocaust. There are no simple questions, no simple answers.

John Cornwell and, more recently, Gary Krupp’s Pave The Way Foundation have become recognizable media names through their employment of black-and-white storytelling. Their stories have little to

do with history, and more to do with an idiosyncratic need to question aspects of contemporary Catholic history and theology. It takes enormous patience and persistence to become familiar with the history of any period and then attempt to make serious statements based on the historical record. Trying to understand the history of the papacy in the modern era so as to understand the events that led to, and created, the Holocaust is difficult. The task is made doubly hard because it is all too easy to let the claims and assertions of writers such as Cornwell or groups such as *Pave The Way*, cloaked as they are in an historical veneer, persuade a general lay audience. They do not help the cause of Pius XII through their literalism, “scrap book histories,” and noncritical, politically driven, fundamentalism even if the intentions are sincere. Tackling the scholarship of serious historians like Besier, Blet, Brechenmacher, Chadwick, Fattorini, Katz, Kent, Miccoli, Loparco, Napolitano, Phayer, Portelli, Wolf, and Zuccotti is demanding and often frustrating. But the student who persists is rewarded with a far more comprehensive understanding than the reader of dramatic pieces like *Hitler’s Pope* or *Pope Pius XII and World War II: The Documented Truth*.³

How do I evaluate and judge Pope Pius XII? A credible answer is made possible by viewing his papacy through a paradigm of leadership. Eugenio Pacelli was a leader—albeit in a role, or series of roles, that were believed to be the Will of God, not something he sought of his own accord. His brother cardinals had elected him pope in March 1939 and his acceptance of their choice confirmed his readiness to assume the leadership of the Catholic Church as the clearly manifested action of the Holy Spirit. The transition from the reserved and shy Cardinal Pacelli into the permanently spotlighted pope was completed with his taking of the name Pius XII. From then on the man was, in many ways, subsumed into the office. But the very office he assumed in 1939 with all the panoply and mandates, human and divine, did not remove the fundamental obligation he enunciated in *Summi pontificatus*: to speak the truth without fear or favor. The moral accountability of the pope was neither distinguishable nor separate from the accountability of Pacelli.

Incumbent upon the office were a set of expectations that would be the rule and guide for the pope throughout his papacy. The year 1939 was the parting of the ways for the Europe and Church that had been led, shaped, and guided by patient and discreet diplomacy and the very public power politics of the dictators. Charles Gallagher points out the excruciating difficulties Pacelli must have experienced as he attempted to work with the Nazis—people he privately detested—precisely because his training, like that of diplomats of his generation, made the fascist penchant for “bread and circuses” anathema to him:

As a man of his times, he witnessed the decline of the so-called old-world, or 19th-century, style of diplomacy and the emergence of modern diplomatic practice. For diplomats trained in 19th-century

procedure, secrecy in negotiations was paramount, finalized treaties were inviolable, and rules of formality reigned supreme. In cases of import, governments and their heads of state were addressed almost exclusively behind closed doors.⁴

He had few skills that would enable him to deal with the brash rhetoric of Hitler and Mussolini. And I believe he found it next to impossible to allow himself the luxury of acquiring new strategies because of the nature of both the man himself and the office he held.

Political and diplomatic stratagems were the domain of secular governments. The Church would employ similar tactics only if it was believed that the good of the Church in a particular place at a particular time could be secured. Once the situation was resolved in favor of the Church, the strategies were discarded. Politics was ephemeral and transitory to an institution that rested its claim to authenticity upon the Will and Revelation of God, the warrant of Scripture, and nearly twenty centuries of Tradition. In times of stress and crisis, the Catholic Church's customary response was to repeat this "chant of security" for the encouragement of the Faithful at all levels of the Hierarchy. It would be naïve in the extreme to imagine that Pius XII had no intuition of the value of public and private leadership.

Leadership: Pacelli, the Pope within the Church

The most visible pattern of papal leadership took place, naturally enough, within the Catholic Church. In March 1939, Pius's principal task was to do all he could to avoid a war that he believed would tear the very fabric of a Church he perceived as embattled and persecuted under different totalitarian regimes across Europe. Catholic teaching was directed first toward members of the Church, and then addressed to the wider world. For Catholics, the leadership of the pope was felt most keenly in the context of the mass.

Eugenio Pacelli knew the power of ritual mediated through the ordained ministry in the annual cycle of the Church's liturgical year. He knew the power of leadership that came from the belief that the priest and bishop were the *Vox Dei* in the public worship of the Church, in the celebration of the sacraments and in the interpretation of Scripture and Tradition. It was a pattern of leadership that did not focus on the character or individuality of the minister. Instead, the model of leadership was precisely the opposite of "worldly" examples. Power was exercised through service, imitating the foot-washing Christ, the one "who came to serve, not to be served" (Matt 20.28). Catholics stood, and still do, during the proclamation of the Gospel at Mass because it was Christ who was heard, not the deacon, priest, or bishop reading the words. Similarly, during the Canon, when the elements of bread and wine were believed to be

changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, the theological understanding of leadership rested on the belief that it was God acting through the priest or bishop—not the personal action of the minister—who effected any change. Therefore, in religious terms, the paradigm of Catholic leadership was a paradox. The most visible figure at the center of Catholic public ritual was, in a sense, the least important, since it was through him that God interacted with believers. The theology expressed here was subject to cultural and distinctly nontheological elements as well. Priests were held in great esteem among Catholics precisely because of their role—they mediated God. And the history of the Church demonstrated the seductive power this esteem had for many of the ordained. Pacelli was not among those seduced by the power of privilege.

In his teaching office, Pius took seriously the charge given him at his coronation to “feed and tend the sheep” and not to be seduced by the temptations of power and privilege.⁵ Again, as the preserver of the Church’s Tradition, the pope acted as the Vicar or Trustee of Jesus Christ, not as a private individual. Leadership *within* the Church demanded fidelity to established teaching and preparedness to teach, encourage, admonish, instruct, and discipline according to each set of circumstances as it arose. Inasmuch as each pope did this according “to the mind of the Church,” it was always stamped with a personal character that created a distinctive papacy. A simple example is the vast difference in the style of papacies of Pius XII and his successor, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, John XXIII.

The pontiff was invested with supreme executive authority over every baptized Catholic. When he spoke in his teaching role, exercising the Magisterium, he gave clear leadership and direction for the Faithful. At the risk of laboring the point, the Faithful heard, not, principally, the man Eugenio Pacelli, but the voice of the Tradition of the Church echoing through the centuries, establishing a direct link between Jesus Christ and the Apostles and the successor of Peter in the contemporary age. For these reasons, the papal title that has encapsulated the paradigm of leadership within the Catholic Church was *servus servorum Dei* (the servant of the servants of God).

During 1943, Pius XII published two encyclical letters. *Mystici Corporis Christi* (June 30, 1943) and *Divino afflante Spiritu* (September 30, 1943) were considered landmark teachings. The first dealt with Pius’s mature theology of the Church: a body of individual members who are all called to exercise their vocation within the Church for the good of the whole world. The second was the endorsement of the study of Scripture using modern scientific research methods within the Catholic tradition. The first encyclical letter summarized well Pacelli’s position on Judaism. Judaism as a religion was not named, but the “Old Law” was abolished by the shedding of Christ’s blood on the cross, thus rendering the religion of the “Old Testament” without value. This was theology, not politics. The inherent negativity toward Judaism was clear, although it was not intended to condemn Jews.⁶ However, it was with these two encyclicals that a major

problem becomes apparent. As the pope penned these digests of Catholic theology, Jews across Europe and, three weeks after the September encyclical, Rome, were being sent to their deaths. For a man who had spoken with such continued force through the teaching office of the bishop of Rome, the lack of any reference to the law of charity toward the helpless as ordered by Christ in the very scriptures he lauded is staggering. What was the “body of Christ,” the Church, if not the place of sure refuge and sanctuary for all God’s children?

Leadership: Pacelli, the Sovereign of the Vatican State

I am indebted to Andrew Roberts and his scholarly analysis in *Hitler and Churchill: Secrets of Leadership* for a model of leadership that is both insightful and historically relevant for my own study of Pius XII. Roberts’s study covers Pacelli’s two most visible and potent contemporary European leaders. He asks the simple question: “What made Adolf Hitler and Winston Churchill such significant and powerful leaders?” By using a set of criteria derived from his own study of various models of leadership and the exercise of power, Roberts has provided me with a starting point for examining the pope as a leader outside of the religious element of his office. While I recognize that the focus of Roberts’s work was placed on two nonreligious men, I believe his study offers a legitimate vehicle with which to assess Pius XII and his response to the Holocaust.

Humans need leaders. History is replete with men and women who have inspired others to live, die, and, in more than a few instances, kill for them. Popes have been among the most famous of leaders in history. Men of the caliber of Leo and Gregory the Great, Hildebrand, and Innocent III, and, in more recent times, John XXIII and John Paul II, have not only shaped the Catholic Church, but have played a significant role in shaping human society beyond the boundaries of the Church. These men were religious leaders who were elected pope at a time of particular need or crisis in the Church’s history. All were strong men with a clear vision and sense of purpose. All were able to command obedience and, more importantly, a high degree of affection, respect, and love. This does not mean they were “charismatic.” Roberts defines “charismatic leadership” “as based on the almost mystical qualities that followers attribute to their leaders. This form of power has no roots in tradition or basis in institutional authority; it acknowledges no constitution and is quite separate from the power of an elected statesman in a democracy.”⁷

Although in this instance he was writing about Churchill, Roberts could well have been writing about Pius XII. The Catholic Church had a formidable institutional authority, was ordered by a constitution, and was governed on earth by an elected Vicar. Pacelli was elected to the Apostolic Throne at a time when a significant number of European leaders had acquired “an unchallengeable authority.” In the case of Hitler, charisma

was his *modus operandi*. For the pope, charisma was believed to be a gift of the Spirit for the good governing of the Church, and was always subservient to the Scriptures and the received Tradition. Political and religious seductions were not elements of Pacelli's leadership pattern.

The twentieth century testified to the power of political seduction on a previously unimaginable scale. Masses of people thronged to see and hear manifestly good people who sincerely wanted the best for their nation-community; and equally, or even more so, masses thronged to see and hear evil people who just as sincerely wanted their personal demons transformed into state policy. Lenin, Trotsky, Mussolini, Franco, Churchill, Hitler, Roosevelt, and Stalin left a legacy that was in no small way shaped by personal characteristics that convinced huge numbers of people that their path was the right one. Populist politicoreligious movements such as fascism and communism proved more mercurial than the more stable patrician/paternalistic modes of leadership that characterized the early modern age. The more morally fragile democratic system proved just as mercurial, but for different reasons. The ballot box could be as effective as a revolution in societies such as the United Kingdom and the United States where participation in the public life of the nation was seen as a form of service for the people and a sign of social maturity. Indeed, many populist movements in the early twentieth century tended to combine elements of patrician/paternal models with street politics and the use of brute force. While some attempted to lead through established parliamentary and legislative institutions—notably Churchill and Roosevelt—others, like Mussolini and Hitler, kept them as a façade of legality, while Lenin and Stalin abolished them altogether and created a new form of national assembly.

In many parts of Europe, religious leadership was less a potent force to shape and guide men and women in the early twentieth century than a semicompliant social monitor. Occasional outbursts or statements in defense of one or other aspect of human life were largely tolerated as long as the spiritual realm did not impinge on the temporal realm, or was perceived as not doing so. During times of calm and relative peace, religious leaders observed the status quo and encouraged their followers to do the same.

John Adair made the point that it was difficult to be a great leader, religious or otherwise, in a time of peace and quiet. "Napoleon needed the Terror, Caesar needed the Gallic Wars and Churchill needed the Nazis to be raised to the pitch of greatness each achieved."⁸ Each of these men achieved leadership because of a period of crisis and significant social, political, and economic upheaval. They acquired power through a variety of means, some legitimate, others manifestly illegitimate. All were given enormous latitude through law, social convention, revolution, and, the most important of all, love and passionate devotion from a large enough proportion of the population who wanted to believe that what they offered would truly change their lives for the better. This was true for millions

of Germans desperate to believe Hitler, for millions of Americans hoping Roosevelt would lift them out of the Depression with the New Deal, and it was true for millions of Catholics looking to Rome believing the Holy Father was truly their Common Father who shared their joys and pains and would not abandon them as they journeyed toward eternal life.

Leadership: Pacelli and the Holocaust

From the beginning of the war, the pope maintained strict public neutrality. Every word was weighed and considered before he uttered it or committed it to writing. It is impossible to assess what passed through the mind and heart of the man when he was faced with the ever-increasing reports of murder and slaughter coming from Occupied Europe, especially from “the East.” The public persona was ethereal and bore all the traits of otherworldliness. His thin, ascetic face grew more and more emaciated as the war years dragged on, giving a profoundly moving picture of the Vicar of Christ wanting to share the sufferings of the persecuted. He was rumored to spend hours in prayer, often at the tombs of his predecessors, and those who joined him at mass rarely left without feeling they had “touched heaven.”

In effect, a papal myth was allowed to grow. Myths have enormous power. Hitler and the *völkish* movements had to create “an all-encompassing national legend” to provide the “perfect psychological balm so desperately needed by a proud nation raw in defeat.”⁹ The Catholic Church relied on the power of its ancient Tradition to sustain belief in God’s purpose for humanity, as interpreted by the Magisterium. Pius XII maintained the power of the Catholic myth through faithful adherence to the Tradition. It was a reality greater than him, but it was perceived as finding its visible expression through him. But the lived reality was somewhat different.

In the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Pius wrote:

Though a long and deadly war has pitilessly broken the bond of brotherly union between nations, We have seen Our children in Christ, in whatever part of the world they happened to be, one in will and affection, lift up their hearts to the common Father, who, carrying in his own heart the cares and anxieties of all, is guiding the barque of the Catholic Church in the teeth of a raging tempest. This is a testimony to the wonderful union existing among Christians; *but it also proves that, as Our paternal love embraces all peoples, whatever their nationality and race, so Catholics the world over, though their countries may have drawn the sword against each other, look to the Vicar of Jesus Christ as to the loving Father of them all, who, with absolute impartiality and incorruptible judgment, rising above the conflicting gales of human passions, takes upon himself with all*

his strength the defense of truth, justice and charity.¹⁰ (Emphases added)

Not once is there any mention of the most persecuted victim group of all, the Jews. Nor was there any mention of the desperate pleas for a word of papal condemnation of the Nazi extermination machine. The “paternal love” may have embraced all “peoples, whatever their nationality and race” but it was manifestly inadequate in its expression through the spoken word of the very man who had been anointed Vicar of Christ. Similarly, the “incorruptible judgment” appeared to apply to everyone but Jews.

The power of the papal myth placed Pius above all other human beings. His words may have little or no effect on the pragmatic politics of government, but they did have enormous effect on the minds and hearts of believers in Germany, Britain, and elsewhere. Stalin once asked sarcastically, “How many divisions has the Pope?” What Stalin failed to understand was the power the Catholic and papal myths had to win and keep the hearts of millions of believers. It was a spiritual power that those who did not believe never understood. But, as the historical record shows conclusively, Pius was an astute, well-educated, and consummate diplomat who had years of experience working with secular governments.

Public Neutrality, Private Action

I said earlier that I tend to think that Pius maintained strict public neutrality while being privately active in supporting relief and rescue initiatives of Jews and other victim groups. He believed that unwise and intemperate language would only make matters worse—although how things could be worse for the Jews of Europe, especially after Rome had clear knowledge of the killing process, is highly contentious—and make more difficult the rescue work already in place. He was of the firm view that he had made clear and precise statements condemning the murder of the Jews and was genuinely surprised when told otherwise. He also believed that he shared the task of leadership with all the bishops of the world. As bishop of Rome, he held a universal primacy and was the final arbiter in questions of faith and morals. But it was the responsibility of the bishops to exercise the same primacy in their own dioceses.

Pius trusted his brother bishops to fulfill their duty before God and before him according to their particular responsibilities. He was in no position to monitor them and their actions, but he was in a position to give leadership and encouragement. And this he believed he did. The letters he wrote to the German bishops testify to his concern for the state of the Church in the Reich and the pressures under which the German episcopacy operated. However, he made it clear that the responsibility for action in defense of the defenseless lay with those who had direct

experience and knowledge, and who had means, however limited, to do something.

Against the Nazis, Pius exercised an uncharacteristic devolutionary leadership. This was a major recognition of the scale of the problem. He effectively admitted that any protest against the murderous policies of the Nazis would be without impact. The experiences of protest from 1940 onward had shown that to be the case. Protest would have to come from the local level, with the full support of Rome. It may not have been the best option, but it was proof that the bishop of Rome knew the situation in Germany regarding the Church and he knew, from mid-1941, the horror confronting the Jews of Europe and chose to act through delegation and intermediaries. However, this did not preclude or, more significantly, stop a future word of protest if conditions changed.

The telegram sent to Admiral Horthy on June 25, 1944 is the most pertinent example of Pius speaking in defense of “a large number of unfortunate people” suffering because of “nationality or race.” The only group suffering because of “nationality or race” in Hungary at that particular time were the Jews.¹¹ It is telling that the telegram was sent three weeks after the liberation of Rome by the Allies, when any threat of German attack on the Vatican was gone. The evidence suggests that Pius’s telegram was consistent with what I call a leadership of reaction.

Leadership of Reaction

Did Pius provide leadership in creating, shaping, or directing an official Vatican response to the Holocaust? The answer is a highly qualified, and generally unsatisfying, “yes.” Keeping in mind the complexities of papal diplomacy, Pius’s determination to preserve the neutrality of the Holy See and avoid any touch of inappropriate “interference” that could be used by his enemies, as well as his refusal to be manipulated or persuaded by one side or the other to condemn specific atrocities, and his unshakeable belief that truth and right would triumph, indicate a leadership dictated by the actions of others. It was not a leadership of action but of reaction.

Pius’s response to the Holocaust, up to mid-1944, was technically distanced through what I call a policy of “leadership in his name.”¹² In the official church responses to the murder of Europe’s Jews, the pope did not once write or speak a specific word. Those tasks were left to Cardinal Maglione and the Secretariat of State. Pacelli’s leadership comes into question most poignantly with his and the Vatican’s reluctance, or even refusal, to share information with the bishops across Europe. I have noted two instances where actions by bishops in Ukraine and Croatia provided models for action against the escalating killing of the Jews. Why Pius did not ensure this information was passed on to bishops like Faulhaber and von Preysing remains a mystery. Perhaps archival materials may come to light that will explain this.

From his relative isolation in the Vatican State, with limited access to verifiable information, at least until late 1941, Pacelli authorized and sanctioned Vatican responses to Nazi terror and mass murder through Vatican Radio, *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Holy See's prisoner of war information agencies, and direct contact with nuncios and ambassadors.¹³ He never once counterordered rescue work or halted any act of rescue of Jews. There are slivers of evidence that suggest Pius encouraged others to do what he could not. The most significant geographical area where Pacelli had direct influence, and where it is known that he had direct contact with several relief operations, was Italy. Money was sent directly from papal accounts to assist several relief and rescue operations in Italy.¹⁴ Extraterritorial papal properties in Rome and the surrounding areas, including the summer villa at Castelgandolfo, were opened up as places of refuge and cloisters were lifted to hide Jewish families across Italy. All this was done with at least the tacit approval of the pope.

What is so frustrating for the amateur historian, and for those who have not lived under totalitarian dictatorships, is the lack of the unambiguous statement condemning the Holocaust. Judging from the available evidence, I think it was very unlikely that Pius XII would ever have made such a statement. I suspect he would have considered it too dangerous—not for himself, but for others. A black-and-white anathema of the killing of the Jews would have had little impact on the genocide as far as the Nazis were concerned, but it may have influenced some, or many, of the Catholic bystanders and even some of the perpetrators. The 1942 protests by the French cardinals, condemning the persecution of the Jews, did not result in a wholesale persecution of the Church. On the contrary, many former supporters of the Vichy regime became part of a network of rescue that helped save around 250,000 French and refugee Jews from the Germans and their Allies.¹⁵

What Pacelli pointed to consistently throughout the war were the many statements made over the years that condemn the murder of innocents. In his mind, Jews were “innocents,” along with Poles and hostages. Pius could not be convinced that there might be uncertainty or lack of clarity in his choice of words.¹⁶ It is interesting that the main protests at the pope's supposed lack of a clear statement came from the representatives of the principal democratic powers, and the only Allied nations not occupied by the Germans—Osborne from the United Kingdom and Taylor from the United States.

Shortly before his death in 1964, Osborne wrote to *The Times* responding to Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*. He defended the pope: “I know that his sensitive nature was acutely and incessantly alive to the tragic volume of human suffering caused by the war and, without the slightest doubt, he would have been ready and glad to give his life to redeem humanity from its consequences. And this quite irrespective of nationality or faith. But what could he effectively do?” Despite his diplomatic temperament and personal affection for the pope, Osborne felt he had to give voice to the

question of why Pius did not make a clear condemnation of the genocide. His criticism was mild, but pointed: “There was admittedly no clear-cut and unequivocal condemnation. For unfortunately, the language... was too often so prolix and obscure that it was difficult to extract his meaning from its extraneous and verbal envelope.”¹⁷

Penetrating the Mask: “If You Can, You Must”

Did the private side of Eugenio Pacelli ever break through the public persona during 1939 and 1943? Were there any occasions when the man gave any hint of the emotional pressures under which he operated? Spontaneity was not a characteristic usually associated with Pius XII. Pius XI and John XXIII were notorious for plain speaking, but Pacelli was reserved and seemingly unmoved except for carefully orchestrated public events. It was not in his character to act other than he had all his life; he was a diplomat and a pope. Nonetheless, there were two incidents during the war years where the pope displayed a rare spontaneity and emotion. They were telling because they were immediate responses, and they were short-lived.

In May 1940, Italy was looking more certain to enter the war. Mussolini was making more stridently pro-German comments and wanted a share of the spoils. Pius was just as energetic in trying to keep Italy out of the war. He appealed to Il Duce and the king to avoid war. When Germany invaded the Low Countries on May 10, Pius took the very public step of sending telegrams of solidarity and sympathy to the Protestant Queen of Holland, the Catholic King of Belgium, and the Protestant Grand Duchess of Luxembourg and then authorized their publication on the front page of *L'Osservatore Romano*.¹⁸ The *Willhelmstrasse* denounced the telegrams as breaches of neutrality and the *Palazzo Veneto* fumed at the interference of the pope and the hated independence of the supposedly neutral Vatican newspaper at the moment when Italy hoped to join in the destruction of France.¹⁹

Several days later, the pope was returning to the Vatican, having celebrated mass in a Roman parish. At a crossroad, Pius's limousine bearing the papal arms was caught in traffic and forced to stop. Groups of fascist youths saw the car and saw the pope. They rushed toward the vehicle from all sides and began shouting abuse at Pius: “Death to the Pope. Down with the Pope. The Pope is loathsome.”²⁰ Reports spoke of the pope being deeply shocked by the protest. Chadwick commented:

The sacredness with which the office had been surrounded since his childhood was stripped away. It seemed to revive something of the attitudes of the prisoner in the Vatican. And if his newspaper could not appear outside the walls of the Vatican and his radio station was under threat, he could not communicate with the Italian people. Osborne thought that the experience affected his outlook. He knew

himself to be what his predecessors had been: a prisoner inside the Vatican. He could not safely go out into the streets, to visit his own diocese.²¹

There seems little doubt that the demonstration was planned and authorized from a reasonably high government source. It was meant to frighten the pope and force him to bring *L'Osservatore* to heel as well as make him look anti-Italian. After the shock had passed, Pacelli did rein in the newspaper and Vatican Radio. It confirms what I have argued throughout, that he believed public expressions opposing the Axis were doomed to fail. On June 10, 1940, Mussolini declared war on France. The Vatican had no way of enforcing its will. Pius believed other ways had to be used.

What this incident showed was the depth of conviction Pius had regarding the office of the papacy—not his own person. While he was shocked at the personal attack on him, he probably saw the incident, as far as I can tell, as an attack on the independence of the Vatican State, and, by extension, the position of the Church. His reaction was swift and consistent with other aspects of his leadership. The needs and safety of the Church came first. Until July 1943, Pacelli did not set foot outside the Vatican State.

The second event occurred three years later. The mood in Italy had changed from tepid support for the war to wholesale and barely repressed anger against it. Despite appeals from the Vatican to spare Rome bombing, the city was hit badly on July 19, 1943. Over 500 Allied planes bombed the area surrounding the marshalling yards and factories in the working-class suburb around the ancient basilica of San Lorenzo fuori le mura. The raid lasted nearly four hours and destroyed a great number of homes, as well as severely damaging San Lorenzo. Upon hearing of the scale of devastation, Pius immediately telephoned Giovanni Montini and ordered him to get the car and take him to the worst-hit area. No preparation was made—the decision was spontaneous.

The pope's car made its way to San Lorenzo. People saw the familiar figure get out and walk through the bomb damage to go up to people standing around, dazed and shocked. Buildings were burning, fire-fighters, medical crews, and police were rescuing the trapped and nursing the injured. When more and more people realized who it was who was kneeling over the injured, hearing confessions and anointing the dying, the effect can only be described as electric. For nearly four hours, Pius stayed in the area. He listened to families who had lost everything in the raid and offered words of consolation. In front of the damaged basilica, the pope knelt and led the people in prayer, reciting the words of Psalm 129, one of the traditional penitential psalms. He then stood with his white cassock stained with blood and soot, arms stretched out cruciform, and blessed the men and women of his diocese. It was a highly emotional visit that ended with the crowd pressing so hard around the papal car that Pius had to return to the Vatican in

another vehicle. Papa Pacelli had become the *Defensor Civitatis* and the Father of the people of Rome.²²

What the San Lorenzo episode tells the historian about Pacelli's leadership is that when faced with the opportunity to act and give aid in its most basic form, that of physically helping people, the pope did it. While he could not stop the trains rolling to Auschwitz, he could be with the families of San Lorenzo and share, for a time, their pain. He was not insensitive to the needs of people in distress. Why then, when faced with a similar situation of people in desperate need within walking distance of his own home, did the pope not go to the Collegio Militare and be with the Jews of Rome? His presence may not have prevented their deportation, but it would have been a powerful scene. I can only surmise that he was reluctant to intervene in case he jeopardized rescue operations continuing across the city. And perhaps he still hoped that the Germans would not deport the Roman Jews, despite the false assurances he had been given through the same Germans. It is a lame excuse that may only be remedied with a full disclosure of the relevant archives.

On the diplomatic front, where he was engaged in the bloodless world of negotiating with government agents and reading ever-growing lists of bloody, death-filled statistics and reports of atrocities, Pius was constantly frustrated at his inability to change events that were beyond his power to do so. He knew the potency of action, however limited. He also knew the impotency of words when the will to act on them did not exist. Yet it did not stop him from proclaiming, preaching, and teaching in defense of the Church. Words were uttered in torrents for the safety of the Catholic world, the preservation of Rome, and the peace of Europe and the world. But none were uttered for Jews qua Jews. The impotency of words, which never once stopped him speaking for Catholics, stopped him speaking clearly for the Jews.

Lesser Victims

How do I judge Pope Pius XII and his role during the Holocaust? I believe the historical record shows us that he was a saintly man who honestly believed he did what he could to save the Jews of Europe. But Eugenio Pacelli was not perfect; he had flaws and he made a number of tragic errors. Perhaps his greatest flaw was his inability to see beyond the theological and social reality in which he had lived all his life, to a vision of the Church that was embraced by his successor. His blindness was not that of a willful ignorance or of a not wanting to know; it was the fervently held belief that the mission of Universal Pastor of Christ's Church, entrusted to him by Almighty God Himself, made him accountable to God for the preservation and salvation of the Catholic Church so that its mission in the world could continue. Nothing, not even the deaths of millions, could be allowed to stand between the pope and this God-given task.

The historical record demonstrates that Pius sincerely hoped that the bishops of the local churches across Europe would act according to their consciences and rescue Jews and others threatened with danger and death. It must have pained him greatly that so little was done. He was utterly convinced (as far as I can ascertain from the limited documentary evidence available) that his role precluded him from any direct form of condemnation of the extermination of European Jewry in the same way that he believed his role precluded him from condemnation of Soviet atrocities. I admit to seeing logic in his thinking—neutrality in action and a strict public adherence to impartiality—but I cannot accept the moral argument underpinning it.

The Holocaust was unparalleled in human history. Jews were killed because they were Jews. There was no escape. Polish army officers at Katyn were murdered because they were perceived by Stalin as a political threat, not a racial one. There is no evidence that Stalin had any intention of wiping out the whole Polish nation because they were Poles. Nazi ideology was founded on a biopolitical vision of the world that demanded a bloody racial purification through fire and sword. Soviet ideology rested upon the vision of Josef Stalin to create a modern nation-state through a social purification brought about with a similar fire-and-sword praxis. The Nazis were determined to kill all the Jews because their perverted logic demanded it. Stalin was determined to eradicate his opponents, but his reasons, in the main, were political and strategic, not racial. His anti-semitism was discriminatory but not exterminatory like Hitler's. The pope understood the ideologies of both systems well. He knew the internal logic of both, yet his condemnations were clearly weaker when speaking against National Socialism.

Throughout the war years and the years of the Holocaust, Pacelli was consistent in his public neutrality and equally consistent in his private support of relief and rescue efforts. While the Rome *Judenaktion* remains, as far as I am concerned, the most contentious episode for Pius personally, the fact that must also be remembered within the context of the period was the saving of 7,000 of the 8,000 Jews in Rome in October 1943. And while Pius was publicly silent throughout the events of the *razzia*, the historical record demonstrates his politically necessitated peripheral role in the rescue and hiding operations.

At the same time, the pope saw the war as more than the territorial battle waged between Nazi Germany and the Allies. In Pius's mind, the greater battle was the ideological struggle between Christian civilization and the evil bio-politico-religious system of National Socialism and the diabolical curse of communism. Let there be no misunderstanding: the danger represented by atheistic Bolshevism was, in Vatican terms, the greater, long-term danger for Christian Europe, even if, in 1942–1943, Russia looked set to be engulfed by the Nazis. Pius hoped that both totalitarian systems would sufficiently weaken each other through the course of the war that whoever emerged victor would lack the strength to do further damage.

Stretched and with meager physical resources, the pope had to give priority to his energy for the claims the war would and did make upon him. First and foremost, as has been detailed, came the needs and position of the Catholic Church. Second, the Vatican put a great amount of energy into the practical “works of charity” in providing what support it could for the “regular” victims of war, that is, prisoners, hostages and refugees. Third, as the war against the Jews intensified and became more widely known, Rome committed itself to an intensive diplomatic operation communicating with governments and individuals across Occupied Europe and beyond. Consequently, the bishop of Rome was forced to make a choice between the preservation of the Church in Italy and throughout Europe—a choice pressured by Nazi threats, both fanciful and real, and communist action that was very real within the Soviet Union—and the unambiguous condemnation of the Nazi murder of the Jews and other victim groups, throwing caution to the wind and taking the chance to call Hitler’s bluff. From what I have learnt about Pope Pius XII, there was no choice. He acted according to his conscience, taking what he believed was the best course of action and placing his trust in the hands of the God he believed would somehow bring an end to the killing. While this explanation is not satisfying, it cannot be avoided since the pope was a religious leader who ultimately held that history and the fate of nations rested not in the hands of Hitler or Churchill, but in the inscrutable designs of the “God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Eugenio Pacelli, Pope Pius XII, was a flawed and imperfect human being. He was the visible head of the world’s largest religious body during the bloodiest conflict in recorded history. He was the inheritor of a long and ancient tradition of suspicion and contempt toward a religion deemed “superseded.” A man trained in diplomacy and the belief that reason and good faith could and would triumph over irrationality and evil intent, the pope was a priest who tried to live his life in accord with the gospels he preached and the tradition he loved. He was a pope faced with a terrible choice to risk endangering the Church in order to rescue the damned, a man without malice and without hatred. He was limited in his worldview and in his ability to see and accept the true nature of the persecution of the Jews. He did not have the luxury of armed forces to impose his will, nor did he have the economic resources to help more rescue attempts than Vatican money allowed. He spoke constantly and consistently of the religious and moral duty of all peoples to avoid breaking the Divine Law; he called upon all people of goodwill to live the parable of the Good Samaritan, and he applied the same criteria to himself, reaching out where he could. He suffered the accusation of silence because he could not risk exposing those who were engaged in rescue in Rome or elsewhere. He was acclaimed as a great man by many after the war, and he accepted the thanks of Jews on behalf of the Church. He was a tragic and pathetic figure who, in the words of Arthur Bradley, erred by “omission, and his error, joining with other causes, [brought] ruin upon him.”²³

But the moral question remains. Why, when he knew without doubt what was happening to the Jews of Europe, and more disturbingly, when the Jews of Rome were rounded up, did he not speak out in clear words that could not be misunderstood? Why did he resort to arcane language and diplomatic procedures that belonged to the Middle Ages, while Jews languished, imprisoned, on the banks of the Tiber “under his very windows”? Why did the Vicar of Christ, who claimed after the war that his words did have effect, not use those same words to speak in defense of the Jews? This “otherworldly” man, without ever articulating or acknowledging it, allowed the long history of Christian Judeophobia to render him silent. The fate of the Jews would rest in the hands of God, because in the series of choices that confronted the pope, the forsaken Jews would always be “lesser victims” than all others. It is a terrible conclusion to reach.

Saul Friedländer discussed the behavior of the bystanders in the Holocaust in his 1977 essay, “Some Aspects of the Historical Significance of the Holocaust.” Bystanders, those who chose not to interfere in the murder of the Jews, neither speaking for or against, were motivated by many reasons: “They may have been motivated by self-interest, pseudoideological choices or traditional antisemitism. But whatever the motivation, the result, except in the instances of righteous gentile behavior, was always a ‘choice in which the Jew was less than any other consideration he was weighed against.’”²⁴

Time and again, whether in the halls of the State Department in Washington, D.C., in Whitehall or in the corridors of the Vatican, Jews were always placed second to every other group that cried out for help. The intention in Rome may not have been politically or religiously motivated, but it was there nonetheless. Pius XII did not speak out clearly because he did not want to. All the justifications argued above lead inexorably to this awful truth. His actions and words up to the *aktion* in Rome in October 1943 are defensible. After October 1943, they are not.

The Honours of the Altar

Beatification and canonization are internal processes of the Catholic Church that are undertaken with considerable rigor. Candidates are judged on the criteria of faith and morals. Did they live an exemplary Christian life demonstrating in thought, word, and deed a heroic standard of the evangelical counsels of faith, hope, and charity? It does not ask if the person was perfect or without sin; it is simply accepted that they were imperfect and sometimes sinful. It does not ask whether they made the best decisions possible, only if the decisions that were made were done in good faith and with a clear conscience. Finally, beatification and canonization address the question of example for the Church. Is the candidate a worthy model of the Christian life lived to a heroic degree that should be put before the Christian people as a saint worthy of imitation and

eneration? John Paul II stated that he would like to see Pius XII raised to “the honors of the altar.”

My considered opinion is that it is too early for such a move. More research and study needs to be done on Pacelli’s life and work, and the war archives need to be opened and studied. Rome needs to be less concerned with preservation of canonical processes and more willing to engage with modern historical—Catholic, Jewish, religious, and secular—scholarship in the study of Pius. His candidacy for sainthood should not be a stumbling block for the study of the war years. The cries from some Catholic circles of *santo subito* should be replaced with others crying out “archives now”!

Sensitivity to the growing awareness in Catholic-Jewish dialogue circles and joint scholarship ventures focusing on the Holocaust would appear to me to validate a sensible decision to leave the beatification process for Pius for at least another generation. For those who venerate Pius XII as a saint, the process will conclude in the “fullness of time” with a public declaration of his canonization regardless of present disputes. For those who believe beatification or canonization should not be conferred on Pacelli, only time and more historical endeavour will indicate the wisdom of withholding any public declaration of sanctity. Personally, I find the ancient tradition of “canonization by acclamation” appealing. When John Paul II beatified John XXIII in September 2000, the declaration in St Peter’s Piazza was greeted with loud and sustained cheering and applause that made the reading of John’s “virtues” a very lengthy process. When the pope declared Pius IX “blessed” at the same ceremony, it was met with stony silence by the same 120,000 people who had cheered John XXIII. The ancient method allowed the people to express their approval or otherwise at the worthiness of the proposed saint as an act of the *sensus fidelium*—the belief that the Holy Spirit works in and through the People of God, the Church, as much as the Magisterium.

Another aspect of the “saint-making” process is evidence of a public devotion or cult around the candidate. During a visit to Rome in 1994, I went to kneel at the tomb of Papa Roncalli—Pope John. I can recall quite vividly the flowers and messages left by his tomb in the crypt under St Peter’s. Nearby, the tomb of Pius XII was unadorned. I visited St Peter’s again in September 2000 just after the beatification of John XXIII. The body of John was being prepared for a new tomb to be placed in the basilica. Meanwhile pilgrims made their way to a sculpture of John in the nave of the basilica. The bronze sculpture was cast shortly after the pope’s death in 1963. After nearly forty years of people kissing the image, the bronze shines brightly. Across the nave is the statue of Pius XII. It stands in an alcove, opposite Pius XI. There are no pilgrims kissing either pope. Clearly, the Catholic people, and many beyond the boundaries of the Church, believe John XXIII was a holy man deserving of the title “saint”—the formal ceremonies in 2000 simply confirmed what millions believed. I would have my fears for Pacelli if a similar process were held for him.

Pius XII was brought low, not in his lifetime, but by history—a patchy and often speculative history that more often than not followed political and religious agendas rather than a passion for the truth. The fatal flaw lay in the centuries-old fear and hatred of Jews and Judaism. Combined with the currents of racist theories and practices that bubbled throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and which had permeated much of the Church, Jews were the ever-present “lesser victims.” If Pius XII committed a sin with regard to the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust, it was the sin of consistency in thought, word, and deed. And if Pius is guilty of that, he does not stand alone. The sins of the Catholic Church during the Holocaust must rest upon the whole Church, not only the Vicar of Christ, just as the deeds of the righteous must be shared by the whole Church, including the Vicar of Christ.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- anti-Judaism: hostility toward the Jewish religion, usually based on Christian theological principles.
- antisemitism: term created in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr in Germany. Jews were defined as a distinct “race”; a contemporary name for “Jew-hatred” or “Judeophobia.”
- Black Nobility: the papal aristocracy who remained loyal to the Holy See after the abolition of the papal states in 1870.
- congregation: a Vatican department supervising a specific part of church government: for example, Congregation for the Sacraments supervised the liturgical life of the church.
- Curia: the governing body of the Catholic Church.
- deicide: literally “the murder of God”; a charge levelled against the Jews by many of the Church Fathers. Officially rejected by the Catholic Church in 1965.
- dicastery: subsection of a congregation.
- Diocese: geographical region governed by a bishop.
- diplomatic note: a less formal communication between governments.
- encyclical: formal papal letter addressed to the whole church or, in special cases, addressed to a particular country, specifying an area of Catholic faith and morals.
- *Endlösung*: The “Final Solution”; Nazi euphemism for the murder of the Jews. It was the “Final Solution” of the *Judenfrage* (the Jewish question).
- Holy See: the seat of the bishop of Rome, the symbol of unity within the Catholic Church. Often used interchangeably with Vatican.
- Holy Week: most sacred week in the Christian calendar stretching from Palm Sunday through to the Easter Triduum (Holy or Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday). It recalls the last days of Christ and is marked with liturgies of special solemnity.
- legate: papal representative in a country without formal diplomatic relations with the Holy See.
- liturgy: the formal worship of the Christian Church.

- mass: the most sacred liturgy of Catholic Christianity; alternatively known as the Eucharist.
- Missal: book containing all the prayers and ritual for the Mass.
- nuncio: papal ambassador accredited to a government.
- parish: the basic unit of church government.
- pontiff, pontifical: pertaining to a bishop, but more commonly used in connection with the actions of the pope.
- Promemoria: a detailed diplomatic letter sent by the Vatican.
- religious: term describing Catholic men and women bound by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience (or the monastic vows of stability, conversion of manners, and obedience) and living in community or a designated house: for example, Carmelite friars and nuns, Benedictine monks and nuns, Sisters of Charity, Christian Brothers
- seminary: training college for priests.
- *Sonderbehandlung*: literally, “special handling”; a Nazi euphemism for the murder of Jews and others deemed “life unworthy of living”.
- supersessionism: theology that taught Judaism had been superseded by Christianity and was therefore obsolete.
- theology: the study of God.
- Tridentine: pertaining to the Council of Trent (1546-1564) and its reforms which marked Catholic life and practice until Vatican II (1962-1965).
- Triduum: literally “three days” and usually referring to the Easter Triduum (see above). It also referred to days of special devotion set aside for prayer.
- Ultramontane, ultramontanist: literally “beyond the mountains”, term used to describe Catholics fiercely (and often uncritically) loyal to the Holy See.
- Vatican: the sovereign state of the Vatican City; residence of the pope and the Roman Curia (the government of the Catholic Church); often used interchangeably with the term Holy See.

NOTES

Introduction: Pius XII, Catholics, Myths, and Realities

1. <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-leaders-dismayed-by-benedict-s-defense-of-nazi-era-pope-1.325948> (Accessed November 21, 2010).
2. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_24061967_sacerdotalis_en.html; http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html (Accessed July 9, 2010). <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-leaders-dismayed-by-benedict-s-defense-of-nazi-era-pope-.325948> (Accessed 21 November 2010).
3. See for example <http://nronline.org/news/vatican/hierarchy-deeply-damaged-within> (Accessed July 10, 2010).
4. This is one example of such thinking. <http://www.piusxiipope.info/> (Accessed July 10, 2010).
5. The most significant group is The Pave The Way organization founded by Gary Krupp. They have amassed considerable documentation that purports to prove conclusively that Pius XII was active in rescuing Jews during the Holocaust. The material is impressive but the commentaries are generally lacking in serious historical analysis and are more in the style of polemic and apologetic. An example of their claims is given here: <http://www.zenit.org/article-29766?l=english> (Accessed July 3, 2010).
6. Two works that deal specifically with the changes in Catholic cultural identity are Bill McSweeney (1980), *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance* and Michele Dillon (2000), *Catholic Identity*. Of particular interest are McSweeney, 22–52, 86–94; and Dillon, 34–40.
7. See Colin Tatz et al. (2003), “Why Denialists Deny,” in *Genocide Perspectives II*, 267–84.
8. Ironically, it was Pius XII who inaugurated modern Catholic biblical studies. His 1943 encyclical, *Divino afflante spiritu*, encouraged scientific and critical study of the Bible.
9. <http://www.ejpress.org/article/41715> (European Jewish Press; Accessed May 28, 2010)
10. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100117_sinagoga_en.html (Accessed July 7, 2010).
11. *Tablet*, June 29, 1963.
12. Sánchez (2002), 28–30.

1 Problems with Pacelli

1. Christopher Dawson (1941), “The Sword of the Spirit,” 4, 6.
2. Pius XII, *Allocutio* October 18, 1939, *AAS* 31.6, 611–12.
3. *Times*, October 19, 1939.
4. Dawson (1941), 6.
5. Rolf Hochhuth, *The Deputy (Der Stellvertreter)* (1964/1997), 352.
6. *Zenit*, June 5, 2007; Speech of Cardinal Tarsicio Bertrone, Vatican secretary of state on Pius XII, “The Victim of a Black Legend.” See also Burleigh (2007), 340.
7. *SMH*, October 10, 1958.
8. Constantine (1954), 32–3.

9. See also Joseph Dinnen (1939), *Pius XII Pope of Peace*; Hugo Doyle (1948), *The Life of Pope Pius XII*; Olav Smit (1950), *Pope Pius XII*; Nazareno Padellaro (1956), *Portrait of Pius XII*; Alden Hatch and Seamus Walshe (1957), *Crown of Glory: The Life of Pope Pius XII*.
10. Margherita Marchione (2000), 183.
11. http://www.pacelli-edition.de/quellen_dokumente.html; <http://www.dhi-roma.it/orsenigo.html> (Accessed June 3, 2010).
12. Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, 1879.
13. Hebblethwaite (1984), 38.
14. *Ibid*, 39.
15. Aubrey de Vere, *Who is she that stands triumphant* (Hymn in honor of the Church), late nineteenth century.
16. *The Catechism Explained* (1899), 221–2.
17. John Paul II, Letter to Cardinal Cassidy, March 12, 1998.
18. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_16031998_shoah_en.html, paragraph 3 (Accessed June 7, 2006). Hereafter *We Remember*.
19. Dinnen (1939), 196.
20. *We Remember*, 4.
21. Robert Anderson, “A Critique of the Vatican Statement on the Holocaust,” 1998; PBS *Online Newshour* April 8, 1998; NYT March 2, 2000. See also Tatz (2003), 58–66, especially 60–1.
22. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article7136048.ece> (Accessed May 26, 2010).
23. *Tablet*, October 30; December 11, 1999.
24. *Washington Post*, March 12, 2000; *SMH*, March 13, 2000.
25. The pope’s petition read: “We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer and, asking forgiveness, we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the People of the Covenant.” *Australian Jewish News*, March 31, 2000.
26. Robert Manne, “A time for Jews and Catholics to reconcile,” *SMH*, March 27, 2000.
27. Pius XII, *Allocutio*, June 2, 1945, *AAS* 37.12, 163–4.
28. NYT, December 25, 1942.
29. Yehuda Bauer described it as an inability to believe that such evil could have occurred. He cited the visit to the pope by Philip Bernstein in October 1946. In the course of their discussion, Bernstein told Pius that over one million Jewish children had been murdered by the Nazis. Pius’ response was a dramatic “No!” It was too great to imagine. Yehuda Bauer to Paul O’Shea, April 8, 2003.
30. *Allocutio*, June 2, 1945.
31. *Private* devotions are practices supported by the Church for the personal edification of the believer, e.g., the Rosary, wearing religious medals and praying to the saints under various titles such as Our Lady of Fatima. *Public* devotions are the official worship of the Church: the Mass, the Sacraments, and the recitation of the Divine Hours.
32. See Hansjakob Stehle (1981), 11–33.
33. *SMH*, August 17, 1920.
34. See Owen Chadwick (1986), especially Chapter 9. Chadwick details the many attempts by the British ambassador to the Holy See, D’Arcy Osborne, along with Myron Taylor, President Roosevelt’s personal representative, to pressure Pius into condemning Nazi atrocities.
35. See Pierre Blet (1999), 214–18; John Cornwell (1999), 298–312; Susan Zuccotti (2000), 126–30.
36. See Daniel Goldhagen (2002), 50–3, 63–9.
37. Michael Buchberger, Bishop of Regensburg, had written to Cardinal Adolf Bertram, president of the German Episcopal Conference, in June 1935 urging caution on the part of the bishops. Any protest against the regime would risk alienating many German Catholics and the vast majority of the faithful would not rally to defend the faith or the Church. Cited in Gunther Lewy, 173. Bertram, a faithful and loyal bishop, would have dutifully reported comments of this kind in his communications with the Vatican. Pacelli, as secretary of state, would have read these reports before passing them onto Pius XI. See also Gordon Zahn (1962/1989), 203.
38. Pius IX, *Quanto Conficiamur* in Maureen Fielder and Linda Rabben (1988), 57.
39. *The Catechism Explained* (1899), 246.
40. *Ibid*, 223.
41. *Ibid*, 246.

42. See ADSS 6.3 Annexe II, January 9, 1939 Circular Letter from Pacelli in the name of Pius XI, to nuncios and apostolic delegates asking them to help non-Aryan Catholics leave Germany; ADSS 6.3 Annexe III, November 30, 1938, Pacelli to nuncios and apostolic delegates asking for their help for Jewish converts forced to leave Germany and Italy.

2 Contempt as “Virtue”

1. Pinchas Lapide, 320–1.
2. *General Intercessions, Liturgy of the Solemn Commemoration of the Death of the Lord, Roman Missal* (1970), 170.
3. *Nostra Aetate*, in Austin Flannery (1975), 738–43.
4. On July 7, 2007 Pope Benedict XVI, in an attempt to reconcile traditionalist Catholics who remained unhappy with the liturgical reforms of Vatican II gave permission for a restoration of the Latin Mass using the 1962 missal. This included the preconciliar Good Friday prayer. Reaction from Catholics and Jews at this backward step led to Benedict issuing a revised prayer on February 6, 2008 that asked God might “illuminate their hearts that they acknowledge Jesus Christ is savior of all men.” Despite renewed protest from Catholics and Jews, the pope has not retracted the prayer.
5. “Judaism” is used here as a literary convenience. The religion of Jesus and his early followers was the Torah/Temple faith of the Second Temple era. “Judaism” grew out of the reconstructed religious community that survived the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. This makes Judaism and Christianity “twin faiths” or “sisters” rather than “mother–daughter” religions. I am indebted to Amy-Jill Levine of Vanderbilt University for her expertise in this area.
6. Marc Saperstein (1989), 1–6.
7. Many contemporary scholars believe this passage is an interpolation and is not a genuine Pauline text. Raymond Collins, “The First Letter to the Thessalonians,” *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 776. Hereafter *JBC*.
8. C K Barrett (1962), 176.
9. *Midrash*: traditional rabbinical biblical interpretation. There are two forms of *midrash*. The first is an exposition of scripture in order to expound legal and moral tenets. The second is allegorical, interpreting texts in order to apply a religious meaning to the events of daily life. Cohn-Sherbok (1991), 14–15.
10. For the early readers of Matthew, this acclamation had been literally realized in the destruction of Jerusalem about four decades after the death of Jesus. See Paula Fredriksen (2000), 255.
11. Benedict Viviano, “The Gospel According to Matthew,” *JBC*, 631. See also Lee Martin McDonald (1993), 246–7; Leon Poliakov (1965). 1.18.
12. Fredriksen (2000), 39–41.
13. Hyam Maccoby (1996), 99.
14. John 1.11; 2.18–21; 3.10; 5.10; 7.1; 9.31–4; 9.40–1; 12.10–11; 12.42–3; 19.6, 15.
15. Maccoby (1996), 130.
16. Justin Martyr (1997), *First Apology*, 36.
17. Gavin Langmuir (1984), 106–7.
18. Pius XII (1943), *Divino afflante spiritu*, para. 26.
19. *Ibid.*, para.49.
20. See Justin Martyr (1997), *First Apology*, 35–6.
21. Ephraim the Syrian, 1.6, 20, 42.
22. Meltio of Sardis (1979), *On Pascha and Fragments*, 96.
23. *Ibid.*, 100.
24. Cyprian (1984), *Letter 13* (April 250), 3.2.
25. Cyprian, *Treatise 4*, 10, 13.
26. Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 3.23; *An Answer to the Jews*, 13.
27. See Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 6.28.1.
28. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 123.
29. Ireneus, *Against the Heresies*, 4.8.1 See also Augustine, *Letter 196: to Bishop Asellicus*.
30. *Ibid.*, 4.18.
31. Marcel Simon (1964/1986), 224–5.

32. *Ibid.*, 226 See also *Codex Theodosius* 16.8.9; 16.8.12.
33. Ambrose, *Letter 40: to Theodosius, December 388*.
34. *Ibid.*
35. John Chrysostom, *Discourses against Judaizing Christians*, 1.2.
36. *Ibid.*, 1.3.1.
37. *Ibid.*, 1.4.1.
38. *Ibid.*, 1.6.4; 1.6.5.
39. John Chrysostom, *Homily on Thessalonians 3*.
40. Augustine, *Letter 82: to Jerome*.
41. Poliakov (1965), 1.29–32. Agobard, archbishop of Lyons (778–840 CE), complained bitterly that the rabbis were said to preach more effectively than the priests and new synagogues were being built, with, it appears, the approval of the local Christian people.
42. David Hunt (1993), 145–7.
43. *Ibid.*, 151–2.
44. *Ibid.*, 157.
45. Augustine, *The City of God*, 18.46.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*, 4.34; 7.32.
48. King James Version (1928).
49. Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm 59*, 18.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. Simonsohn (1988), 230.
53. *Ibid.*, 231.
54. *Ibid.*, 232.
55. Pius XII (1943), *Mystici corporis Christi*, paras 29–30.
56. Simonsohn (1988), *The Apostolic See and the Jews: Documents 492–1404*, Gregory I, Document 3: March 591; Document 4: June 591. Hereafter, ASJ, Pope and Document.
57. *ASJ*, Gregory I, Document 10: May 594; Document 20: July 599; Document 27: September 602.
58. *ASJ*, Calixtus II, Document 44.
59. Jeremy Cohen (1982), 37.
60. *Ibid.* See also *AJS*, Alexander III, Document 51: c. 1178.
61. *AJS*, Innocent IV, Document 192: 09.06.1247.
62. *AJS*, Innocent III, Document 71: 15.08.1198; Document 78: 04.01.1200; Document 97: 22.04.1213.
63. *AJS*, Innocent III, Document 77: 31.12.1199; Honorius III, Document 102: 26.01.1218 and passim; Urban IV, Document 222: 23.10.1263.
64. Poliakov (1965), 1.35–6.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, 1.42.
67. Halsall (1997.1), 2.
68. John Hood (1995), 77–9.
69. *Ibid.*, 2.2.10.8.
70. Hood (1995), 87–8. See also *ASJ*, Gregory X, Document 244, 01.03.1274—the Bull *Turbato corde*. Gregory mandated the Inquisition to act against Jews who relapsed into Judaism after accepting baptism. This was confirmed and expanded by successive popes, e.g., *ASJ*, Nicholas III, Document 248, 07.05.1278; Honorius V, Document 262, 18.11.1286.
71. *Summa*, 2.2.10.12.
72. Hood (1995), 91–2.
73. *Summa*, 2.2.10.11.
74. I am grateful for the insights provided by my colleague Dr Darren O’Brien. O’Brien (2003), *Pinnacle of Hatred*, 9–13.
75. Leviticus 7.27; 17.1–14; *Shulhan Aruh* 1.36.
76. O’Brien (1982), 247–66; Saul Friedländer (1966), 123–4.
77. Lateran IV, canon 67 in *Decrees* I.265.
78. *Ibid.*, canon 68, 267. The references to the Hebrew Bible were Leviticus 19.19; Deuteronomy 22.5; 22.11.

79. Ibid., Lateran III, canon 26, 224.
80. See, for example, *ASJ*, Honorius III, Document 103, 26.01.1218; Gregory IX, Document 141, 04.03.1233.
81. Poliakov (1965), 1.67.
82. Robert Chazan (1997), 102–3.
83. Luther (1962), 45.200.
84. Ibid., 45.200–1.
85. Ibid., 45.220.
86. Luther (1962), 47.137.
87. Ibid., 47.256–63.
88. Ibid., 47.268.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid., 47.268–9. Luther used Deuteronomy 13.12–19 where Moses ordered any city practising idolatry to be destroyed by fire. Since the Jews of Luther’s age were no longer considered to be “true Jews” he deemed their synagogues as nothing more than idolatrous temples fit for destruction.
91. Ibid., 47.269.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid., 47.270–2.
94. Ibid., 47.292.
95. Cited in Robert Jay Lifton (1986), 15–16.
96. Poliakov, 3.271.

3 *Et in Unum Ecclesiam*

1. Bill McSweeney (1980), 29.
2. Pius IX, 1864; Leo XIII, 1878.1. Both encyclicals display a siege mentality and neither offer any suggestion of dialogue.
3. Leo XIII, 1878.1, para 5.
4. Robert Bellarmine cited in Avery Dulles (1974), 14.
5. Catholic in this context refers to all Christians who acknowledge the pope as Visible head of the Church on Earth. The Catholic Church is made up of 27 individual rites (Maronite, Russian, Melchite, Uniate etc.), of which the *Latin* or *Roman* rite is the largest. The term *Roman Catholic* is a seventeenth-century term devised by Anglican Christians to distinguish between English Catholics who remained loyal to the pope and English Catholics who acknowledged the Elizabethan Settlement of 1562. As far as Continental Christians were concerned, the term *Catholic* applied only to Christians who acknowledged the pope. Other Christians were either *Protestant* or *Orthodox*.
6. Dulles (1974), 27.
7. Ibid.
8. Joseph William and Thomas Scanell (1901), II. 355–7. The tone of this manual gives a useful insight into the popular theological thinking of the late Tridentine period. The commentary on the unity of the Church demonstrates this: “The unity of the Roman Catholic Church is a fact of such notoriety that any proof would be superfluous,” 356.
9. Dulles (1974), 32. See also Yves Congar (1957), 45.
10. Henry Denziger, *Pastor Aeternus*, 3051.
11. Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896, 8–9, 11–15.
12. Denziger, *Pastor Aeternus*, 3055, 3058. The expression *Anathema sit* literally means “Let them be cursed.” At the end of every doctrinal definition at an Ecumenical Council a summary or *canon* of the text was written (always in the negative) cursing anyone who did not accept it. Vatican II was the first council not to use the *Anathema*.
13. Stephen Duffy (1983) in Tekippe, 159.
14. Ibid.
15. Denziger, *Dei Filius*, 839.
16. Sylvester Hunter (1895) I. 442.
17. Ibid. See Chapter II, *Who was St Peter?*

18. Hunter, I.395. The papal states are pictured as an idyllic place where all was light and peace. Their loss was due to a deluded people "too ready to listen to the delusive promises made to them by the agents of envious neighbors."
19. *Ibid.*, I.396–7.
20. *Ibid.*, I.397–407.
21. Catholic Encyclopedia (1912) (Online), *Seminary-Ecclesiastical*. (Hereafter CE).
22. Thomas Rausch (1999), 170–1.
23. Vatican I cited in Brocanelli (1977), 82–3. I am indebted to Gianfranco Brocanelli's research into seminary education in nineteenth-century Italy. I have relied on his detailed discussion of the academic curriculum and the spiritual formation programs used in Italy before the reorganization of seminaries under Pius X. The formation of priests described by Brocanelli was the pattern Pacelli would have known.
24. Daniel Pilarczyk (1986), 140–1.
25. William and Scannell (1906) I. xxiv.
26. Roger Aubert (1981) 9, Chapter 28.
27. J. Moyes (1907), 865–73.
28. Canon 1364.2.
29. Canon 1364.3.
30. Brocanelli, 402.
31. *Ibid.*, 405.
32. *Ibid.*, 405–6.
33. Ionne Gury (1900), 2 vols, *passim*. See also Augustino Lehmkuhl (1898), 2 vols, *passim*.
34. Brocanelli (1977), 406, Francisci Patritii (1844). See indices in particular. I.297–301, II.289–292.
35. Brocanelli (1977), 407.
36. Aertyns (1892). The reader is referred to the *Index synopticus* which sets out the structure of the treatise.
37. Brocanelli (1977), 407.
38. *Ibid.*, 90–1.
39. *Ibid.*, 91–3.
40. The title is drawn from the image of *Synagoga* often represented on the Western front of Cathedrals throughout Europe. *Synagoga*, representing the unbelieving Jews, was contrasted with *Ecclesia*, the figure of the Church. *Synagoga* was a beautiful woman, portrayed with downcast head and blindfolded eyes, which held a broken staff in one hand and the broken tablets of the Law in the other. She was a potent representation of the rejected Chosen People. Opposite was *Ecclesia*, another beautiful woman standing erect with the banner of Christ's resurrection held out in one hand and the chalice, symbol of the blood of Christ, in the other, who represented the True Faith and the fulfillment of Judaism. The depictions were not restricted to medieval churches. St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, built between 1868 and 1928, has a window in the north ambulatory showing *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia*.
41. A D Sertillanges (1922), 245–51.
42. See Howard Sacher (1990), Chapter 11, especially 255–61; and Peter Pulzer (1964), 129–32.
43. John MacHale (1852), 2.
44. *Ibid.*, 83, 115.
45. *Ibid.*, 130.
46. John Vaughan (1904), 21–48, especially 22–5, 36–45.
47. Heinrich Ewald (1886), 8.304.
48. *Ibid.*, 8.309.
49. See H. V. Morton (1934), 40.
50. S. Baring-Gould (1884), 259.
51. W. Robertson-Smith (1907), 2–3.
52. Francis Gigot (1898), 162.
53. *Ibid.*, 209; Adolf Harnack (1905), I.179.
54. Wilhelm Bousset (1908), 155, 218.
55. *Ibid.*, 219, 221–2, 225, 239.
56. Harnack (1905), I.178.
57. *Ibid.*, I.178–9.
58. Doris Bergen (1996), 143.
59. Gigot, 403.

60. Ibid.
61. Leon Poliakov (1971), 215–54.
62. Gigot, 404.
63. Gustav Gundlach (1930), 504–5. The *Lexicon* was a standard seminary text which enjoyed the *imprimatur* and *nihil obstat*.
64. Gundlach (1930), cited in Passelecq and Suchecky (1977), 47.
65. Ibid, 48.
66. Ibid, 49.
67. The 1957 edition of the *Lexicon* has a radically different article on antisemitism. It contains reference to the works of Jewish writers such as Jules Isaac and Leon Poliakov.
68. *AAS*, 20 (1928), 103.
69. Anna Lysiak in Spicer (2007), 29.
70. Hubert Wolf (2010), 121.
71. Cited in Christopher Seton-Watson (1967), 13.
72. The figure is taken from Andrew Canepa (1986), 406.
73. Cecil Roth (1946), 477–8.
74. In 1840, 33,900 Jews lived in 67 communities supporting 108 synagogues. In 1930, about 40,000 Jews lived in 63 communities supporting 38 synagogues. It was estimated that at least a third of young Jews married “out” and the vast majority were not religiously observant. Conversions were generally rare, but were not unheard of. The most common reason given was the desire to identify totally with Italy. Roth, 495–502; Andrew Canepa (1986), 406; Canepa (1989), 14–15.
75. Susan Zuccotti (1987), 14–20. Assimilation and identification with Italy, and the erosion of a sense of Jewishness made Italian Jews unsympathetic and even hostile to the infant Zionist movement. Canepa (1989), 14–17.
76. Canepa (1979), 260–1.
77. Canepa (1989), 23.
78. Canepa (1979), 261.
79. I use the term “pro-papal” deliberately. Most Italian Catholics were torn between loyalty to the Church and loyalty to Italy. Pius IX ordered total noncooperation with the new state in political life. The effect was to emasculate any effective Catholic-led opposition to the secular government.
80. Canepa (1978), 55.
81. Canepa (1992), 363–4.
82. Canepa (1978), 61. On the history of *Civiltà Cattolica* (*CC*), see Francesco Dante.
83. Oreglia was a Jesuit from a noble Piedmontese family. He was well known for his antiliberal and anti-Freemasonry rhetoric. The blood libel articles aroused considerable protest, not least of which was a personal condemnation by Cardinal Henry Manning, archbishop of Westminster, who demanded the Jesuits take action against Oreglia. Canepa (1979), 82–3.
84. *CC*, 1881.4, 225, October 6, 1881. The articles were spread over 42 pages that concentrated, for the most part, on the life and death of Simon of Trent in 1475. The last article covered the years from Simon’s death until the end of the eighteenth century in what appears to have been something of a rush. The arguments are essentially a rewriting of the classic blood libel cases with no reference to papal or episcopal repudiation over the centuries. *CC* 1881.4, 344–52, October 27, 1881; 477–83, November 10, 1881; 598–606, November 24, 1881; 730–8, December 7, 1881.
85. Herbert Thurston (1898), 561–74. Thurston also cited papal sources to support his argument. In his case, the use of sources is considerably more professional and honest.
86. *CC* 1890.4, 7, October 4, 1890.
87. Ibid., 11–13.
88. Ibid., 1890.4, 386, November 15, 1890.
89. Ibid, *passim*, 389–407.
90. Emilio Gentile (1998), 499.
91. Canepa (1989), 33.

4 Eugenio Pacelli 1876–1917

1. Nazareno Padellaro (1956), 6.
2. Bonafede Mancini (1998), 41, claims Marcantonio had twelve children.

3. John Cornwell (1999), 10.
4. Mancini (1998), 41. At the same time, Pius created Marcantonio's cousin, Prospero Caterini, cardinal.
5. The honors were comparable to the landed gentry of England and carried no title. The Pacellis were now recognized as "notables" within the papal states.
6. The Mortara scandal is retold by David Kertzer (1997).
7. Pius sent his "adopted son" out of Rome on October 22, 1870, partly to avoid any "kidnap" on the part of the boy's parents, or of the "Garibaldists." Mortara went first to Bressanone in the Austrian Tyrol before settling permanently in the abbey at Bouhay, near Liège. He was ordained priest in 1874. Mortara died at the age of 88, in February 1940, two months before the German invasion. The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints interviewed Mortara as part of the process of gathering testimony for the "cause" of Pius IX. He stated several times throughout the interview that he believed his removal from his parent's home was a "grace" and that the pope had always been a true father to him.
8. Cornwell, 11.
9. Padellaro, 6.
10. Joseph Dinnen (1939), 20.
11. Charles Doyle (1948), 11.
12. Padellaro (1956), 6, Frederick Jones (1992) 64.
13. Olav Smit (1950), 20.
14. Martin Clark (1997), 107.
15. *Ibid.*, 82.
16. *Ibid.*, 83–5.
17. T. J. Kiernan (1958), 13. She had twelve brothers and sisters, which included two nuns and two priests. Paul Murphy (1983), 41, describes her as a papal marchioness.
18. *Archivio di Stato di Roma* to Paul O'Shea, February 21, 2001.
19. Alden Hatch and Seamus Walshe (1957), 20.
20. *Ibid.*, 22.
21. Padellaro (1956), 10.
22. Cf. Cornwell (1999), 16–17.
23. Padellaro (1956), 14.
24. *Ibid.*, 15; Doyle (1948), 24–5; Hatch and Walshe (1957), 24–7; Spinosa *Primi passi*, 3.
25. Claims that by the time Pacelli was seventeen he could speak French, English and German are something of an exaggeration. Certainly Pacelli's French was fluent, and this was his preferred language when speaking with non-Italian speakers. His English was grammatically correct, but he was self-conscious about his heavy accent, and so avoided speaking it if he could. As for his command of German, Kaiser Wilhelm II commented that Pacelli's grasp of German was sufficient to understand what was being said, but not fluent. Fluency in German came only after several years in the country. See also *NYT* October 17, 1922; October 9, 1958.
26. Paul Collins (2000), 215. The great irony lay in Bousset (1627–1704) being an early proponent of Gallicanism. This was a French-based movement, which argued that a General Council of the Church was superior in authority to a pope, a proposition Pacelli would not have tolerated.
27. Robert Lieber, *Tablet*, December 13, 1958.
28. Cited in Peter Hebblethwaite (1993), 134.
29. *Ibid.*, 534–5. See also Cornwell (1999), 19–20, and the excellent study of Pacelli's spirituality by Eva Fleischner in Carol Rittner and John Roth (2002), 123–30.
30. *Ibid.*, 557–8.
31. Padellaro (1956), 17.
32. Hatch and Walshe (1957), 32. It was a Spartan affair, but not untypical for the time. "The furniture consisted of a little narrow bed, that would certainly not tempt anyone to linger in it; a table, a chair, and a cabinet for his clothes. In the corner was an iron tripod supporting a wash-bowl and water-jug. The room had one small window that looked out on an ancient courtyard, thick with lemon and orange trees, but ragged and uncared for."
33. Cornwell (1999), 22; Doyle, 27; Hatch and Walshe (1957), 33–4; Padellaro (1956), 17–18.
34. Pacelli held a double doctorate in philosophy and theology at the age of 23. Roman or pontifical doctoral degrees at this time would be the equivalent of an Australian bachelor degree with honors, that is, four years of study.

35. Cf. Cornwell, 23.
36. Carlton Hayes cited in Frank Coppa (1999), 15.
37. *Imortale dei*, November 1, 1885, 13.
38. *Ibid.*, 14.
39. *Ibid.*, 15.
40. *Ibid.*, 24.
41. *Ibid.*, 26–7.
42. *Ibid.*, 33.
43. *Ibid.*, 44. A clear reference to Italy.
44. Emilio Gentile (1998), 499. *Civiltà Cattolica* joined *La Croix* in condemning Dreyfus.
45. *Vehementer nos*, 13.
46. *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 38 (1905–06), Supplement to the volume.
47. Cornwell (1999), 46.
48. *Vehementer nos*, 8, 15, 17.
49. A Eucharistic Congress is a periodic major gathering of Catholics where the central mystery of the Eucharist is given special public devotion. It became customary for the pope to send a special legate or ambassador to represent him.
50. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 3 (1911), 115. Hereafter, *AAS*.
51. *Times*, May 19; June 19; July 10, 1911. See also *AAS*, 3 (1911), 301.
52. Cornwell (1999), 33.
53. David Schultenover, *A View from Rome* (1993), cited in Collins (2000), 258.
54. *AAS*, 4 (1912), 718.
55. *Ibid.*, 467; *AAS*, 6 (1914), 70.
56. *Raccolta di Concordati*, 1100–03.
57. Cornwell (1999), 56; see also 48–58.
58. *Tablet*, September 25, 1999.
59. *AAS*, 7 (1915), 33–6.
60. Benedict XV, *Ad beatissimi apostolorum*, 3.
61. *Ibid.*, 4.
62. *Ibid.*, *passim*, especially 24–5.
63. John Pollard (1997), 89–91.
64. *AAS*, 6 (1914), 7f.
65. Jedin (1979), 10.38–9. See too www.pacelli-edition.de, Document 384, *Pacelli to Gasparri*, 15 June 1917.
66. Pollard (1997), 113–14. Pacelli was to do all this as nuncio. E.g. see www.pacelli-edition.de, Document 8113, *Pacelli to Gasparri*, 23 November 1917.
67. *Faculties* refer to the canonical provisions that allowed priests to work within a diocese. The war made this procedure redundant and a greater flexibility was needed. *AAS*, 7 (1915) [May 4, 1915], 268.
68. *Ibid.*, 463.
69. Pollard (1997), 119–24.
70. Pacelli's appointment came as no surprise to some. The *Times* correspondent in Rome wrote that "in all probability it will be Mgr Pacelli." *Times*, April 21, 1917. The report was cabled to London on April 20 just before the pope's formal announcement was made.
71. Pacelli arrived in Munich on May 24, 1917 and presented his credentials for King Ludwig III of Bavaria four days later. <http://www.pacelli-edition.de/> Documents 10 079, *Pacelli to Gasparri* 25 May 1917; 4934 *Pacelli to Gasparri* 29 May 1917.

5 When Worlds Collide

1. D. D. Guttenplan, (2001); Richard Evans (2002).
2. There are, of course, exceptions. Lucy Dawidowicz's (1975) *The War Against the Jews* and Martin Gilbert's (1985) *The Holocaust* are two popular and scholarly histories of the Holocaust that incorporate the "conventional" war into Hitler's anti-Jewish genocide.
3. For the discovery and reaction to the Treaty and its "secret" clauses, see www.pacelli-edition.de Documents 8235–8239, 8004.

4. Erzberger sent Pacelli several reports throughout 1917, which the nuncio read and forwarded to Rome. See for example www.pacelli-edition.de Documents 4274, 8011.
5. Friedrich Muckermann's report was sent to Rome by the former Vatican chargé d'affaires in Bavaria, Giovanni Panico (later Apostolic delegate to Australia 1935–1948) on November 16, 1934. See *AES, Germania, Pos 666, fasc 221, fol 3rv; 5r-10r*.
6. *ASV, AES, Pos 695, fasc 267, ff 66–69*, Bertram to Pacelli, April 21, 1936.
7. Eric Weitz (1997), 77–8.
8. *Ibid.*, 16. Perhaps the best description of fascism was penned by Benito Mussolini in his article *Dottrina del fascismo*, which appeared in the 1932 *Enciclopedia Italiana*. Cited in Nino Tripodi (1971), 167–89.
9. Michael Burleigh (2000) 12.
10. *Ibid.*, 13. I agree with Burleigh that Hitler's rejection of "cult" status for Nazism was made for political expediency. Hitler did not want the movement's philosophy muddled with the crank ideas of Rosenberg or Himmler and their neopaganisms. However, that in no way suggests that Hitler did not believe his New Order was anything less than a divinely revealed epiphany built on an immutable law. Cf Burleigh 253–4.
11. *ASV, AES, Pos 641–643, fasc 157, ff 13–14*, Orsenigo to Pacelli, February 4, 1933.
12. Cf Hitler's first address to the German people after January 30 was a radio statement on February 1, 1933. He affirmed the place of Christianity in Germany as the "basis of our national morality, and the family as the basis of national life." Hitler (1946) 1.370. The *Tablet* (June 24, 1933) commented: "We hesitate to believe that even Herr Hitler could be so foolish as to offer thorough going battle to the Catholic Church... [it] would make the ultimate journey to Canossa more thorny and stony to his feet."
13. Hitler (1924/1992), 51.
14. *Ibid.*, 60.
15. Saul Freidländer (1977), 84–7.
16. Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann (1991) *The Racial State*, especially Part 2, *The Purification of the Body of the Nation*, 75–136.
17. See Max Weinrich (1999), *Hitler's Professors: The part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People*. See also Alexander Mitscherlich and Fred Mielke (1962), *The Death Doctors*, and Konrad Jarausch (1990), *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers, and Engineers, 1900–1950*.
18. Gordon Zahn (1962/1989), 203.
19. *Tablet* December 26, 1936; January 30, 1937. A famous sermon of Clemens von Galen, Bishop of Münster (August 3, 1941) condemning the euthanasia program stung the Nazi leadership into calling an official halt to the public operations. Von Galen's protest needs to be seen in the light of the overall killing process. His protest did stop the killing of adults, but it did not stop the murder of children. The protests slowed the killing process, and forced the perpetrators to go underground. See Burleigh (1997) 130–41, especially 140–1.
20. *Tablet*. March 7, 1931.
21. *ASV, AES, Pos 641–643, fasc 157, f 15*, Orsenigo to Pacelli, February 4, 1933.
22. *ASV, AES, Pos 641–643, fasc 157, f 32*, Orsenigo to Pacelli, nd 1933.
23. Burleigh (2000), 252.
24. *ASV, AES, Pos 641–643, fasc 157, f 32*, Orsenigo to Pacelli, nd, 1933. See too Lewy (1964), 173.
25. See Gerhard Besier (2004), pp. 14–25.
26. *ASV ANM Pos 397, fasc 2, fol 154r-155v, Pacelli to Gasparri, 18 April 1919; ASV ANM Pos 397, fasc 3, 3r-10v, Pacelli to Gasparri, 5 May 1919*.
27. Cf. John Cornwell (1999), 72–6.
28. DBFP 2nd Series 5, Kirkpatrick to Vansittart, August 19, 1933.
29. *ASV ANB, Pos 91, fasc 2, fol 35r-36r, Pacelli to Gasparri, 2 February 1919; AES Stati Ecclesiastici 4 periodo, Pos 359, fasc 248, fol 57r-60v, Pacelli to Gasparri, 9 December 1925; ASV ANB Pos 92, fasc 6, fol 164r-v, Pacelli to Pizzardo, 6 January 1927*.
30. *ASV, AES Baviera ANM Pos 396, fasc 7, fol 6*, Pacelli to Gasparri, November 14, 1923.
31. *ASV ANB, Pos 94, fasc 1, fol 682r-683r, Pacelli to Sabilia, 5 August 1929*.
32. Fattorini, 101. Interestingly, the *putsch* made the front page of *L'Osservatore Romano* on November 10–11, 1923.
33. *ASV, ANM, Pos 396 fasc 7, fol 75-76, Pacelli to Gasparri, April 26, 1924*.

34. *ASV ANM, Pos 396, fasc 7, fol 79r-v*, Pacelli to Gasparri, May 1, 1924.
35. In 1928 the Holy See issued a condemnation of antisemitism while affirming the traditional anti-Judaism of Catholic Christianity. See Hubert Wolf (2010), 106 ff for a detailed explanation of the situation surrounding the condemnation and the attendant issues.
36. *ASV Germania, 3 Periodo, Pos 1706, fasc 894, fol 2r-4r*, Pacelli to Gasparri, 5 November 1920.
37. *NYT*, July 3, 1923. The pope's criticism of the Ruhr Occupation was well known. See *Tablet*, February 18, 1939.
38. Fattorini, 103; *NYT*, July 5, 1924.
39. *AKF* 2.64, Faulhaber to von Ritter, February 16, 1920.
40. Fattorini, 145. *AKF* 2.34, Pacelli to Faulhaber March 27, 1919, and *AKF* 34a, Gasparri to Pacelli March 18, 1919. See also Stewart Stehlin (1983), 57–64. Ebert's government quickly established diplomatic relations with the Holy See, appointing Diego von Bergen on April 30, 1920.
41. See Fattorini, 197–8.
42. *Ibid.*, 164. *NYT*, May 17, 18, 20, 1919. Ratti's decision to stay in Warsaw was hailed as an act of a pastor refusing to leave his flock and became a model of the future pope's dogged determination once he had made up his mind on an issue. Cf *SMH*, August 17, 1919, February 8, 1922; *Tablet* February 18, 1939.
43. See Fattorini, 197–8.

6 His Master's Voice

1. Pius XI, *Divini illius magistri* (December 3, 1929), 18.
2. *Ibid.*, 35, 38, 46, 48.
3. I have included the English-speaking world since I have relied on mostly English language media in my assessment of a hierarchy of issues.
4. *Ubi arcano dei consilio* (December 23, 1922), 7, 10, 12, 13, 15.
5. *Ibid.*, 24, 25, 29, 30.
6. *Ibid.*, 40, 45, 54.
7. *Ibid.*, 65.
8. Frank Coppa (1999), 95–103.
9. See Albert O'Brien (1982) on the clash between Catholic youth groups and the claims of the fascist state.
10. Domenico Bertetto 2.620 to Pius XI to Consistory December 24, 1931.
11. Jonathon Luxmoore and Jolanta Babiuch (1999), 11. See also Bertetto 1.134 to Pius XI to Consistory May 23, 1923.
12. Gerhard Besier (2004), 46–8.
13. Orazio Premoli (1932), 223–4.
14. *Ibid.* The Jews were responsible for the decline in academic excellence in Austria (139); they were present in all parts of the Hapsburg Empire and by implication were part of the reason for the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (140); with their Masonic allies Jews were responsible for socialism causing havoc in the Austria and Hungary (144); and the "Jewish Masonic press" insulted the Church in Austria at every opportunity as well as in Hungary (145, 147).
15. *Tablet*, February 15, 1930; See too Hansjakob Stehle (1981), 133–7.
16. Anthony Rhodes (1973), 96–7.
17. *Quas primas* (December 11, 1925) 24.
18. Rhodes (1973), 97. Pius made a similar observation in the encyclical *Acerba animi* (September 29, 1932) 12.
19. Héctor Camín (1993), 84–6.
20. *Iniquis afflictsque* (November 18, 1926) 17, 27; Bertetto 1.645 to Pius XI to Consistory December 20, 1926.
21. Besier (2004), 201.
22. Camín et al. (1993), 84–6.
23. Bertetto 2.620 to Pius XI to consistory December 24, 1931.
24. *Ai figli perseguitato della Spagna*, Bertetto 3.554 to Pius XI to Spanish refugees September 14, 1936.

25. *Tablet*, April 15, 1939.
26. *Tablet*, December 21, 1929, February 15, 1930; *Times*, December 17, 1929, December 24, 1929, February 11, 1930; *NYT*, January 24, 1930, February 11, 1930.
27. *Tablet*, July 17, 1937.
28. Klaus Scholder (1986/1988), 66.
29. DGFP Ambassador Bergen to Foreign Minister Neurath January 4, 1936, 1936. No. 482, 963–967.
30. William Clonmore (1938), 73.
31. *Casti connubii* (December 31, 1930), 3.
32. *Ibid.*, 9–11.
33. *Concordat of the Lateran Pacts 1929*, Article 34 in Coppa (1999) 202–3.
34. *Casti connubii*, 41–2.
35. *Ibid.*, 44–7, 51–2, 56–60.
36. *Ibid.*, 56.
37. *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931) 80.
38. *Ibid.*, 46–50.
39. *Ibid.*, 74, 88.
40. *Ibid.*, 109–10, 112.
41. *Ibid.*, 112.
42. *Non habbiamo bisogno* (June 29, 1931) 10–12.
43. *Ibid.*, 12, 17.
44. *Ibid.*, 26.
45. *Ibid.*, 30.
46. *Ibid.*, 44, 49.
47. *Ibid.*, 59.
48. *Minute by Mussolini on his meeting with Pope Pius XI 11 February 1932* in Peter Kent (1981) 193.
49. *Caritate Christi compulsi* (May 3, 1932) 4.
50. *Ibid.*, 6.
51. *Ibid.*, 10–11, 15.
52. *Times*, March 5, 1932.
53. Hubert Wolf (2010), 128–31.
54. Pius XI to Tardini, 1936, cited in Cornwell, 167.
55. *NYT* October 10, 1934; *Time* October 22, 1934, “Pomp.”
56. John Cornwell, 169.
57. CC 1934.4.309.
58. Pacelli at the Closing Mass of the Eucharistic Congress, Buenos Aires October 14, 1934, in *CM* 32, December 22, 1934, 474–5.
59. *Ibid.*, 475.
60. *NYT*, October 22, 1934.
61. Cf *Acta* 26.14, *Letter from Pius XI to Eugenio Pacelli*, 587–8.
62. Richard Brietman et al. (2007), 561–2. McDonald records meeting with Pacelli on November 17, 1934 and asking for the cardinal’s moral support to encourage greater reception of refugees in Latin America.
63. Cornwell, 170.
64. *NYT*, April 26, 1935.
65. *NYT*, April 29, 1935.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Tablet*, January 24, 1931, February 28, 1931, March 7, 1931; Michael Faulhaber, *Sermon for the Sunday after Christmas 1933*, 107–10.
68. Conway, 98. See also Gunther Lewy, 206.
69. CC1936.4.341.
70. *NYT*, October 9, 1936.
71. *NYT*, November 11, 1936.
72. Address to the National Press Club in Washington DC. *Washington Post* October 23, 1936.
73. CC1936.4.341–2; *NYT* passim October–November 1936; *Times* passim October–November 1936. Pacelli also met Myron Taylor, who was to become Roosevelt’s personal representative at the Vatican during the war years. Myron Taylor, 4.

74. *Oral history interview with Florence Kerr, 18 October 1963, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.* <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/kerr63.htm#top> (accessed August 27, 2008).
75. *Allocution du cardinal Pacelli à Notre Dame le 13 juillet 1937.*
76. *Times*, July 12, 1937.
77. *Tablet*, July 17, 1937.
78. See comments made in *NYT*, July 11, 1937 and *Times*, July 15, 1937.
79. *Civiltà Cattolica* made no mention of Pacelli's antiracism comments. This was hardly surprising since the journal was still publishing anti-Jewish articles up to late 1938. Cf. *CC*1937.3.277–81, and issues from May 1937 through to September 1938.
80. Nazareno Padellaro (1956), 126.
81. *NYT*, March 27, 1938; March 31, 1938; April 6, 1938; *Tablet*, April 9, 1938; April 16, 1938.
82. Cardinal Pacelli to Joseph Kennedy, April 1938, with a cover note by Kennedy to James Roosevelt, April 19, 1938. Joseph P Kennedy Papers, Kennedy Library, Columbia Point, Boston. . See Charles Gallagher (2003), 8–10.
83. *CM* 36.853, Eugenio Pacelli, *Principal address at the Eucharistic Congress*, June 6, 1938 [sic].
84. *Ibid.*
85. *NYT*, May 26, 1938.
86. *Tablet*, June 4, 1938.
87. See Vera Ranki (1999), 99–101, 137–8, 168–9.
88. Cited in Giovanni Sale (2004), 517.
89. Besier (2004), 182–183. This is contrary to the “accepted history” that has Pius leaving Rome before Hitler arrived.
90. Richard Bosworth (2002), 281.
91. Owen Chadwick (1998), 39–40.
92. The Italian text was reproduced in *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1938.2113, 275–7. An English translation of the text is cited in George Passelecq and Bernard Suchecky, 115–18. Pius made two public statements condemning “racialism”. On July 28, 1938 and August 21, 1938, in addresses to the students of the Propaganda Fide College, the pope condemned both the biological basis of racism and “exaggerated nationalism” as contrary to Christian faith. Bertetto 3.929,930.
93. Mussolini, February 16, 1938 cited in Susan Zuccotti (2000), 27.
94. Bosworth, 334–44, especially 334–5.
95. Zuccotti (2000), 26.
96. *CC* 1938.3.83–4. An English translation was published in *CM* in January 1939. *Racism Calumnies Condemned in Vatican Letter*, *CM* 37.866, 507–8. They were great and noble words, but of such limited exposure that it was probable that most Catholics, let alone general populations, had never heard them.
97. Zuccotti (2000), 29–47; *CC* 1938.2113, 83–4.
98. *NYT*, November 15, 1938; *Tablet*, November 19, 1938.
99. *Humani generis unitas*, 131–44, cited in Passelecq and Suchecky, 246–54.
100. *Tablet*, September 10, 1938
101. *Ibid*, 131.
102. *Ibid*, 132.
103. *Ibid*, 133.
104. Cited in Passelecq and Suchecky (1997), 138–9.
105. E.g., *Tablet*, September 24, 1938.
106. Dan Kertzer (2001), 280.

7 Cardinal Pacelli, Jews, and Germany, 1933–1939

1. DBFP (2nd series), 5.342, Ivon Kirkpatrick to Robert Vansittart, August 19, 1933.
2. Richard Breitman et al. (2007), pp. 90, 91, note 45. Felix Warburg (1871–1937) was one of the “elder statesmen” of Jewish philanthropy in the United States and former chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee.
3. *ASV, AES Germania, Pos 645 P O fasc 163, f 20*, Note of Gasparri, June 30, 1933.
4. ADB, 1.9–10, Gröber to Pacelli, March 10, 1933.

5. Richard Brietman et al. (2007), 393–394.
6. Klaus Scholder (1986/1988) 1. 381–7. On this point there has been much, and often bitter, debate. See Scholder’s closing comments. *Ibid*, 410–13.
7. *ASV AES Germania, Pos 643, fasc 157, fol 18r-19v*; Orsenigo to Pacelli February 16, 1933; *ASV AES Germania, Pos 621, fasc 140, fol 16r-17v*; Bertram to Pacelli April 18, 1933.
8. *AKF 2.572* Note of Faulhaber on meeting with Hitler. November 4–5, 1936.
9. *ADB 1.17, 42*, note 3, Response from Bertram March 31, 1933.
10. *ASV AES, Germania, Pos 643, fasc 158, fol 6*; Orsenigo to Pacelli, April 10, 1933.
11. *ASV AES Germania, Pos 643, fasc 158, fol 11*; Faulhaber to Pacelli, April 10, 1933. Faulhaber’s comment “the Jews can help themselves” needs to be read in context. Like many other bishops, he was convinced that Jewish communal organizations were able to implement strategies to cope with the boycott. The main Jewish Christian help group was the Protestant Paulus Bund, which existed between 1933 and 1939. See Werner Cohn (1988).
12. *AKF 1.300*, Faulhaber to Wurm April 8, 1933. See also Ian Kershaw (1983), 246–57. Despite the widespread racism and antisemitism among the clergy, when racist theories were implemented the clerical reaction tended towards support for the Jews in sermons and prayers as well as practical charity. But it was never enough to counter the general indifference toward the Jews throughout the Reich. Those who did speak or act in defense of the persecuted usually did so on a person-to-person basis.
13. *AKF 1.300*.
14. *ASV AES Germania, Pos 643, fasc 158, f4*; Pacelli to Orsenigo, April 4, 1933.
15. Yitzhak Arad, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margalio (1987), 39–42. See too DBFP 5.29, Horace Rumbold (Berlin) to J. Simon (London) April 13, 1933. Rumbold’s dispatch contained a detailed summary of the law and its implications for German Jews.
16. *ASV, AES, Germania, Pos 643, fasc 158, fol 5r*; Orsenigo to Pacelli, April 8, 1933.
17. *ASV, AES, Germania Pos 643, fasc 158, fol 6*; Orsenigo to Pacelli, April 11, 1933.
18. *ASV, AES, Germania, Pos. 643, fasc. 158, ff 16–17*; Edith Stein to Pius XI, March/April 1933.
19. In 1938, the nuns decided that it was too dangerous for her to remain in Germany and she and her sister Rosa, who had also converted to Catholicism, were transferred to the Carmel of Echt in Holland. Attempts to have the sisters transferred to Switzerland after the German invasion of April 1940 failed. Edith and Rosa Stein were deported to Auschwitz in August 1942 as part of the German retaliation against the Dutch Catholic bishops’ condemnation of Nazi anti-Jewish measures. She was murdered because she was Jewish, not because she was a Catholic. Pope John Paul II canonized her as a martyr on October 11, 1998.
20. *ASV, AES Germania, Pos 643, fasc 158, fol 27*; Margolis to Pius XI, April 21, 1933; *ASV, AES Germania, Pos 643, fasc 158, ff 29–30*; Schwarz to Pius XI, April 9, 1933.
21. *ASV AES Germania, Pos 643, fasc 158, fol 32r*, Note of Giuseppe Pizzardo, April 26, 1933.
22. Jews were generally referred to as “non-Aryans” in Nazi legislation. The German bishops and the Vatican tended to follow the usage set by the Reich government.
23. DGFP C.1.425; Klee to Foreign Ministry September 12, 1933.
24. *Ibid*.
25. See Anthony Rhodes (1973), 174–6.
26. *AKF 1.280*, Faulhaber to the Bavarian Bishops, March 24, 1933.
27. *ASV, AES, Germania, Pos 643, fasc 158, fol 8*; Memorandum of the Secretariat of State, nd, 1933.
28. *ADB 1.32*, Conference of Representatives of the Church Provinces: Negwers Protocol, April 25–26, 1933.
29. Many others thought differently. The undue haste with which the Concordat was prepared was seen as the Church hastening to ensure the safety of Catholics in Germany. The *Tablet* commented: “We hesitate to believe that even Herr Hitler could be so foolish as to offer thorough-going battle to the Catholic Church. In the early stages of the conflict he could inflict immense injury upon Catholics, but by so doing he would sharpen the defense and would make the ultimate journey to Canossa more thorny and stony to his feet.” *Tablet*, June 24, 1933. Canossa was a reference to the public penance performed by the humbled German king, Henry IV, in January 1077. He had accused Pope Gregory VII of being an “accused monk” and not fit to govern the Church.
30. Thomas Brechenmacher (2010), <http://www.dhi-roma.it/orsenigo.html>
31. Owen Chadwick (1973), 21.

32. Peter Godman (2004), 31.
33. *ASV AES Pos 643, fasc 158, ff 3-5*, Pacelli to Orsenigo, April 4, 1933.
34. Besier (2004), 128.
35. See *ADSS* 8.374, Pirro Scavizzi to Pius XII May 12, 1942 (extract from a private letter) See also Anthony Rhodes, 229, n20 and John Morley (1980), 103–8, 126–8.
36. Article 31: Those Catholic organizations and societies which pursue exclusively charitable, cultural or religious ends, and, as such, are placed under the ecclesiastical authorities, will be protected in their institutions and activities. Those Catholic organizations, which to their religious, cultural, and charitable pursuits add others, such as social or professional interests, even though they may be brought into national organizations, are to enjoy the protection of Article 31, Section 1, provided *they guarantee to develop their activities outside all political parties*. It is reserved to the central government and the German episcopate, in joint agreement, to determine which organizations and associations come within the scope of this article.” Cited in Coppa (1995), 212.
37. *ASV, AES Germania, Pos 621–623, fasc 140, ff 48-49*, Orsenigo to Pacelli, May 30, 1933. See too *The Tablet*, June 17, 1933.
38. See Lawrence Walker (1970) for a detailed exploration of the destruction of the Catholic youth movements in Germany.
39. See *NYT*, July 9, 1933; July 21, 1933; *Tablet*, July 29, 1933. Ironically, on the same page as the report of the initialing of the Concordat, the *NYT* reported the arrest of 80 Jewish doctors in Berlin (July 9, 1933). Barely a year later the attitude of commentators was more a case of the Church’s accepting the Concordat as the best choice available. This remained the consensus until the end of the war. See Arnold Toynbee (1934); John Brown Mason (1935), and Robert d’Harcourt (1939).
40. *ASV, AES Germania, Pos 645, fasc 168, fol 41*; Pacelli to Foreign Office Berlin October 19, 1933.
41. Scholder 2, 93.
42. Wolf (2010), pp. 48–50, especially 50.
43. Dieter Albrecht 1.29, May 14, 1934, Pacelli to Bergen, Document 29: May 14, 1934 Promemoria of the Holy See to the Reich government.
44. Albrecht 1.29, May 14, 1934, Sections 2–3.
45. *Ibid.*, Section 4.
46. *Ibid.*, Section 5.
47. *Ibid.*, Section 8.
48. *Ibid.*, Section 9.
49. *Ibid.*, Sections 10–14.
50. Burleigh (2000), 159–60.
51. See Gunther Lewy (1964), 167–8, 171.
52. Joachim Fest (1977), 469.
53. See chapter 7.
54. Matteo Napolitano discussing Vatican documents from the Germania 1923–39 files, interviewed in *Il Giornale* and reported in *Zenit* May 1, 2003.
55. Cited in Lewy (1964), 275.
56. *ASV, AES Germania, Scatole 1935, fasc 9a, ff 32–33*. Orsenigo to Pacelli, September 14, 1935.
57. *NYT* September 20, 1935. See too Besier (2004), 152.
58. See *ASV AES Germania, pos 143, fasc 160, ff 11–15*; *Santa Sede e Nazionalsocialismo (after August 15, 1933)*.
59. William Harrigan (1961), 195
60. See Heinz Hürten (1992), 372–3; Peter Godman (2004), 141–54; Giovanni Sale (2004), 127–50. See also *Tablet*, January 23, 1937.
61. I hasten to add that this is “drawing a rather long bow.”
62. DGFP D.1.641, Foreign Office (Berlin) Memorandum, April 5, 1937; D.1.642, Foreign Office Berlin to German Embassy to the Holy See, April 7, 1937. See also Harrigan (1966), 461–2.
63. *ASV, AES, Germania, Pos 719, fasc 316, ff 98–102*; von Bergen to Pacelli, April 12, 1937.
64. *ASV, AES, Germania, Pos 717, fasc 317, ff 6–26*; Pacelli to von Bergen, April 30, 1937.
65. *Tablet*, May 15, 1937.
66. Besier (2004), 167–68.

67. *Divini redemptoris*, 8. Pius declared that the origins of communism lay in the attempts by nineteenth-century “intellectuals” who attempted to “free civilization from the bonds of morality and religion.” Their purposes were openly anti-Christian and hostile to the Catholic Church. See paragraph 4.
68. This distinction between the Russian people and the Soviet government was a part of Pius XII’s refusal to endorse or bless the German invasion in 1941 or name it a “crusade” against Bolshevism. See ADSS 5.63, 151, Notes of Monsignor Tardini, September 5, 1941, November 27, 1941.
69. Cf David Kertzer (2001), 249–62. *Civiltà Cattolica* had no such qualms. In an article published in September 1936 the journal went to great lengths to show the inherent Jewish nature of Bolshevism. “La Questione Giudaica”, CC 1936.2071.
70. Besier, 450–1, 453.
71. ASV, AES, Germania, Pos 605-606, fasc 117, ff 18–19; Orsenigo to Pacelli, October 16, 1930; ASV, AES, Pos 695, fasc 267, ff 66–69; Bertram to Pacelli, April 21, 1936.
72. NYT, May 19, 1937; *Washington Post*, May 20, 1937; *Tablet*, June 5, 1937; *Time*, May 31, 1937.
73. DGFP D.1.655, Bergen to Foreign Ministry Berlin, May 25, 1937. Pacelli to von Bergen, May 21, 1937, cited in Harrigan (1966), 466.
74. Albrecht 2.20–1, von Bergen to Pacelli, May 24, 1937; DGFP D.1.658, Neurath to Bergen, May 27, 1937.
75. NYT, May 21, 1937. Hitler’s reaction to Mundelein was blunt: “The Church organization is the work of human hands, and human hands can destroy it. If it is destroyed true faith may emerge purified.” *Daily Telegraph* (London) June 5, 1937.
76. Albrecht 2.24–31, Pacelli to Menshausen, June 24, 1937. Among some German government circles, there was considerable discussion on methods to end the Concordat. See DGFP D.1.661, Memorandum of the Foreign Office (Berlin), June 30, 1937.
77. *Times*, July 18, 1937.
78. DGFP D.1.667, Bergen to Foreign Office (Berlin), July 23, 1937.
79. Harrigan (1966), 467–9. Nonetheless, Hitler had his sympathizers among some clergy. The Anglican bishop of Gloucester declared quite simply in July 1938: “It is not true that the German churches are treated with insult and injustice.” Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller’s recent jailing by the Nazis was justified because he had abused the privilege of the pulpit and preached politics. The bishop concluded by assuring his readers that all was well in Germany “provided [the clergy] obey the law and do not use their pulpits for political purposes”. *Times*, July 14, 1938.
80. Mario Barbera cited in Kertzer (2001), 277–9.
81. Articles appeared regularly. The following list is a sample. “La Questione Giudaica” e l’Antisemitismo nazionalsocialista, 1934.4, 126–36, continued in 1934.4, 276–85; La questione giudaica, 1936.4, 37–46; La questione giudaica e il sionismo, 1937.2, 418–31; La questione giudaica e le conversioni, 1937.2, 497–510; La questione giudaica e l’apostolico cattolico, 1937.3, 27–39; La questione giudaica e “*La Civiltà Cattolica*”, 1938.4, 1–16. All the articles cited maintained the traditional anti-Jewish Catholic argument that the “problem” stemmed from the Jews themselves. While racist Antisemitism was repugnant, it was understandable.
82. Wolf, 203–6.
83. One example of Vatican supported work was based at the University of Utrecht in Holland. See ADSS 6.3, Professor J. Schmutzer to Pius XII, March 10, 1939. Schmutzer referred to the activities of the Catholic Committee for Refugees founded in 1936 with papal approval. Schmutzer was also president of the International Catholic Bureau for the Affairs of Refugees, established in 1938. The work of the committee was directed at helping converted Jews leave Germany. The most active Catholic refugee organization in Germany was St Raphaelsverein. Founded in 1871 to care for German emigrants, it became the chief church agency helping Catholics of Jewish ancestry. Between 1936 and 1938, 2,366 baptized Jews were given help in leaving the Reich. See Lewy, 283. See also Michael Phayer (1993), 219.
84. ADSS 6 Annexe 2 Circular Letter of Cardinal Pacelli January 9, 1939; Annexe 3 Cardinal Pacelli to the Representatives of the Holy See November 30, 1938. Both letters were confirmed with a personal letter from Pius XI addressed to the leading cardinals of North and Latin America. Annexe 4 Pius XI to the cardinal archbishops of Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Quebec, and Buenos Aires January 10, 1939.

85. Phayer (1993), 219. Even so, as the persecution became worse, organizational distinctions became obsolete.
86. Arad, 69–71, 99–101, 125–6, 137–9. Emigration by whatever means was official government policy until an order banning Jewish emigration was passed on October 23, 1941. On July 27, 1938, the Reichsverband der Juden in Deutschland (Reich Federation of Jews in Germany), headed by Leo Baeck, decided that only Jews “by religion” could be members. Converted Jews would have to seek help from the Christian churches. This was, of course, consistent with German social welfare practice. See Phayer, *ibid.*
87. Arad et al. (1987), 131.
88. *ADB* 2.205, Protocol of the Foundation for the Assistance of Non-Aryan Catholics March 22, 1935; *ADB* 3.315/IIj, Financial plan of the German bishops for Diocesan Assistance August 20, 1936; *ADB* 4.447, Report of Grössers March 31, 1938; *ADB* 4.510/IIIh, Report of Bishop Berning on the Assistance for Non-Aryan Catholics August 24, 1939. Rome was also kept well informed of the work of the Raphaelsverein. *ASV, AES, Pos 689, fasc 256, f 99.* nd 1937.
89. E.g. *NYT*, November 11–13, 1938; *Times*, November 12–13, 1938; *SMH*, November 12–14, 1938. Ambassador Dieckhoff in Washington wrote to Berlin outlining the outrage against Germany that was sweeping the United States.
90. *ASV, AES, Germania, Pos 742, fasc 354, ff 40r–41v*, Orsenigo to Pacelli, November 15, 1938.
91. *NYT*, November 13, 1938; November 18, 1938.
92. *ADSS* 6, Appendix 4 Nuncio Orsenigo to Cardinal Pacelli November 15, 1938. Faulhaber’s residence was attacked by a Nazi crowd that had been incited by Gauleiter Wagner, who accused the Church of having the “audacity to take the Jews under its protection”. *AKF* 2.752/I Note of Faulhaber, Munich, November 12, 1938, and *AKF* 2.752/II, Note of Buchwieser, Munich, November 12, 1938.
93. The pogrom was reported in detail in *L’Osservatore* from November 11, 1938 and for the rest of the month.
94. *Tablet*, November 26, 1938. In the same edition, a sermon of Cardinal Faulhaber was quoted. He refuted Nazi antisemitism as an affront to Christianity, since it denied the fundamental Christian principle that membership of the Church was through faith, not blood. He did not speak out in defense of Jews who had lost life and property in the pogrom. I suggest that this would have been politically naïve, something Faulhaber was not. The chief rabbi of Munich asked the cardinal’s help in saving Torah scrolls and other ritual objects from Munich’s main synagogue. Faulhaber responded with immediate help, sending a truck to help the Rabbi and members of the Munich community.
95. See Peter Kent (1988), 601–2.
96. *NYT*, November 13, 1938
97. *NYT*, November 17, 1938.
98. *Tablet*, January 14, 1939; January 28, 1939.
99. For example, see *ADSS* 6.32, 48, 49, 55, 123, 157, 211, 259, 326, 418.
100. Cited in Burleigh (2007), 199.
101. *Times*, November 9, 1938.
102. *NYT*, November 12, 1938
103. *Tablet*, November 9, 1938.
104. *Tablet*, December 10, 1938.
105. *ADSS* 6.6, Note of Cardinal Pacelli, December 3, 1938.
106. Cited in Lewy, 284. Denounced by several parishioners for continuing to pray for the Jews, Lichtenberg was finally arrested in 1941. *Tablet* November 15, 1941. He asked to be deported to the ghetto in Lodz in order to minister to non-Aryan Catholics but was sentenced to Dachau. He died en route on 5 November 1943. John Paul II beatified Lichtenberg as a martyr on June 23, 1996.

8 Habemus Papam

1. The title comes from the Latin announcement made to the world upon the election of a new pope. “I announce to you news of great joy—we have a pope!”

2. ADSS 2.53, To the archbishops and bishops of Germany August 6, 1940.
3. Cited in Chadwick (1986), 213. Domenico Tardini was Prefect of the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs and had regular access to the pope. Myron Taylor was the personal representative of President Roosevelt to the Holy See.
4. The German papers were less fulsome in their praise, but were nonetheless positive in their sentiments. Count Ciano wrote in his diary that the choice of Pacelli was good for Vatican-German relations, since it was known that "Pacelli the Cardinal favored the Germans." Ciano 1.48, March 2, 1939. The following day he wrote "Il Duce... is happy with the election of Pacelli." Ciano, 1.48, March 3, 1939.
5. *Tablet*, March 11, 1939.
6. Pius XII, Easter Message of Peace, March 9, 1939. *CM* 37.873; May 8, 1939.
7. *NYT*, May 14, 1939.
8. The first formal diplomatic act of the new pope was a letter written, with the help of the German cardinals, to Hitler. ADSS 2, Appendix IX Pius XII to Hitler (minute of letter) March 6, 1939.
9. *Manchester Guardian*, March 16, 1939.
10. On the papal peace initiatives, see ADSS 1, *passim*; Anthony Rhodes, 230–3; Pierre Blet, 10–25; Owen Chadwick (1986), Chapter 3. See too *NYT*, May 14, 1939.
11. Cited in Charles Gallagher, 9.
12. Pius XII, "Un'ora grave" August 24, 1939, *AAS* 31.10. The *Tablet's* report of the broadcast is interesting for its liberal translation that suggests an anti-Axis bias. *Tablet*, September 2, 1939.
13. Pius XII, "Endeavors for Peace, Allocution of the Holy Father addressed to the members of the Sacred College of Cardinals on his Name Day, the feast of St Eugenius I, June 2," *CM* 37.880, August 22, 1939.
14. On the subject of the pope's willingness to act as an intermediary between the warring parties see José Sanchez, 108–13.
15. See *CM* 37.887, "Poland Will Not Die!" September 30, 1939.
16. *AAS* 31.6, "Allocutio 18 October 1939".
17. *Times*, October 19, 1939.
18. *Dublin Review*, January 1941, 6.
19. See Michael Phayer (2002), 238, 243–7.
20. *Tablet*, *NYT*, *Times* *passim*, September 1939–December 1940. See also Blet (1999), Chapter 4.
21. *Summi Pontificatus* 106.
22. Pius added the word *quasi* (translated here as "tends to") in a later draft of the text, thus weakening the original sentence. See ADSS 1.318 for the working draft of the encyclical.
23. *Times*, October 28, 1939; *Tablet* November 4, 1939. The French Air Force dropped 88,000 copies over Germany. Chadwick (1986), 84–5.
24. Robert Graham (1984), 139–40; *Tablet*, November 18, 1939.
25. Leonidas Hill, "History and Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*," *The Nazi Holocaust*, 8.1204.
26. Anthony Rhodes, 237.
27. Pius XII, "Christmas Message on International Peace 24 December 1939", *CM* 38.889, January 8, 1940.
28. See Frank Coppa, 96.
29. ADSS 1.202, Pius XII to the Belgian Ambassador September 14, 1939.
30. See *Inter Arma Caritas*, Volume 2, *Perseguitati per Motivi Politici, Religiosi e Razziali*, pp. 643–716 for a selection of Jewish letters asking for papal help and Vatican responses.
31. *Inter Arma Caritas*, Volume 1, 3–37.
32. Conway (1968), 241–2.
33. *NYT* March 14, 1940.
34. ADSS 8.207, Maglione to Osborne November 24, 1941.
35. ADSS 2.105, Pius XII to Bishop von Preysing, Berlin, April 30, 1943.
36. *NYT*, December 25, 1942.
37. See Chapter 11. On the Vatican Archives in general see the helpful essay by John Jay Hughes, "The Vatican's Archives: What's the problem?" *Inside the Vatican*, May 2002, 46–9.
38. Paul O'Shea (2009), 2–3.
39. "Protocol of the Wannsee Conference January 20, 1942" in Arad, 249–61.

40. "Signed obligation by SS men taking part in an extermination operation to observe secrecy," July 18, 1942; "Extract from A speech by Himmler before senior SS Officers in Poznan," October 4, 1943, in Yitzhak Arad, 274–5; 344.
41. See *Extract from the Speech by Hitler 30 January 1939*, in Arad, 134–135; *Text of Speech by Chancellor Adolf Hitler at Berlin Sports Palace 30 January 1942* from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1942/420130a.html> (Accessed August 13, 2010). Gerlach, on Goebbels in *Das Reich 16 November 1941*, 808 and n228.
42. FRUS 1942.3, Leland Harrison to Cordell Hull, October 16, 1942, 777.
43. See Robert Graham (1996), 330–337; Dina Porat (2006), 599–632.
44. Chadwick (1986), 201–2.
45. Phayer (2007), 9–14.
46. Phayer (2000), 31–40.
47. ADSS 8.438, Marcone to Maglione, July 17, 1942.
48. DGFP D.13.347, Bergen to Foreign Ministry Berlin.
49. Godolphin Francis D'Arcy Osborne was the British minister accredited to the Holy See (1936–47) and Myron Taylor was the personal representative of President Roosevelt (1940–45) and President Truman (1945–47). Neither the United Kingdom nor the United States had formal diplomatic relations with the Vatican. On Osborne, see Chadwick (1986), *passim*; on Taylor's mission to the Vatican, see John Conway (1975).
50. See Dariusz Libionka (2008), 270–93.
51. ADSS 8, *passim*. See too Peter Hoffmann, 77–82.
52. ADSS 8.14, Cardinal Innitzer to Pius XII February 4, 1941, ADSS 8.15, Cardinal Innitzer to Cardinal Maglione February 5, 1941.
53. Cited in Saul Friedländer (1966), 92, 97–8.
54. Eugenio Corti (1997), 102, 108–10.
55. ADSS 8.374, Scavizzi to Pius XII, May 12, 1942; Peter Hebblethwaite (1993), 169.
56. Shimon Redlich (1990), 44–5, 46.
57. Cited in Blet (1999), 77. See also Redlich (1990), 44. The letter does not appear in ADSS.
58. See ICJHC Preliminary Report October 26, 2000, Q 10.
59. Phayer (2000), 46–7. See also Kent (2002), 48, who agrees with Phayer but qualifies his assessment of Stepinac by saying that even though the archbishop denounced the murder of Jews and Serbs, he never made a public break with the Ustasha, "thus giving the impression that the regime continued with the blessing of the church."
60. See Moore, 127–9. See also *Tablet*, August 29, 1942.
61. ADSS 8.440, Valeri to Maglione July 29, 1942; 8.454, Pacini to Maglione, August 27, 1942 contains reference to the sermons preached by Cardinal Saliège, which infuriated Vallet; 8.463, Pacini to Maglione, September 5, 1942 contains Cardinal Gerlier's protest against antisemitism and the deportations. See also *NYT*, August 29, 1942; September 3, 1942; September 9, 1942; *Tablet*, September 5, 1942.
62. *NYT*, September 10, 1942; Michael Burliegh (2007), 247–8. See ICJHC, Q 20 and n36.
63. Cited in Friedländer (1966), 111–12. See also *Tablet* September 19, 1942; October 17, 1942.
64. ADSS 8.438, Nuncio Cesare Orsenigo to Monsignor Montini, July 28, 1942.
65. ADB 5.742, Report of Margarete Sommer, February 14, 1942.
66. ADB 5.774, Gröber to Pius XII, June 14, 1942.
67. ADSS 9.38, 75, 152, 240, 346.
68. See Susan Zuccotti (1987), Chapter 5.
69. ADSS 8.153, Burzio to Maglione September 18, 1941.
70. ADSS 8.199, Maglione to Sidor, November 12, 1941.
71. ADSS 8.326, Burzio to Maglione March 25, 1942. See also ADSS 8.332, Maglione to Burzio, March 27, 1942.
72. ADSS 8.426, Notes of Tardini, July 13, 1942. Phayer makes the salient point that the Vatican did not inform any of Europe's bishops about Tiso and his pivotal role in the extermination of Slovakian Jewry, as Cardinal Faulhaber discovered to his great embarrassment after the war. I can only surmise that Rome held to the principle that to speak against the evil of Tiso's regime would create greater evil. In any case, the idea of priests in politics went against the long-held view of both Pius XI and Pius XII that the clergy should not have any active role in secular politics. Tiso was indicted and later condemned and hanged in April 1947. Rome had only asked that he be given a fair trial. Phayer (2000), 46; Kent (2002), 174–5.

73. NYT, December 24, 1941.
74. For a detailed summary of the actions taken by members of the American and British governments in response to the telegram, see Richard Breitman (1998), Chapter 9.
75. ADSS 8.314, Bernardini to Maglione, March 19, 1942. The substance of Bernardini's cable to Maglione was a report on the situation of Jews in central Europe. The nuncio's information had been supplied by Riegner of the World Jewish Congress and Jewish Agency in Palestine. The memorandum is reprinted in John Morley, *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews during the Holocaust 1939–1943*, Appendix B, 212–15.
76. See Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1942.3, 772–6.
77. FRUS 1942.3, 776.
78. ADSS 8.493 Notes of Montini September 27, 1942 with a note from Cardinal Maglione. This comment stands in marked contrast to Maglione's remarks about Tiso in March of the same year. See ADSS 8.326.
79. ADSS 8.507 Maglione to Harold Tittmann, October 10, 1942.
80. FRUS 3.1942, 778–779, Harrison to Sumner Wells, relaying telegram from Tittmann in Rome, October 16, 1942.
81. Zuccotti (2000), 111.
82. Ibid, 106–8.
83. ADSS 7.53, Notes of Maglione, December 14, 1942.
84. Phayer (2007), 49–50.
85. For example, see *The Times* for the period December 4–14, 1942. Almost every edition of the paper contained at least one article on the Jews.
86. *Times*, December 18, 1942.
87. ADSS 8.578, Osborne to Maglione, December 29, 1942. The only public protests made by the German bishops concerned the euthanasia program. The most famous protests were those of Clemens von Galen of Münster in 1941. See Graham (1976), 68–72. At the same time, in Germany itself the RSHA and its agencies had called a halt to the overt attacks on the Church. Heydrich told a meeting of religious specialists within the SD in September 1941 that although the attacks would be scaled back, “The immediate aim: the Church must not regain one inch of ground it has lost. The ultimate aim: destruction of the confessional churches.” Heydrich cited in Wall (1971), 440.
88. Chadwick (1986), 217.
89. “The 1942 Christmas Message of Pope Pius XII entitled: The Holy Season of Christmas and Sorrowing Humanity,” *CM*, January 1943, 45–60 (see the Italian text *AAS* 35(1943), 9–24). This interpretation is speculation at this stage. Historians need access to the drafts and notes made by Pius as he prepared the text.
90. Ibid, 46.
91. Ibid, 54, 58.
92. Ibid, 59.
93. Sanchez, 57 citing FRUS 1943.2, Harrison to Cordell Hull, 911–12.
94. Ronald Rychlak (2000), 178; NYT, December 25, 1942.
95. Chadwick (1986), 219–20.
96. Ibid, 218, citing Ciano's Diaries. Predappio was Mussolini's home village.
97. Rhoades, 272–4. In May 2002, French Protestant pastor Françoise de Beaulieu, a former *Wehrmacht* radio operator in Zossen (the OKW Headquarters outside Berlin), spoke of his arrest in December 1942 on the charge of distributing illegal copies of the pope's Christmas Address. At his court martial in April 1943, he was spared the death penalty but given a prison sentence for spreading a “subversive and demoralizing document” as well as being “spiritually attracted to Jewish environments and sympathetic towards Jews.” *Zenit*, May 14, 2002.
98. Chadwick's essay is based on his reading of ADSS Vol. 9 (1975). Among the many other works on the subject, Robert Katz (1969), Fausto Coen (1993), and Alessandro Portelli (2000) are particularly insightful. Robert Katz (2003) relies on recently opened state archives from the war years.
99. Zuccotti (1987) provides a comprehensive and global account of the implementation of the Holocaust in Italy. See also Alexander Stille (1992) for personal accounts of five Italian Jewish families, and Morley, Chapter 10. Renzo de Felice's (1993) is widely regarded as the standard reference on Italian Jews and fascism.

100. Zuccotti (2000), Chapters 12 through 14.
101. Richard Bosworth (2002), 399.
102. Pighin (2010), 280–1.
103. *NYT*, September 9–10, 1943; *L'Osservatore Romano*, September 10–11, 1943.
104. *NYT*, July 23, 1943; August 15, 1943.
105. Jane Scrivener (1945/2007), 3–4. Scrivener was the *nom de plume* of American-born Mother Mary St Luke who kept a diary of the German occupation.
106. Richard Lamb (1993), 21. The treatment of the Italians by their former allies was appalling. Thousands of Italians were sent to German POW camps as well as forced labor camps throughout the Reich and eastern Europe. Many thousands died, including hundreds of men who were gunned down after surrendering. This was common throughout Greece.
107. *NARA*, RG 226 E 210 Box 6 Doc 337.1, Intercept of SD reports, September 23, 1943; October 5, 1943.
108. *NARA*, RG 226 E 210 Box 6 Doc 337.1, Intercept of SD reports, September 29, 1943; October 8, 1943.
109. Rick Atkinson (2007), 240–1.
110. *NYT*, July 20, 1943; Bruno Pighin (2010), 272.
111. “Pius XII’s war efforts seen on rediscovered films” *Zenit*, October 29, 2009.
112. *NYT*, August 14, 1943.
113. *ADSS* 7.302, Maglione to the nuncios in Madrid, Lisbon, Dublin, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Bogota, Rio de Janeiro, Lima, Caracas, and the Apostolic Delegates in Ottawa and Washington. The prompt response of the Vatican to notify its diplomats around the world of the bombing was a not so subtle attempt to encourage them to protest against further bombing of the city. *ADSS* 7.303, Pius XII to President Roosevelt July 20, 1943. The letter was published in *The New York Times* on July 22, 1943.
114. <http://paulonpius.blogspot.com/2010/10/story-of-enrico-galeazzi-1943.html> (Accessed October 11, 2010). The entry contains the references from *ADSS* volume 7.
115. Phayer (2007), 71.
116. *ADSS* 9.282, Easterman to Pius XII August 2, 1943.
117. “Allocution of Pius XII on the Feast of St Eugenius, 2 June 1943”, *CM* 41.3 (September 1943).
118. See Giovanni Miccoli (2000), 250–3. This perception was not held by the U.S.-based Executive of the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe who appealed to Secretary of State Cordell Hull to use what they believed was “as excellent opportunity” to rescue thousands of Jews in Italy, southern France, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. *NYT*, September 9, 1943.
119. Wolff had previously been Himmler’s Chief of Staff. He was appointed Highest SS and Police Leader for Italy.
120. Richard Breitman (2002), 403–4.
121. *ADSS* 9.338, Note of the Secretariat of State September 18, 1943. On September 24, 1943, Kappler warned Berlin that neutral diplomats were leaving Rome on a special train and that many Jews were trying to escape with them.
122. *NARA*, RG 226 E 210 Box 6 Doc 337.1, Intercept of SD report, October 5, 1943. See too Pighin, 305–6. Archbishop Costantini wrote in his diary for September 29, 1943 that the Jews had to bring the gold or face “deportation to Poland.”
123. See Phayer (2007), 121–2.
124. Zuccotti (2000), 154. See, too, *ADSS* 9.349, Note of the Secretariat of State September 27, 1943; and Fausto Coen, 26–37.
125. Phayer (2000), 99; Chadwick (1977), 188.
126. *NARA*, RG 242 T 120 Roll 4354, E421525, Möllhausen to von Ribbentrop, October 6, 1943.
127. *NARA*, RG 242 T 120 Roll 4354, E 421524, Möllhausen to von Ribbentrop, October 7, 1943.
128. *NARA*, RG 242 T 120 Roll 4354, E 421521, von Thadden to Möllhausen, October 7, 1943.
129. Katz (2003), 80.
130. Phayer (2007), 75.
131. <http://www.archives.gov/iwg/reports/images/treatment-of-italian-jews-2.jpg> (accessed December 27, 2007).

132. ADSS 9.363, Note of the Secretariat of State, October 11, 1943.
133. See Chadwick (1977), 190; Morley, 179; Breitman (2002), 406, Miccoli, 250–1.
134. Italy had the highest survivor rate (85 percent) of any country in Europe, with the exception of Denmark. While the majority of those with knowledge of rescue supported the work, there were some who feared that allowing Jews and other refugees into church property would endanger the neutrality of the Holy See. ADSS 9.382, Note of the Secretariat of State, October 23, 1943.
135. Coen (1993), 61–74. OSS intercepts of SD reports also indicated an increasing anger toward the Germans and an increased sympathy for the Jews. NARA, RG 226 E 210 Box 6, Doc 337.1.18, Intercept of SD report September 29, 1943.
136. Coen, 89–94; Portelli (2001) describes the conditions inside the Collegio Militare and the state of the Jews during the two days of waiting.
137. Chadwick (1977), 190; Morley, 180. Costantini described scenes of “infinite misery” as the roundup continued throughout the day. Pighin (2010), 319.
138. ADSS 9.368, Notes of Cardinal Maglione, October 16, 1943.
139. Phayer (2007), 77. An odious man, the OSS had the measure of Hudal well established by summer of 1944: “. . . a renegade in the full sense of the word, he belongs to the worst category of priests who dabble in politics, being unscrupulous [and] without character.” Cited in Phayer (2007), 196.
140. ADSS 9.373 Bishop Hudal to General Stahel October 16, 1943.
141. Phayer (2007), 78.
142. Cited in Morley, 181. See also Miccoli, 254–5.
143. ADSS 9.373, Bishop Alois Hudal to Commandant Stahel October 16, 1943. See also Chadwick (1977), 191–3.
144. Breitman (2002), 407.
145. Phayer (2000), 99.
146. Phayer (2007), 85.
147. Renzo de Felice calculated the number of Jews hidden in religious houses in and around Rome to 4461. Another 252 refugees, including many Jews and members of the antifascist resistance, were sheltered in seminaries that fell under the direct supervision of the Vatican. Cited in Marchione (1997), 214–21.
148. See Rychlak (2000), 202–4; Sanchez, 147. Papal enclosure refers to the canonical cloister of solemnly professed nuns, such as Benedictines or Carmelites. It is very specific and defined. Under normal circumstances, no outsider, even clergy, were permitted to enter the cloister. The only exception was to provide urgent medical or sacramental aid to someone in dire necessity. Male cloister has traditionally been less stringent, but in the 1940s it was observed strictly.
149. See ADSS 7.327, Notes of Tardini, August 4, 1943; Alvarez and Graham, 83–8; Chadwick (1986), Chapter 12.
150. Phayer (2007), 80–9.
151. ADSS 7 *passim*. There are 98 documents (out of a total of 505) related to appeals to spare Rome and Italy from *Allied* bombing. The pattern continued through Volume 11 (January 1944–May 1945).
152. ADSS 7.249, Maglione to Cicognani (Washington) June 15, 1943; 7.302, Maglione to Nuncios July 20, 1943; 7.303 Pius XII to President Roosevelt July 20, 1943. Phayer (2007), 81.
153. ADSS 7.336, Notes of Tardini August 13–15, 1943; 7.347 Maglione to Osborne and Tittmann, August 15, 1943.
154. ADSS 7.334, Maglione to Cicognani, August 11, 1943. Allied air raids were described “terroristic.” See too ADSS 7.364, Maglione to Fietta (Buenos Aeries) August 23, 1943, and Atkinson 139–40; 479–82.
155. ADSS 7.433, Maglione to Cicognani, October 12, 1943; 434 Notes of Tardini, December 12, 1943. See too Harold H. Tittmann (2004), 76.
156. Katz (2003), 135–6; 247–8.
157. The Berlin request is found in ADSS (7.430) but the Vatican response is not. See Phayer (2007), 85.
158. ADSS 9.82, von Preysing to Pius XII March 6, 1943.
159. Breitman (2002), 406–7; Morley, 183,186. Coen (1993), 95–101, has a vivid description of the journey. See ADSS 9.389, Agostini to Maglione, October 25, 1943.

160. Portelli, *passim*, Phayer (2000), 97–8; Zuccotti (2000), 155–6.
161. See ADSS 9.388, 390, 392, 401; ADSS 10.13, Montini to Giuseppe Chiot, January 20, 1944. See ADSS 10 *passim*. See too Loparco (2009). Loparco has researched the archives of Congregation for Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life where there are several hundred reports submitted detailing rescue work in Rome under the German occupation.
162. ADSS 2.105, Pius XII to von Preysing April 30, 1943.
163. See the translation of part of the letter in Morley, 123–4.
164. *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 25, 1943. The first report of the Rome raid in the British press was in December. *Tablet*, December 18, 1943. Ironically, news of the bombing of San Lorenzo was published five days after the event. *Tablet*, July 24, 1943.
165. Zuccotti (1987), 130–1.
166. ADSS 9.394 David Panzieri to Pius XII October 27, 1943.
167. ADSS 9.390 Tacchi-Venturi to Maglione, October 25, 1943.
168. There was at least one case of Pius's protesting to the Germans over their potential violation of papal neutrality. In February 1944 an Italian police squad raided the basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura looking for deserters, anti-fascists and Jews. The pope sent a formal protest to the German ambassador claiming that the Lateran Treaty prevented any foreign agent entering papal extraterritorial property to apprehend people accused of crimes against Italian civil law. The timing of the protest and the urgency about it, along with the fact that it came from the pope himself and not through the secretary of state, suggests that Pius wanted to prevent any possibility of German or Fascist Italian interference in any papal property where Jews and other refugees were being hidden. See ADSS 1123–27. *NYT*, February 9, 1944.
169. Cited in Portelli, 11.

9 Blessed Eugenio?

1. Cited in Giovanni Miccoli (2000), 59.
2. Saul Friedländer (1965), 61.
3. Gary Krupp (2010) *Pope Pius XII and World War II: The Documented Truth*, 3rd ed., PTW Publishing, New York.
4. Charles Gallagher (2003), 9.
5. During the procession into St Peter's at the beginning of the Coronation Mass, it was customary to burn flax before the pope at several stages along the way with the words: *Sancte Pater sic transit gloria mundi* (Holy Father, so passes the glory of the world). This reinforced the idea that the holder of the office was there solely by the grace of God. *Tablet*, March 11, 1939.
6. See *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 29–32.
7. Andrew Roberts (2003), 42.
8. John Adair, cited in Roberts, xxvii.
9. Roberts, 18–19.
10. *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 6. See also Oliver Logan (1998), who explores the development of the papal "cult," which reached its high point during the pontificate of Pius XII.
11. Cited in Pierre Blet (1999), 194–5.
12. After the death of the secretary of state, Cardinal Maglione, in August 1944, Pius assumed the responsibilities of the office.
13. The Vatican Information Bureau was established in October 1939 to assist in communication between prisoners of war and refugees. By June 1941 it had investigated nearly 200,000 requests for and from prisoners of war (POWs). *Tablet* June 28, 1941. Four months later the number had risen to 300,000. *Tablet* November 8, 1941.
14. See Paul O'Shea (2009).
15. Paul Webster (1990), Chapter 13, especially 123–7.
16. For example, see Chadwick (1986), 213. I have used this citation at the opening of Chapter 9.
17. *Times*, May 20, 1963.
18. Blet, 42–4, Chadwick (1986), 110–13. See also FRUS 1940.2, Myron Taylor to President Roosevelt, May 17, 1940, 705–6.
19. Gunther Lewy (1964), 228. Two Catholic papers in Germany also condemned the pope's letters.

20. *Tablet*, August 30, 1940 cited in Chadwick (1986), 114.
21. *Ibid.*
22. One of the sad ironies lies in the fact that the area around San Lorenzo was known as one of the most antifascist parts of Rome with a long history of antagonism toward the regime.
23. A. C. Bradley (1904/1974), 14.
24. Saul Friedländer, cited in Colin Tatz (2003), 28.

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- *Epistle to Diognetus* (V 1).

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