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International Conference

New documents from the Pontificate of Pope Pius XII and their Meaning for Jewish-Christian Relations: A Dialogue Between Historians and Theologians

Monday-Wednesday, October 9-11, 2023

*Aula Magna of the Pontifical Gregorian University
Piazza della Pilotta 4 – Rome (Italy)*

Registration is now open for the international conference “*New Documents from the Pontificate of Pope Pius XII and their Meaning for Jewish-Christian Relation: A Dialogue between Historians and Theologians*”. After its first announcement, last June, the conference aroused already widespread interest. Indeed, it aims to offer new light on the historical and theological controversies concerning Pope Pius XII and the Vatican during the Holocaust period, and on Jewish-Christian relations at multiple levels, thanks to important discoveries emerging from the analysis of the Vatican archives and to a strengthened collaboration between institutions and researchers.

The conference, which will take place **from 9 to 11 October in the Aula Magna of the Pontifical Gregorian University**, will in fact see the participation of the major international academics and researchers involved in this sector, both in the historical and theological fields, allowing the meeting and the comparison between a plurality of approaches and visions. Structured in seven sessions, the conference will address the most complex issues, both in the historical-diplomatic implications and in the social, religious and cultural ones which led to an irrevocable reformulation of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish People in the following decades.

Monday, October 9th - The first session will address the motivations and decisions of Pope Pius XII in the face of fascism, Nazism and communism, in an attempt to balance his roles as head of the Church and the Holy See.

Tuesday, October 10th - The second session will explore the worldview of the Vatican as a whole in the face of the Holocaust, and in particular the views on nations and religions that shaped the response of officials, prelates and lay people around Pius XII. In the third session, the theorization and practice of the racial laws, born in Nazi Germany and spread throughout Europe, will be explored in depth. The fourth session, structured in two panels, will be dedicated to the rescue of the Jews, with particular attention to the 80th anniversary of the roundup in Rome: Who saved the Jews and why? What can the new archives tell us about this event as to why the rescue did or did not happen?

Wednesday, October 11th - The fifth session will map the reactions of papal diplomats and nunciatures around the world in the face of the refugee crisis and the horrors of the Holocaust. The sixth session will follow some particularly critical post-war moments, such as aid to Nazi and Axis war criminals, and the Vatican's efforts on behalf of Germans convicted of war crimes in international military tribunals.

The seventh and final session will finally travel the uncertain path that led to the declaration *Nostra Aetate* (1965) when, twenty years after the Holocaust, the Second Vatican Council rejected anti-Semitism and underlined the profound link between Christianity and Judaism.

The opening session of the conference – Monday, October 9 at 3 p.m. – will be inaugurated by the greetings of H.E. **Mons. Étienne Vető**, Auxiliary Bishop of Reims, former Director of the Cardinal Bea Center for Judaic Studies (Pontifical Gregorian University); by **Dr. Iael Nidam-Orvieto**, Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research (Yad Vashem, Jerusalem); by **Dr. Suzanne Brown-Fleming**, Director of International Academic Programs at the “Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies” (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C.); of His Excellency **Cardinal Pietro Parolin**, Secretary of State of the Holy See; and **Rav Riccardo Di Segni**, Chief Rabbi of Rome.

The conference will be preceded by a study session about the documents found in the archives of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, regarding the rescue of Jews in Roman parishes and religious institutes.

Registration via the online form at www.unigre.it is required to attend the conference in person. English-Italian simultaneous translation service is provided.

The conference will also be streamed live on youtube.com/unigregoriana

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE FOR JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA OPERATORS

Journalists and media operators who wish to participate must apply, no less than 48 hours before the event, through the Holy See Press Office online accreditation System available, or at press.vatican.va/accreditamenti

For technical information on the event and interviews, please contact: press@unigre.it

STATEMENTS BY THE CONFERENCE ORGANISING INSTITUTIONS

“The conference will favour a reflection at the highest historical and Jewish and Christian theological levels, on the attitude of the Holy See towards the unfolding of the Second World War. Due to the high prestige of the promoting bodies and the scholars called to participate, it will certainly be one of the turning points in the history of Jewish-Christian relations of our time.”

Liliana Picciotto, historian of Fondazione CDEC, Milan - Italy

*“The Cardinal Bea Center for Judaic Studies of the Pontifical Gregorian University undertook with great enthusiasm the initiative to organize, together with the other partners, this important conference. The Center in fact, already in the name of its license - Jewish Studies and Jewish-Christian Relations - places alongside the perspective of historical study that of its theological relevance. Moreover, the man from whom the Center itself takes its name - Card. Augustin Bea - was first a trusted collaborator and personal confessor of Pius XII, then one of the major architects of the Jewish-Christian dialogue and of the declaration *Nostra Aetate*.*

Our hope, therefore, is that this conference will open a space for study and discussion of finally accessible documents that can shed light on a complex and dramatic historical period, but that at the same time this will be coupled with a reflection on how the new data impact the theology of Jewish-Christian relations. These relations are based on the origin of Christianity from Judaism and on a largely common scriptural heritage, but also on a complex history in which Christian anti-Judaism played a considerable role in the establishment of anti-Semitism. The new documents should be an incentive for the continued deepening of the theological dimension alongside the historical one.”

**Dr. Massimo Gargiulo, pro-director, Cardinal Bea Centre for Judaic Studies
Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome - Italy**

“The opening of the Vatican archives in March 2020 signaled to historians and researchers worldwide a new chapter of openness and transparency from Rome. We, at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., are excited that so many academic institutions and sponsors are gathering to present and discuss the efforts of an international community of scholars who have been working diligently for more than three years studying, analyzing and, when possible, copying the Vatican’s war-time archives for access.

It’s expected to take decades of scrutiny and collaborative work by scholars of all faiths before we have a complete picture on the profound ethical, theological and historical questions raised by the Holocaust, but we are hopeful that careful, meticulous scholarship will be unearthed to add to the vital and vibrant field of Holocaust research and honor the memory of survivors and their families.”

Dr. Suzanne Brown-Fleming, director of International Academic Programs at the “Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies”, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C.

“This conference is an important opportunity to meet and discuss very central topics regarding the attitude of the Vatican and the Church at large vis-à-vis the Holocaust, some of them still highly controversial. Scholars from different countries specializing in different topics will share their research findings and thoughts, offering different perspectives which can contribute to an open discussion and to understand more fully some of the central questions under scrutiny. Such an occasion will not only increase our knowledge, but it will also build new venues of dialogue and encourage serious and meticulous research on these topics.”

**Dr. Iael Nidam-Orvieto, director, International Institute for Holocaust Research
Yad Vashem – The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Jerusalem**

“The aim of the dialogue between Catholics and Jews since the Second Vatican Council is to build mutual understanding between our respective traditions. Saint Leo University's Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies has advanced this goal for 25 years, and so this conference offers a unique and historic opportunity. It does so in a highly significant way as it brings together scholars who can clarify the historical contexts of a difficult era along with theologians who can draw upon the rich religious resources of each tradition. The dialogue between these two groups can help illuminate the issues at the heart of Christian-Jewish relations more broadly.”

**Dr. Matthew Tapie, director, Saint Leo University’s Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies, Florida
Rabbi David Maayan, assistant director, Saint Leo University’s Center for Catholic-Jewish, Florida**

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IS SPONSORED BY

- UCEI – Union of Jewish Communities of Italy
- The Holy See, Vatican Apostolic Archive
- The Holy See, Dicastery for Culture and Education
- The Holy See, Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity
- U.S. Department of State, Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues
- U.S. Embassy to the Holy See
- Israeli Embassy to the Holy See
- FSCIRE – Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII
- RESILIENCE, <https://www.resilience-ri.eu>
- AJC – American Jewish Committee
- Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations, Saint Joseph’s University, Philadelphia