

A Response from the Catholic League

The Courier-News

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The article by Alan Shelton ("Anti-Semitism: The Church's Chilling Legacy," Oct. 21) is more of a screed than a reasoned argument. Shelton's reading of history is deeply flawed and, given his hatred of the Catholic Church, it seems likely his incompetence is a function of his hatred.

Shelton claims that the Church's role during the Holocaust is "largely unknown." With that we agree, though the evidence is not something that Shelton would like to trumpet. It was Jeno Levai, the foremost scholar of the Holocaust in Hungary, who said that Pope Pius XII "did more than anyone else to halt the dreadful crime [the Holocaust] and alleviate its consequences." And it was the Israeli diplomat and scholar Pinchas Lapide who wrote that "The Catholic Church under the pontificate of Pius XII was instrumental in saving the lives of as many as 860,000 Jews from certain death at Nazi hands." Golda Meir similarly recognized Pius XII's heroics.

Shelton would also have a hard time explaining why the chief rabbi in Rome during the German occupation, Emilio Zolli, would say that "no hero in all of history was more militant, more fought against, none more heroic, than Pius XII." Indeed, Zolli was so moved by Pius XII's work that he became a Catholic after the war and took the Pope's name as his baptismal name.

And then there was the lavish praise of the *New York Times* and Albert Einstein. On Christmas eve of 1941 and 1942, the *Times* praised Pius XII as a "lonely voice crying out of the silence

of a continent.” Einstein noted that while the universities and the newspapers did nothing to prevent the Holocaust, “Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing truth.”

Now if Shelton wants to avoid grappling with this, let him. But honest men, unmotivated by bigotry, know better.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.