

# HOLOCAUST EVENTS POLITICIZED; REBUTTAL PROVIDED

From April 12-19, the University of Minnesota Duluth hosted a series of events commemorating the Holocaust. There were so many early signals that at least some of these events would be patently unfair to the Catholic Church that both the Diocese of Duluth and the Catholic League raised many public concerns. Bill Donohue wrote a lengthy rebuttal to the events [[click here](#)].

What got our attention initially was the graphic on the front of a postcard that was sent to the Duluth community advertising the series. It was a representation of an invidious portrayal of a Catholic prelate and a Nazi standing on top of a Jewish person. The drawing, which depicts the 1933 Concordat signed between Pope Pius XI and Hitler, has been used by enemies of the Church to paint the pope as an accomplice of the Nazis. As Donohue pointed out, this is pure rubbish. Another disturbing sign was a scheduled production of the 1963 anti-Catholic play, "The Deputy."

The Diocese of Duluth said, "We object to what appears to be a thoroughly biased, and, worse, false presentation of the efforts of Pope Pius XII and other Catholic leaders during the Nazi Holocaust." It also dismissed the academic freedom argument as presented by the University as "hollow."

Fr. Richard Kunst, a Duluth priest, was particularly poignant in his remarks: "Not only am I a Catholic priest and student of papal history, I am of Jewish heritage. My mother is Jewish. In 'The Deputy,' Pius is a victim of hate speech."

Donohue's five-page rebuttal was sent to the President of the University of Minnesota; the Chancellor at the University of Minnesota Duluth; the panelists involved in the events; select

professors on campus; the student newspaper; student groups; the media; and leaders in the Catholic and Jewish communities. We also distributed copies of the Catholic League reader, *Pius XII and the Holocaust* to students.

Professor Deborah Petersen-Perlman, who played a major role in planning these events, said, "We are intending to raise awareness." It could also be said that stunt men do the same. This is the kind of lame response we expected, and it is one we've experienced with academics many times before.

By blanketing the Duluth community with our response, we put everyone on notice that we were on to the University's propaganda exercise. If those associated with this veiled attack on the Catholic Church had any intellectual fortitude, they would have reached out to area Catholics. No matter, they expected a cakewalk and instead had to scurry.