

HOLOCAUST-SURVIVING JEWSTHANK POPE

oday, Pope Benedict XVI is welcoming a group of Jewish Holocaust survivors. Arranged by the Pave the Way Foundation, the group will personally thank the pope for the Catholic Church's intervention in saving their lives in Italy during World War II.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed this event today:

"Despite attempts by embittered ex-priests and seminarians, and others, to discredit Pope Pius XII's heroic efforts in rescuing Jews during the Holocaust (as many as 860,000 were saved), the evidence is mounting that Pius was a 'Righteous Gentile.' What is happening in the Vatican today is another reminder of just how great a man he was.

"October 9 marks the 50th anniversary of Pius' death. To mark this important event, the Vatican announced yesterday that a convention will be held November 6-8 to honor his work; a photo exhibit will be on display in the colonnade of St. Peter's Square from October 21-January 6. Millions of Catholics hope that eventually Pius will be beatified and then canonized. The Catholic League certainly supports this process.

"Those who disagree with this assessment have a lot of explaining to do. For example, the true test of the Catholic Church's role in rescuing Jews was in Italy, and nowhere in Europe were more Jews saved—fully 85 percent—than in Italy. Also, the chief rabbi in Rome during the German occupation, Emilio Zolli, once said 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' work that he

became a Catholic after the war, taking the pope's name as his baptismal name.

"Finally, today's meeting of Jewish Holocaust survivors thanking the pope for what the Church did to save their lives says it all. No amount of revisionism can change that."