

# HOLOCAUST-SURVIVING JEWS THANK POPE

On June 18, Pope Benedict XVI welcomed a group of Jewish Holocaust survivors. Arranged by the Pave the Way Foundation, the group personally thanked the pope for the Catholic Church's intervention in saving their lives in Italy during World War II. During their audience, the group also announced that they would be arranging a symposium in September highlighting "the important help Pius XII gave to the Jews."

For years we have been on the front lines defending the Church and Pope Pius XII from the lies spread by embittered ex-priests, seminarians and others. The heroic effort of Pope Pius XII in rescuing Jews from the Holocaust (as many as 860,000 were saved) is evidence that Pius was a "Righteous Gentile." With the meeting between Benedict XVI and the Holocaust survivors we were reminded again of just how great a man Pius was.

According to ZENIT, one of the survivors recalled how a monsignor in Italy saved her and her family by "shuttling them around to keep them safe." The survivor also recalled how she and her mother used to dress as nuns and stayed in a convent in order to protect themselves from the Nazi forces.

October 9 marks the 50th anniversary of Pius XII's death. To mark this important event, the Vatican announced that a convention would 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. We certainly support this process (in March we received over 15,000 signatures supporting our petition for the late pontiff's beatification).

Those who disagree with this assessment of Pius XII 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, Eugenio Zolli, once said, “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, the meeting of Jewish Holocaust survivors to thank the pope for what the Church did to save their lives says it all. No amount of revisionism can change that.