

# ISRAEL HOLOCAUST MUSEUM MAKES CHANGES

Israel's Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem, recently amended the wording of its text on Pope Pius XII. The change acknowledges the pope's Christmas radio address in 1942 where the Holy Father called attention to the "hundreds of thousands of persons, who, without any fault on their part, sometimes only because of their nationality or ethnic origin" were killed by the Nazis.

Another change in the wording says Pius XII "did not publicly protest" when Jews were deported from Rome; previously, the text said he "did not intervene." Language regarding other matters was also softened to reveal a less harsh appraisal of the pope.

The changes were welcome if insufficient. For example, a new panel says, "The pope's critics claim that his [the pope's] decision to abstain from condemning the murder of the Jews by Nazi Germany constitutes a moral failure." To be sure, there are such critics. But it is important to note that this accusation is historically inaccurate. Indeed, even the *New York Times*, in two back-to-back Christmas editorials in 1941 and 1942, singled out the pope for "not being silent." Moreover, the reason 800,000 trees were planted in Israel after the war was to commemorate the 800,000 Jews who were saved by the pope.

In the Yad Vashem statement, it said the update was the result of new research. It is hoped that when more evidence is revealed that the text will be further amended. However, there is already plenty of evidence that during and after the war the Jewish community was effusive in its praise for Pope Pius XII. If the people closest to these historical events regarded the pope as their hero, it begs the question why Pius XII is

not regarded as a "Righteous Gentile"; those who have made an in-depth study of the pope's record (including prominent Jewish scholars) have already reached this conclusion.

We await the day when Yad Vashem also recognizes the pope as a "Righteous Gentile."