

PIUS XII DEFENDED

On April 16, the *Washington Post* ran a news story discussing the honors that the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum bestowed on those Catholics who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. Unfortunately, the way the story began did not give tribute to these heroic Catholics.

Here is how the story began: “They were few, lamentably few. A half-century ago, while their neighbors drew the shades and closed their ears, these few could not ignore what was happening to the Jews. They could not ignore the moral message of their Catholic faith.” The article also raised questions regarding the role that Pius XII played at that time.

William Donohue sent the following letter to the newspaper and it printed it on April 26:

Caryle Murphy (new story, “Museum Honors WWII Catholics Who Aided Jews,” April 16) writes that there “were few, lamentably few” Catholics who helped rescue Jews during the Holocaust. Pope Pius XII is also cited as a person who did little to help.

This is strange given the fact that it was Israeli diplomat and scholar Pinchas Lapide who said 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.”

It is axiomatic that every person and institution—including the Catholic Church—could have done more to rescue Jews and others from Hitler’s madness. But to state that there were “lamentably few” Catholics who did anything is contrary to the historical record.