

VATICAN DOCUMENT ON HOLOCAUST DESERVES PRAISE

On March 16, the Vatican issued a long awaited document, "We Remember, a Reflection on the Shoah." It defended the role of Pope Pius XII during World War II while also acknowledging that some Roman Catholics were guilty of misdeeds. It implored Christians to abide by a "moral imperative" that will never allow for another Holocaust. No sooner had the document been released than some were crying "this isn't enough." The league immediately put out a news release responding to the outcry:

"Already there are those who are carping that the document doesn't go far enough. But the Vatican was only right to defend Pope Pius XII. After all, his efforts at saving Jews was duly recognized during and after the war by such luminaries as the World Jewish Congress, the Hebrew Commission, Golda Meir, the New York Times, Albert Einstein and Emilio Zolli (Zolli was the chief rabbi in Rome at the time of the occupation who converted to Catholicism after the war and took Pius' name as his baptismal name). Moreover, the Israeli diplomat and scholar, Pinchas Lapide, concluded his study of the Church's response to the Holocaust by crediting the Church with saving as many as 860,000 Jews.

"Those who reflexively criticize this document should ponder the words of Robert Kempner, the American who served as deputy chief of the Nuremburg war-crimes tribunal: 'All the arguments and writings eventually used by the Catholic Church against Hitler only provoked suicide; the execution of Jews was followed by that of Catholic priests.' William Rubinstein, author of the new book, *The Myth of Rescue*, similarly maintains that the Church could not realistically have done more to save Jews during the war.

"To those who say that the Church could have done more, it is

time to say, 'had others done as much, more Jews would have been saved.'"

The league will have more to say about this issue in the next edition of *Catalyst*.