

THE SINS OF THE UNHOLY SEE: FROM FRANCO TO POPE JOHN PAUL I

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INITIAL FOREWARNING

- This presentation is not meant to be an attack on the Catholic Church or on Catholics; it only intends to bring into the public attention certain historical facts that are little known even among academicians that may tarnish the supposed complete and perfect holiness of the Holy See, the governing body of the Catholic Church.
- I am not a historian by profession: I have been teaching the history of Spain for many years on an irregular schedule within the frame of the Spanish Culture and Civilization course, and have taught the Spanish Civil War as a Topics course on a couple of occasions. It has been only during the last ten years that I have been researching the history of the Spanish Civil War, Franco's dictatorship, and the Vatican, as well as some other history periods that have nothing to do with this presentation.

I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939)

- Before we describe how certain sectors of the Catholic Church behaved in unimaginable ways, we need to understand how the Catholic Church and many of its members were treated before and during the Spanish Civil War.
- Here are a few photographs to illustrate the caliber of cruelty inflicted on the Catholic Church by Republican elements:



9, 10 and 11 Mummified religious corpses which were put on public display outside the Convento de las Salesas in Barcelona following the July 1936 coup (Biblioteca Nacional de España and Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica, FC-CAUSA_GENERAL, 1547, Exp. 11, Imágenes Núm. 4, 8).



12 A statue of the infant Jesus from an unspecified part of Cataluña, dressed in militiamen's overalls and holding a gun and a Republican flag. (Biblioteca Nacional de España)



13 A statue of Christ, painted with the initials of the CNT and adorned with a paper hat bearing an anti-Nazi symbol, displayed in one of Barcelona's public parks in summer 1936 (Biblioteca Nacional de España).



24 A statue of the Virgin Mary, with its eyes and mouth gauged out, discovered after the civil war at a church in Santander (Biblioteca Nacional de España).



25 A dismembered statue of Christ discovered after the civil war in the parish church of Anero (Santander) (Biblioteca Nacional de España).



I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) (cont.)

1. It's only with this background in mind that we can understand how certain members of the Catholic Church would want to retaliate against the Republicans, whom they considered a danger to their survival, and even establish a friendly relationship with Nazism and fascism, whose leaders and followers fought, like they did, the communists that wanted to destroy religion.







I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) (cont.)

2. Once we have seen these horrific images, let's consider the numbers of killings of members of the Catholic Church, starting in Russia, with the period before the Spanish Civil War:

a. In Russia, between 1917 to 1920, Lenin's repression "took away about 9000 lives" (Koehler 2). Around this time, Lenin created his famous "Chekas", which were "establishing a vast network of spies in all corners of Russia to ferret out 'counterrevolutionaries' which, of course, included all religious leaders" (Kohler 3).

b. On March 19, 1922, Lenin wrote a top-secret letter to members of the Politburo asking them to "pursue the removal of church property with the most frenzied and ruthless energy and not hesitate to put down the least opposition" (Kohler 4) As a result of this, more than 5 million peasants died and 38,000 clerics and intellectuals became slave laborers. The church property taken was later valued at \$250,000 (Kohler 5).

I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) (cont.)

c. By 1932, the Soviet authorities had arrested 19,812 priests and nuns.

d. During the Great Purge of 1936-1938, 1,000 Catholic clergymen were executed.

e. The Soviet authorities caused six million deaths through execution and starvation, including Catholics, Orthodox, Baptists, Lutherans, and Muslims. In 1938, Nikolai Bukharin “called for the extermination of religion `at the tip of the bayonet’” (Kohler 6).

f. Given the great presence of Russian communists in Spain – especially in Madrid-, there is no doubt that the previous facts were known among the population.

I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) (cont.)

3. During the Spanish Civil War, the atrocities against the Catholic Church continued:

a. Nearly 7000 clergy (priests, bishops, monks, and nuns) lost their lives during the Spanish Civil War. Murdered clergy are portrayed as passive victims. The persecution was not so much anti-religious, as against the Catholic Church as an institution. (Durgan 82)

Out of those 7000, almost 500 were beatified in Rome at the end of October of 2017 in the largest beatification ceremony seen in a single day. There have been 749 other beatifications of civil war martyrs since 1987, and others may happen in the future. Surprisingly, many of these were not on Franco's but on the Republican side. These were not memorialized.

(<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/clergy-killed-in-spanish-civil-war-to-be-beatified-1.976600>)

b. As seen previously, lots of churches and religious images found in them and in private properties were destroyed and/or desecrated.

I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) (cont.)

4. It is with this background that we can understand how certain members of the Catholic Church decided to forego the Christian principle of forgiving your enemy (Mt. 5:39: ... if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also) and try instead to get even with them, following the Old Testament's injunction: "But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." (Ex. 21:23-25)

This desire for justice (or vengeance) for the murdered clergy led priests, cardinals, and bishops to offer heated sermons, speeches, and declarations to their flocks, pressuring them to fight the Republicans. Not only that: there were even priests and other religious leaders who put on a Falange military costume and a red hat, and placed a pistol in a sling, to get ready to go fight in the war (Casanova 14).

I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) (cont.)

5. Paul Preston describes some priests that gained the reputation of being resolute and audacious, becoming very active participants in the war:

a. Eduardo Martínez Laorden, from Rociana (Huelva), a priest whose church had been set on fire, on July 28 of 1936, made a speech from the balcony of the town hall to the population of his town: “ustedes creerán que por mi calidad de sacerdote voy a decir palabras de perdón y arrepentimiento. Pues ¡No! ¡Guerra contra ellos hasta que no quede ni la última raíz!” Sixty people were murdered; in 1937, 17 other Republicans were executed at the revengeful priest’s instigation. However, the priest still ended up complaining “that the repression had been too lenient” (Preston 148).

I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) (cont.)

b. Other priests, like Antonio Bahamonde y Juan Galán. After having witnessed 66 killings in one night, Bahamonde thought that it was too few: ¡it should have been 700! *He stated the following: “Hay que limpiar más a fondo y hasta el fin toda la podredumbre que Rusia ha introducido en este pueblo.»*" Another priest, **Juan Galán**, from **Zafra**, chaplain of the “Once Bandera, Segundo Tercio de la Legión”, prided himself, showing off his pistol, that he had eliminated more than one hundred Marxists (Julián Casanova 96)

Antonio Bahamonde



I. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) (cont.)

These are just a few priests among many who chose to participate actively in the Spanish Civil War. There were many more. And they were in part instigated to action by higher ecclesiastical authorities who promoted this kind of action: the cardinal Plá I Deniel, and the Cardinal Isidro Gomá, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of all Spain. The latter one was the most aggressive and outspoken cardinal, great defender of Franco, and he was the first one to use the term “spiritual crusade” to refer to the Spanish Civil War, which would be repeated by other Catholic ministers thereafter, but never by military leaders, who preferred to call the war a military crusade.

Cardinal Isidro Gomá



PIUS XII' ROLE

- Pope Pius XII supported Franco, silently throughout the Spanish Civil War, publicly after the war, when he blessed Franco as the defender of the Catholic faith against the atheism of the communists.

II. THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1939-1945) (Cont.)

1. **The Reich Concordat between the Holy See and the German Reich** (July 20, 1933)

The concordat was negotiated by Eugenio Pacelli (future Pius XII) on behalf of Pope Pius XI, who did not show up, and neither did Hitler. This agreement would offer the Reich the sense that they had the pope's approval, while they actually did not. Pius XI thought that signing this treaty would protect the Church from Hitler and his government. The main reason the Vatican signed the pact was to protect the 20 million Catholics that lived in Germany at the time. The price? This: **"The Holy See's concessions** included the concordat's requirement that clergy not engage in political activities and not hold political offices. Bishops were required to swear an oath of loyalty to the Reich and its legally constituted government. The bishops would sponsor only those lay organizations dedicated to charitable works and to social activities of a religious nature."

(<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2003/09/01/vatican-concordat-hitlers-reich-concordat-1933-was-ambiguous-its-day-and-remains>)

THE CONCORDAT BETWEEN THE REICH AND THE HOLY SEE



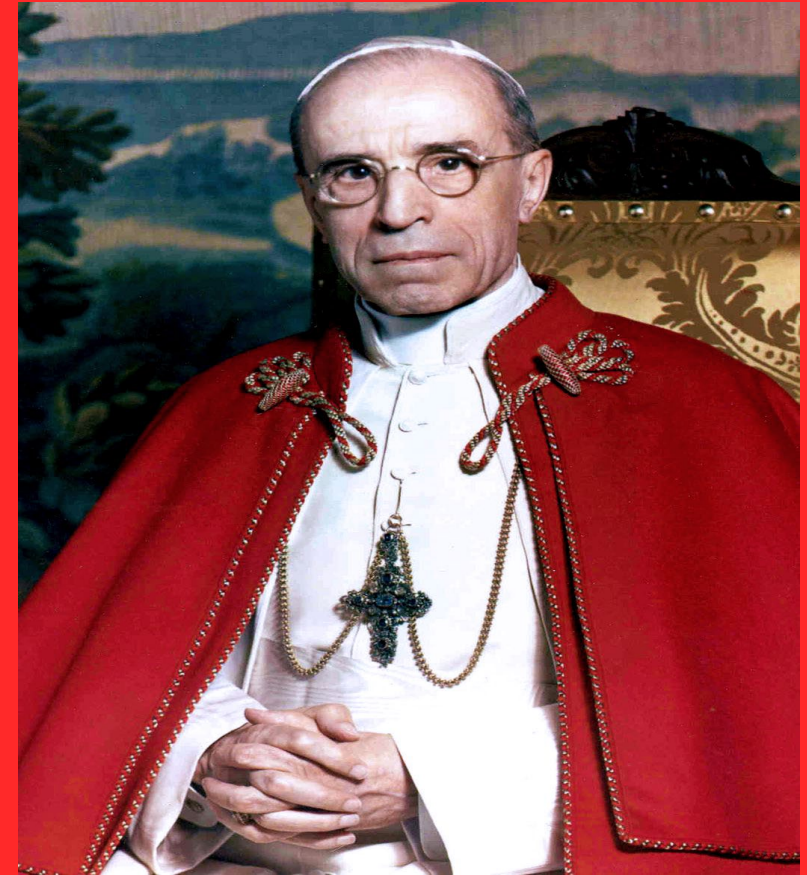
II. THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1939-1945)

2. The Vatican helps Nazis escape to South America and elsewhere:

- Declassified documents in Argentina, America and Europe show how Buenos Aires teamed up with Vatican officials, notably the Argentine cardinal Antonio Caggiano and the French cardinal Eugène Tisserant, to rescue beleaguered Nazis and collaborators from post-war Europe. Imagining itself to be fighting communism, the network issued false documents to slip Hitler's helpers to Italy and on to passenger ships departing from Genoa.
- One of the first to arrive in Buenos Aires was Pierre Daye, a Belgian collaborator who had been sentenced to death. Unusually, he flew, but the sentiments in his memoirs were doubtless shared by others: "It was with a sense of deliverance, of escape, a veritable joy in the heart, that I boarded the plane that would carry me to South America." As the four-engine Douglas neared sanctuary, he grew giddy. "They may be looking for me in that troubled Europe. But they cannot reach me. I fly far from a world gone mad, towards peace. It's all over. I have escaped. I fly through the blue."
- "...there was indeed a shadowy network of genocidal murderers in Argentina. It is a stain on the revered founder of Peronism that has been belatedly and grudgingly recognized. In 2005 the government repealed "directive 11", a secret order that prohibited Jews fleeing the Holocaust from entering Argentina in the 1940s."
- (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jan/08/secondworldwar.argentina>)

II. THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1939-1945) (Cont.)

3. Pius XII seeks pardon or leniency for Germans convicted of major wartime atrocities.

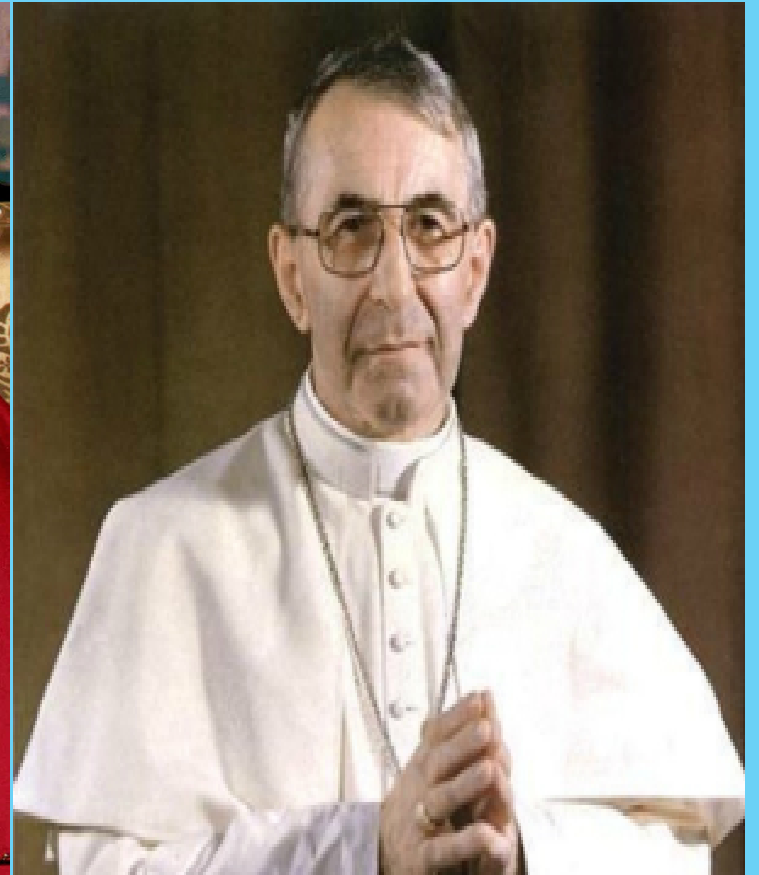


II. THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1939-1945) (Cont.)

4. Attitudes towards the Jews and the Germans

III. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

Paul VI rejects Cardinal Albino Luciani's recommendation to allow birth control, only allowing the rhythm method.



PAPAL INDULGENCES THROUGH THE 60s

Nos, DOCTOR DON ENRIQUE, del Título de San Pedro in Montorio, Presbítero de la Santa Iglesia Romana Cardenal PLA Y DENIEL, por la misericordia divina Arzobispo de Toledo, Primado de las Españas y Comisario General Apostólico de la Bula de Cruzada

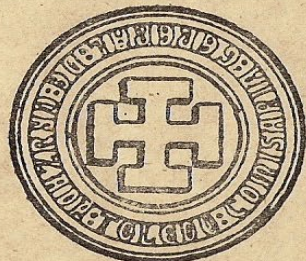
Gracia señaladísima, entre las muchas con que los Romanos Pontífices y en particular el Papa Pío XI, de santa memoria, enriquecieron la Bula de Cruzada, es el Indulto de la ley de ayuno y abstinencia, por el cual se facilita notablemente el cumplimiento de esta ley. Y por cuanto Nos, como Comisario General de la Bula de Cruzada en España, tenemos facultad para publicar Sumarios de los diversos Indultos que la mencionada Bula comprende, hemos determinado publicar, para el debido conocimiento de los fieles, el presente Sumario de los privilegios contenidos en el dicho Indulto de la ley de ayuno y abstinencia.

Así, pues, hacemos saber: que, desde el día de la solemne publicación de la Bula de Cruzada de este año hasta un mes después de la publicación del año venidero, todos los fieles residentes en territorio español o en cualesquiera otros territorios sujetos a la dominación española (excepto los regulares obligados por voto especial a comer manjares cuadragésimales todo el año) gozan, con las condiciones que abajo se expresan, y aun durante el tiempo que estuvieren fuera de España, siempre que eviten el escándalo, de los siguientes privilegios: —I. En cualquier día y en cualquiera refección pueden comer lícitamente lacticinios, huevos y pescados. —II. La ley de abstinencia de carne y de caldo de carne los obliga solamente en los viernes de cuaresma, en las vigiliass de Pentecostés, Inmaculada Concepción de la Virgen María y Natividad de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, y al clero tanto secular como regular se exhorta vivamente sin obligación a guardar la abstinencia en los viernes de las Téporas *extra Quadragesimam*. —III. Unicamente en los miércoles, viernes y sábados de Cuaresma y en las tres vigiliass mencionadas están obligados a la ley del ayuno.

Es de advertir que la Vigilia de Navidad se traslada al sábado de las Téporas inmediatamente anteriores y que en los dichos días de ayuno queda en todo su vigor, para los que estén obligados a ayunar, la prescripción de no hacer al día más que una comida propiamente dicha.

Para gozar de los expresados privilegios es preciso: —I. Tomar el Sumario General de Cruzada. —II. Tomar, además, el presente Sumario. —III. Dar la limosna que para cada uno de los Sumarios hemos señalado. —Cuando los ingresos del Jefe de familia no superen las 15.000 ptas. en total, ni él ni sus familiares deberán tomar Sumario alguno para gozar de los privilegios que concede este Sumario; pero si quisieren gozar de los demás privilegios de Cruzada deberán tomar todos el Sumario general de infima clase y también los demás Sumarios particulares. Además, los hijos de familia, cuyos padres estén obligados a tomar el Sumario de infima clase tampoco están obligados a tomar Sumario alguno para disfrutar de los privilegios de este Sumario de Abstinencia y Ayuno

Dado en Toledo, a 25 de julio de 1961.



*+ Enrique Cardenal Pla y Deniel
Arzobispo de Toledo*



Indulto de la ley de ayuno y abstinencia para 1962 a favor de.....

EDITORIAL CATÓLICA TOLEDANA

Clase del Indulto 6^a
Limosna: UNA peseta

THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF POPE JOHN PAUL I



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