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Cover: Pope Pius XII.

This Page: Charles V, King of Spain & Holy Roman Emperor



Pope Pius XII

Was he Hitler's Pope?

Rutherford Card. Johnson

Those who wanted to vilify Catholicism or the Christian Church in general found a new means in the person of Pope Pius XII. For decades, it has been claimed by many that Pius was really “Hitler’s Pope” and made all sorts of inappropriate arrangements with the Nazis during the Second World War. The Holy See’s silence on the matter only added fuel to the debate.

It was known that some in the Vatican, such as Mgr. Hugh O’Flaherty, helped Jews, prisoners of war, and others in need, as immortalized on the screen by Gregory Peck in *The Scarlet and the Black*. Pius XII, who was born into an Italian princely family as Eugenio Pacelli, was far more controversial. Some thought him to be a mere diplomat trying to broker for his own position. Others thought he was simply caught in a bad position. Then there were those who thought that, despite the lack of public information, Pius XII did his duty and may even have been a hero. As it happens, the latter group was correct. A new book by intelligence expert Mark Riebling entitled *Church of Spies: The Pope’s Secret War against Hitler*, sheds new light on the truth about Pius XII.

Indeed, Pius XII was a hero of the Second World War. He walked the political tightrope with the Nazis to preserve Vatican neutrality while simultaneously risking that neutrality and his own personal safety to direct operations to save countless Jews, Italians, prisoners of war, and others. He did not,



however, simply run the wartime equivalent of a benevolent society or humanitarian effort. Those efforts, which included the work of Mgr. O’Flaherty, would have been heroic enough by themselves to warrant an honored place in the historical record. Pius XII, however, understood that sometimes the best defense is a good offense – sometimes direct action must be taken to ensure the preservation of life.

In his efforts, Pius XII went so far as to seek the assassination of Adolf Hitler. He had no plans (at least none of which we are aware) to engage in an operation himself or to pull the trigger personally. However, he supported, encouraged, and perhaps even clandestinely directed some of the operations that did take place. None were successful, of course, but it is worth considering how many lives could possibly have been saved if Hitler had been removed. That is speculation, as is always the case with considering alternative history. However, there were plenty among the German military hierarchy that wanted peace with the Allies and did not go along with the Nazi ideology or the grandiose plans of Hitler to dominate the world.

The animosity went in both directions. Hitler had an uneasy relationship with the Papacy. On one hand, he wanted to remove the Papacy as it was known and install his own puppet Pope. On the other

hand, he knew the respect that the Italians had for the Pope, not to mention many people around the world. So, Pius was in a difficult position, and he knew it. He had significant involvement in affairs of state and refused to ignore the precarious situation that was developing around him.

Pius was not a mere politician in a cassock, however. He was immensely devout, even reporting visions of Our Lord and Our Lady, as all who knew him would testify – even though who disliked his involvement in politics. He knew the role of prelates, including the Pope, was to have one foot in heaven, one foot in the world. Prelates rule with spiritual and temporal authority. Pius XII exercised both.

The situation facing the Jews bothered him greatly. As the war raged on, Italians themselves were under threat, and prisoners of war from Allied nations were also seeking help from the Vatican.

Pius spoke out as much as he could, and he organized faithful Christians behind the scenes.

In Germany, the Nazis placed their oath to the Führer above all others. The Catholic officers in the German military, however, quite often placed their duty to God and to the Church above their duty to country. This provided Pius with an opportunity. If such German officers knew the Pope's wishes regarding Hitler, perhaps they could be spurred to act for the benefit of the world and indeed for the benefit of Germany.

One of the most famous attempts to assassinate Hitler and establish a military government that would sue for peace with the Allies was known as Operation Valkyrie. It was led by the Count von Stauffenberg, a devout Catholic and a highly decorated Colonel in the German Army. He was known to Hitler and trusted by him. After a few earlier

Below: The room in which the bomb planted by the Count von Stauffenberg exploded that was to kill Hitler. The Führer was injured, but not killed.



attempts had been aborted, Stauffenberg himself brought a bomb in a briefcase into a high-level meeting at an area known as the Wolf's Lair. He placed the briefcase under the table next to Hitler and then made an excuse to leave the room. He returned to Berlin, having heard the bomb explode. Unfortunately, however, a staff officer kicked the briefcase and then moved it out of the way behind a table leg. That act ended up deflecting the blast when the bomb later exploded. Hitler survived. He suffered several injuries, but he survived. The remainder of the coup was put into action, but it failed due to the Führer's survival. The conspirators, including the Count von Stauffenberg, were executed. Their exploits were memorialized in the 1990 film *The Plot to Kill Hitler* and the 2008 film *Valkyrie*.

It is not necessarily clear how much involvement Pius XII had in the Stauffenberg plot. It is unlikely that he was directly involved. However, it is likely that his wishes for the assassination of Hitler were communicated through secret channels to faithful Catholics such as Stauffenberg. At the very least, he provided them with inspiration.

During the times that tried Europe and the world during the mid-20th century, from the time Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli was crowned with the Papal tiara as Pius XII, he did not rest in his efforts. He sought not only the spiritual well-being of the people, but also their physical safety. He worked tirelessly in diplomatic efforts, and he vigorously directed operations to rescue from mortal peril the victims of man's inhumanity to man. He was a Crusader, no different than those who had fought in Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, Edessa, Cyprus, and Egypt almost eight hundred years before. He took the Cross not only as a priest, but as a warrior to defend not only the Holy Church of Christ, but humanity, whether they were Christians or not. He was indeed a warrior – not with a rifle, but with the rosary, for the rosary had defeated the Muslims at the Battle of Lepanto, and with the Cross, which has defeated countless enemies in battle.

That Pius XII did not seek glory for his actions, or even publicity, provided his enemies the opportunity to twist his silence into complicity with the Nazi regime. Yet nothing could be further from the truth.

*Right:
Pope Pius XII at
his coronation.*



As more and more information comes out about his heroic and perhaps even miraculous actions, it is clear that Pius XII was not Hitler's Pope. He was God's holy priest. To many, he was and is a Saint. One day, perhaps, the Church may formally recognize him as a Saint. Until then, however, we who enjoy freedom today should be all thankful for the efforts of the Italian nobleman Eugenio Pacelli, who, reigning as Pius XII, did all that he could, even at great risk to himself, to help the victims of war and end the regime of Adolf Hitler. ☩

About the Author:

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Pius XII with members of the Canadian military after the liberation of Rome.



From Ancient to Modern Knights and Nobles

by
Daniel L. Coberly

In ancient times, social and economic distinctions between people were plainly seen. Feudal systems concentrated and sustained family wealth and titles among various cultures that lived on for more than a thousand years in Europe, Asia and in many other continents. In Europe, the collapse of the Roman Empire led to Dark Ages, and then to a new Christian feudal system that quickly expanded. The new system became more elaborate with the founding of the Holy Roman Empire by Charlemagne in 800 AD.

Common to all cultures was a concept that principal titles were first connected to tribal chieftains, warriors, and what later became the Noble or Landed Gentry. From them came the earliest royals. Titles indicating social and economic position were inheritable from the progenitor, mainly via male lines. Inheritance later became dependent upon legally-recognized birth orders within each family that included women.

Royals, Nobles, Knights, Gentry, Freeman, Clergy, and Serfs of every culture observed the "class" system. Wealthier and more powerful classes held certain rights, guaranteed by their "titles" or positions that helped them live more securely, wear better clothing, eat better food, and gain better access to health care and education. Royals were of noble blood, and ran the kingdom. They were supported mainly by other Royals, Nobles, Knights, Gentry, Clergy and Serfs who worked the land and also served as soldiers and sailors. In turn, the Nobles and Knights protected the kingdom and the people. The Clergy offered spiritual guidance, learning, and education first to the wealthy, later to others as societies expanded during the Renaissance. Eve-

ryone banded together to defend the kingdom when called to duty by the Royals and Nobles.

Some people today suggest that not much has changed. And yet, so very much has changed.

For example, in the beginning of the middle ages, the Knight was of low status, separate from the aristocracy and nobility. Perhaps a quarter of most early Knights did not own land or produce an income, unless granted land or income as a reward for service. They became the "minor nobles". For perhaps half of the millennium such Knights were the main force in warfare and society. By the 12th century, they had become part of a military aristocracy that ranged from household Knights who held no land, to serf-Knights tied to a lord, to Knights who were themselves Royal or Noble. Serf-warriors could become ennobled Knights due to their bravery and battlefield exploits, acquiring dignity and status over





time. Each level of Knight began to adopt honorific titles and their own individual symbols rather than wear those of a lord.

Royals and established titular Nobility sought to distance themselves from the new forms of Knights. They created more elitist groups of Knights formed into Orders. The Orders attached greater significance to the "making" of a Knight, including elaborate training, ceremonies, and a knightly culture that served to draw a new line of distinction between those who were considered Knightly by ability to fight, and those who maintained the social trappings of Knightly or Noble ranks.

By the late 14th century, the distinction of a warrior Knight merged with the concept of man-at-arms and archers. In turn, they were eventually replaced by new technologies: men with munitions. Since less military skill was required to fight and obtain spoils of war, the landed Gentry became more actively involved. Much like the Knights and Nobles before them, they returned to invest in the land or in business, and aspired to the aristocracy. By the 1600s the Knight had vanished from the battlefield. However, Chris-

tian concepts of Chivalry, Charity, Duty and Honor remained.

As they became more affluent, Gentlemen Squires who were landowners or merchants began to adopt the trappings that once belonged to the Knightly class--seals and coats of arms. The concept of a Gentleman itself was inspired by Chivalry. Service within a domestic court of kings and aristocrats increasingly held a similar regard to that of the warrior class, now simply called "soldiers". By the 15th Century nobility came from service to King and Country, another hallmark of the Chivalrous. A military officer class evolved from the Nobility.

New opportunities for education, and an increasing bureaucracy created a greater need for administration. Soon, what had been the work of ecclesiastical clerks became lay occupations of the new Gentry, who also became lawyers and judges. By the 16th century, two classes emerged with Noble status: the *noblesse de l'epee*--nobility of the sword; and *noblesse de robe*--civil nobility. Military service was no longer a requirement for the new Nobility. Heraldry became less important on the battlefield and evolved into business logos and trademarks. Courtliness and fine manners became "courtesy". Virtues of duty, honor, and loyalty, became both a myth of chivalry and a code of business and moral conduct.

By the time of the Industrial Revolution, Noble and Knightly titles were increasingly honorific. Generations of Nobility were wiped out during WWI. By the end of WWII, most European Noble titles and many reigning Royals were abolished or forced in exile by the victorious Allies.

And yet today, the concept of the modern, virtuous Noble Knight remains. Several nation-states, including the Vatican still grant noble titles and Knighthoods, as do formerly ruling Houses in Exile. Otherwise, comparatively few hereditary Noble titles or Knighthoods continue to exist outside of Europe. And yet hundreds of honors, titles, and Knighthoods are modernly bestowed by many nations to those who best exemplify the ideals of achievement, charitable work, and the improvement of self and of mankind. ☩

The Joinville Legacy

Nobles — Crusaders — Chroniclers

Gefürsteter Graf v.d.Steinhörst

The House of Joinville is an ancient French noble house. It is known in Italian as *di Gioinvilla* and in English variably as *Geneville*, *Johnston(e)*, and *Johnson*. They were prominent in the Court of Champagne and became related through the generations to the Capetian Dynasty and the houses of Lusignan, Brienne, Savoy, and Milan. The first known Lord (Baron) de Joinville was Étienne de Joinville et Vaux. He was married to the daughter of Engelbert III, Count de Brienne. The relationship with the Brienne family would continue through the generations. Étienne's great-great grandson Geoffroi III, Lord de Joinville married the daughter of Erard I, Count de Brienne. A later descendant in Great Britain, Joan de Joinville, Baroness de Geneville in her own right, married a descendant of Jean de Brienne, King of Jerusalem and Latin Emperor of Constantinople.

From the son of Étienne, Geoffroi I, the Lords de Joinville also held the title of Count de Joigny. Geoffroi III accompanied Henry I of Champagne in the Second Crusade and was named Seneschal of Champagne, a title that would remain in the family for two centuries. The most famous member of the Joinville family in the office of Seneschal was Jean de Joinville, grandson of Geoffroi III. Jean accompanied Saint Louis IX, King of France on the Seventh Crusade. Not only was he a warrior, fighting before the Cross, he compiled a history of the King. Written in Jean's later life, it was entitled *The Life of Saint Louis IX*, and it heavily featured his actions in the Crusades.

In 1347, Henri de Joinville married Marie de Luxembourg, daughter of Jean de Luxembourg,

Count de Ligny, and Alix de Dampierre. Alix was descended from William de Dampierre, son of Guy de Dampierre, Count of Flanders and Marquis of Namur, and Mathilda, Baroness de Béthune. William's brother was Robert III, Count of Flanders, known as the Lion of Flanders. Henri de Joinville inherited the County of Vaudémont as Henri V from his maternal grandfather.

Joinville then passed through Henri V's daughter Marguerite to the House of Lorraine through marriage to Ferry de Lorraine, son of John I, Duke of Lorraine. René II de Lorraine, Lord de Joinville, became Duke of Lorraine in 1470. His son Claude became the first Duke de Guise. He married Antoinette de Bourbon. Their children included Marie de Guise, consort of James V, King of Scotland and mother of Mary, Queen of Scots.



Left: René of Lorraine
Below: Joinville coat of arms.



Members of the Joinville legacy have left their mark on society in France, Italy, Great Britain, the North America. They have and continue to hold titles that include Prince and Lord de Joinville, Duke de Guise, Grand Prince of Etruria, Count de Joigny, Baron de Geneville, and others.

