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Says Former US Delegate

What the World Needs Now Is Saints, Saints, Saints

By James C. O'Neill
VATICAN CITY—(NC)

—The world today, more than ever, needs the concrete example of saints, old and new, to show men sanctity is possible and that there is "something more for man than what life generally offers."

Cardinal Luigi Raimondi, Pope Paul VI's new choice to head the Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes, thus summed up his assignment the first day on the job.

The cardinal, apostolic delegate in the U.S. since 1967, was naked prefect of the congregation on Mar. 22, and the following day moved into his third floor offices facing St. Peter's Square. On that morning the ample office had an uninvited guest still had an uninvited look.

No souvenirs of his more than 20 years in the papal diplomatic corps in India, Haiti, Mexico or the United States lent a personal touch to the walls. The wooden desk, with its inlaid coat-of-arms of Pope Pius XI was bare of papers and bric-a-brac.

The white-haired, 60-year-old cardinal seemed still unaccustomed to the rather small dimensions of the room and was startled when a door opened be-

hind him and then closed immediately as an embarrassed usher discovered his boss was in conference.

New to the job and the role of a Roman cardinal—he was created a cardinal less than three weeks earlier—Cardinal Raimondi nevertheless had definite ideas about saints and their role in the world today.

"Men in the world today have been levelled down by materialism," he said. "It amounts almost to oppression. People are looking for something uplifting, something different, something more for man than what life generally offers."

This something, said the cardinal, is the living and lived example of sanctity. "It is a propitious time to discover the presence of God and the action of the Holy Spirit in a concrete way, in the lives of persons who have been holy in an extraordinary way."

With a small, graceful gesture of the hands the cardinal indicated the hallway and offices outside his room and said "there are hundreds and hundreds of causes of possible saints and blessed and many of them will take years to examine."

But he insisted the work of his congregation "is most important in the Church because

it gives witness to one of the Church's characteristic notes, holiness. "Holiness, he said, "is a charism which must never fail in the Church and which finds concrete expression in all ages. It is one of the ways by which the Church projects itself in the world."

Cardinal Raimondi stressed the "social aspect of dimension of sanctity." The moral encouragement which results from a saint's holiness "is not simply a personal fact that a person has reached evangelical perfection. There also is the natural overflowing of a beneficial influence in society at large."

"The Church has always dedicated a great deal of attention to the lives of saints from the beginnings of Christianity. It collected the records of the early martyrs so that they could serve to help others live the faith. These records are the manifestations of God and the action of the Holy Spirit in men through the docile instrument which is the saint himself."

In talking of the great backlog of historical research on the causes of saints already burdening the congregation's files—someone has estimated that it would take 100 years just to clear all the cases on record to-

day—Cardinal Raimondi said:

"You cannot bring about the conclusion of these causes by a simple chronological process. Some cases present more evidence that others and can be

dealt with more quickly. But even this (the backlog) is a testimony to the richness of the sanctity of the Church. To me they are in a way providential signs that Our Lord wants us

to feel that holiness is more accessible to man than he might think."

As for saints for the present day, Cardinal Raimondi declared: "I am sure there will be

manifestations of the action of the Holy Spirit of our own times and of our society which will have a significance and universal appeal to men in general."

British Book Defends Pius XII . . .

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settle my account with the Pope."

Rhodes quotes Albrecht von Kessel, counselor to the German ambassador to the Vatican during World War II, as saying: "We knew that a violent protest by the Pope against the persecution of the Jews would have certainly put the Pope in great personal danger, and would not have saved the life of a single Jew. Like a trapped beast, Hitler would have reacted to any provocation with extreme violence."

Von Kessel said that Hitler at one time considered kidnapping the Pope and taking him to Germany.

Rhodes cites events in the Netherlands in 1942 as an example of Nazi reaction to Church protests. While the Na-

zis were rounding up other Dutch Jews and shipping them off to Poland, where the extermination camps were located, the large number of baptized Jews in the Netherlands had not been touched.

"In July, 1942, the Catholic Church together with the Reformed Church of Holland protested in a telegram to the German Reichskommissar against the deportation of Dutch Jews, and threatened to make the protest public if the deportations were not discontinued. The German authorities replied that if the churches would remain silent in this matter, they would continue to make a special exception of the baptized Jews, who would continue to be regarded as Christians."

The Reformed Church agreed to this and its baptized Jewish members were left alone, but when the Catholic archbishop

of Utrecht publicly condemned the Nazi persecution of the Jews, the Nazis arrested all baptized Catholic Jews and deported them to the death camps.

Pope Pius XII did protest against the deportation of Jews in private messages to the heads of the Slovak and Hungarian governments, then under German domination.

But the Pope, did not protest publicly, Rhodes claims, because according to reports, "he did not want to make the situation of Catholics worse in Germany and the occupied territories."

Rhodes quotes a letter from Pope Pius XII to a German bishop in which he praised the charity of Catholics toward Jews and then said: "In spite of good reasons for our open intervention, there are others equally good for avoiding

greater evils by not interfering."

Rhodes criticizes the play "The Deputy," by Rolf Hochhuth, which portrayed Pope Pius XII as callously passive in the face of Nazi persecution of the Jews.

The sources on which the play was based are "not very convincing," Rhodes says and he points out that shortly after it was first staged in Germany, the Society for Jewish-Christian Collaboration protested to then Chancellor Konrad Adenauer against its continuation and described it as "historically erroneous."

Rhodes recounts that when Jews in Rome were arrested the Pope instructed his secretary of state to protest to the German ambassador. This was done "with the result that a large number were released," Rhodes says.