PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITÀ GREGORIANA

Cardinal Bea Centre for Judaic Studies

יד ושם YAD VASHEM
THE WORLD HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE CENTER

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM
JACK, JOSEPH AND MORTON MANDEL CENTER FOR ADVANCED HOLOCAUST STUDIES

Witness to the Age of Extremes: The Life and Work of Father Robert Leiber, S.J. (1888-1967)

Pontifical Gregorian University
Rome

Co-organized with:
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Yad Vashem

March 8-9, 2027

Father Robert Leiber S.J. was Pope Pius XII's (Eugenio Pacelli) personal secretary and unofficial advisor for over four decades, from Pius XII's days as Apostolic Nuncio to Germany, through Cardinal Pacelli's term as the Holy See's Secretary of State, and into his years as pope (1939-1958). Father Leiber was witness and confidant to the future pope through the establishment of the Soviet Union (1922-1991), the German Weimar Republic (1919-1933), the rise of Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party in Italy (1922-1943), the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the Second World War (1939-1945), the Holocaust, and its aftermath as Europe was restructured over the course of the late 1940's and 1950's. Through these extraordinary times, Father Leiber took part in and was privy to events that changed the world. Father Leiber taught history at the Pontificia Università Gregoriana throughout his time in Rome, where a portion of his personal papers are housed and will be made publicly available in 2027. This conference will rediscover Father Leiber as a crucial historical actor, as a deeply spiritual researcher and teacher, as a liaison for Pope Pius XII to the world's most powerful leaders, and as a mirror for the times in which he lived.

We welcome paper proposals on any aspect of Fr. Leiber's life and work, including but not limited to:

- The role of the Berlin Nunciature in Weimar Germany
- Leiber's relationships and exchanges with key political leaders in Europe between 1919 and 1933
- Leiber's response to requests for help from victims of political repression in the 1930s
- Leiber's relationships with other powerful clerics
- Leiber's role as advisor to Pacelli on clandestine rescue by both Jewish and Catholic groups during World War II
- Leiber's role as the intermediary between the German Resistance, the British, and the attempted plots to overthrow Hitler
- Leiber's role in conveying the details of the Holocaust
- Leiber's role as a scholar and teacher at the Pontifical Gregorian University
- Reflections on Leiber's legacy
- Leiber's correspondence with Cardinal Augustin Bea and the Path Toward Vatican II

To Apply

Applications are welcome from scholars at all career levels, from PhD candidates to senior scholars. Apply here by October 31, 2026.

Applications must include:

1. a curriculum vitae
2. a brief paper proposal of 300-400 words

Travel and Lodging

The conference will be held in-person only. For non-local participants, the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will cover the cost of (1) direct travel to and from the participant's home institution and Rome, and (2) lodging for the duration of the conference. All participants will also be provided $200 to defray the cost of ground transportation and incidentals. Questions about travel should be directed to religion@ushmm.org.

This conference is made possible by support from the Cardinal Bea Centre for Judaic Studies, Pontifical Gregorian University; the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; the International Institute for Holocaust Research, Yad Vashem; and the Israeli Embassy to the Holy See.