

# The Swastika Blessing: Intro

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**The Swastika Blessing** By Diane and Stephen Galebach Copyright 2011 Diane Galebach and Stephen Galebach. All rights reserved. **Table of Contents:** *The Swastika Blessing* Introduction Volume I: Investigation into a Photograph – available [here](#) Volume II: Vatican Policy Toward Nazi Germany in 1934 (forthcoming Fall 2011) Volume III: Vatican Policy Toward Nazi Germany in 1935 (forthcoming Fall-Winter 2011) Volume IV: Causes and Context (forthcoming Winter 2011) The photograph of Catholic Archbishop Santiago Luis Copello ceremonially blessing a Nazi Party flag in conjunction with the International Eucharistic Congress of 1934 in Argentina raises issues that go to the heart of burning controversies of the 20th century. Overlooked by historians for decades, this photograph was discovered by Stephen Galebach in 2009. In early 2011, Diane Galebach found a 1934 Argentine newspaper article, in the US Library of Congress, confirming that Archbishop Copello of Buenos Aires, Argentina, conducted a formal, deliberate, elaborately planned ceremony to bless the symbol of the Nazi Party and its ideology. Understood in context, the photograph implicates more than the Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Because Copello was elevated to Cardinal five months after the photograph was displayed in the most widely viewed newspaper in Nazi Germany, the photograph inevitably calls into question the policies and reputation of the Church leaders who elevated him. **Pope Pius XI addressing the Eucharistic Congress** Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) paid close personal attention to the International Eucharistic Congress of 1934. Equipped by inventor Guglielmo Marconi with the latest wireless technology, Pius XI was able to address the crowd at the Congress from 7,000 miles away in Rome. Pius sent his Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, to represent him as “Legate a Latere” to the Eucharistic Congress. The sensation of a high-ranking Cardinal and Legate, who was accorded all the honors due to the Pope himself, attracted huge crowds to the Congress. Five years later, Cardinal Pacelli became Pope Pius XII (1939-1958). Known today as Venerable Pius XII, Eugenio Pacelli is two steps away from being declared a saint. What, if anything, did Pope Pius XI and Cardinal Pacelli know of the swastika blessing? What were their policies toward Nazi Germany at the time the swastika blessing took place in 1934, and at the time it was published (for the first and perhaps only time) in 1935 in a Nazi newspaper in Germany? **Cardinal Pacelli (who became Pope Pius XII) pictured in an Argentine magazine (Caras y Caretas, Oct 1934, special Eucharistic Congress edition)** *The Swastika Blessing* is an experiment in presenting *evidence*. Debates over the Catholic Church and Nazi Germany have raged for five decades, since Rolf Hochhuth’s play *Der Stellvertreter* (translated into English as *The Vicar* or *The Representative* or *The Deputy*) cast Pius XII as callously indifferent to the Holocaust. The continuing debates are intensely partisan and highly polarized, with opposing sides not listening to each other. “That writer is anti-Catholic . . . this one is a dissident Catholic.” From an opposite perspective, “That writer is not a historian . . . this one is a Catholic apologist.” *Who* the authors are becomes a diversion from *what* they are presenting.

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## The story behind a shocking photograph.

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