

# PIUS XII AND THE LOW COUNTRIES (1939-1958)

Three Years after the Opening of the Vatican Archives:  
First Results, New Insights, Research Perspectives

Academia Belgica & Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome  
Thursday 9 – Friday 10 February, 2023



*Statue of Pius XII at Expo 1958 in Brussels. [Collection KADOC]*

The opening of the different Vatican Archives for the pontificate of Pius XII (1939-1958) in March 2020 sparked the interest of scholars from different disciplines worldwide. It strengthened tendencies to revisit the history of the 1940s and 1950s beyond established narratives and sources, and nourished hopes to find answers to old and new questions and to discover innovative themes and approaches. Three years after the opening of these archives, a multidisciplinary group of scholars from Belgium and the Netherlands stages a scientific conference to analyze the impact of the opening of these archives on a variety of fields of research, specifically relating to the history of the Low Countries in the 1940s and 1950s. It presents new research based on documentation retrieved in the Vatican archives on both the period of World War II and the afterwar period, and analyzes to what extent these Vatican sources not only challenge existing research on the history of the Catholic church, but also on broader themes in the history of the Low Countries.

## < Steering Committee >

Kim Christiaens (KADOC – KU Leuven)

Jan De Volder (Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies - KU Leuven)

Dries Vanysacker (Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies - KU Leuven)

## < Secretary >

Sam Kuijken (KADOC-KU Leuven)

The conference will be held on Thursday 9 and Friday 10 February, 2023. It is hosted by the Academia Belgica and the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome. Scholars from different disciplines will take the floor. They are present physically, but it will be possible to follow the conference online. The main conference language is English. The conference will be followed by a publication.

The conference has been prepared by a workshop, where invited experts gave a keynote on how the opening of the Vatican Archives for Pius XII relates to the state of the art of different fields of research. Participants discussed their findings and research perspectives among themselves. Also a guided visit to some of the Vatican Archives was part of the workshop. This workshop was held in the Academia Belgica, Rome, on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 February 2022 and was open only for panelists and invited guests. The keynotes were streamed and were made available [online](#).

## < Organizing Committee >

Maria Bonaria Urban (Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome)

Kim Christiaens (KADOC – KU Leuven)

Jan De Volder (KU Leuven)

Vincent Dujardin (UCLouvain)

Dominique Lambert (Université de Namur)

Marit Monteiro (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Sabine Van Sprang (Academia Belgica)

Dries Vanysacker (KU Leuven)

Jan Wouters (KU Leuven)



## < WORKSHOP >

**Thursday, 3 February 2022**  
**Rome, Academia Belgica**

Via Omero 8

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS (live streamed + PodCast)

9:00 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

9:15 Philippe Chenaux (Pontifical Lateran University)  
*State of the Art of Research on Pius XII (in French)*

10:00 Jean-Dominique Durand (University Lyon 3)  
*The Vatican and the Holocaust (in French)*

10:45 COFFEE BREAK

11:00 Jan Bank  
*Pius XII and the Dutch episcopate during World War II.  
New facts from the Papal archives?*

11:45 Giuliana Chamedes (University of Wisconsin-Madison)  
*Pius XII and Transwar Continuities: 1929-1958*

12:30 Matteo Luigi Napolitano (University of Molise)  
*Different Archives on Pius XII. A Comparative Approach and  
Historiographic Considerations (in Italian)*

## < Contact and information >

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## < CONFERENCE >

**Thursday, 9 February 2023**  
**Rome, Academia Belgica**

Via Omero 8

9:30 WELCOME by Sabine Van Sprang, Director of the Academia Belgica

9:45 OPENING REMARKS by the organizing committee

10:15-11:45 FIRST SESSION (1): PIUS XII, THE CHURCH AND WORLD WAR II

Elisabeth Bruyère (Academia Belgica)  
*Canon Law and Occupied Territories*

Jan De Volder (KU Leuven)  
*The Vatican and the Occupation of the Low Countries (1940-1945)*

Vincent Dujardin (UCLouvain)  
*Myron Taylor and Harold Tittman*

COFFEE BREAK

12:00-13:30 FIRST SESSION (2): PIUS XII, THE CHURCH AND WORLD WAR II

Monika Stolarczyk-Bilardie (KU Leuven)  
*Pius XII, Polish Bishops and the Holocaust in Poland*

Anton Milh (KU Leuven)  
*Flemish Franciscans, Capuchins and Dominicans during the  
Pontificate of Pius XII*

Gabriele Rigano (University for Foreigners of Perugia)  
*The "Silences" of the Popes in War: Benedict XV and Pius XII*

LUNCH

15:30-18:00 SECOND SESSION: PIUS XII AND THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE  
1940S AND 1950S

Kristien Suenens (KADOC-KU Leuven)  
*Pius XII and Women Religious*

Peter-Jan Margry (University of Amsterdam)  
*Postwar Miracles in Holland*

Dominique Lambert (UNamur)  
*Pius XII, Teilhard de Chardin and the Belgian Jesuits*

Dries Vanysacker (KU Leuven)  
*Pius XII and the Olympic Games*

**Friday, 10 February 2023**  
**Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome**

Via Omero 12

9:30 WELCOME by Maria Bonaria Urban (Royal Netherlands Institute  
in Rome)

9:45-11:15 THIRD SESSION (1): THE VATICAN AND THE POSTWAR WORLD ORDER

Johan Ickx (Historical Archives Vatican Secretariat of State)  
*Pius XII's Ostpolitik*

Marit Monteiro (Radboud Nijmegen)  
*The Netherlands and Decolonization*

Marco Figliola (Pontificia Università della Santa Croce)  
*The Catholic Church in the Netherlands through the Archives of the  
Apostolic Internuncio Paolo Giobbe (1939-1958)*

COFFEE BREAK

11:30-12:30 THIRD SESSION (2): THE VATICAN AND THE POSTWAR WORLD ORDER

Kim Christiaens (KU Leuven) Sam Kuijken (KADOC-KU Leuven)  
*The Catholic Church and the Opening to Latin America*

Jan Wouters (KU Leuven)  
*Pius XII and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

12:30-13:00: CONCLUSIONS



CUSANUS CHAIR  
'RELIGION, CONFLICT AND PEACE'

