



Global Alliance for Justice: The Ethiopian Cause,
4002 Blacksmith Drive, Garland, TX 75044, U.S.A.

February 7, 2013

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI
Apostolic Palace
00120 Vatican City

Your Holiness:

It is with great both respect and consternation we relate that on August 11, 2012 a representative of the Vatican was unfortunately present as part of an inaugural ceremony to honor a convicted Nazi collaborator, Rodolfo Graziani, in the Italian village of Affile. Rodolfo Graziani was responsible for the massacre of over 30,000 Ethiopians in 1937. Graziani publicly executed two bishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and personally ordered the desecration of our monasteries and murder of our monks and clergy.

The Vatican was also complicit with the crimes of the Fascists and those of Nazi Germany in World War II. Pius XI supported the Italian occupation of Ethiopia and the coronation of Victor Emmanuel the Emperor of Ethiopia. We ask when will apologies be made, when will justice be served?

We call on the Vatican to begin this process by insisting the Graziani Monument in Affile be closed to the public and dismantled immediately. We furthermore call on the Vatican to apologize for the presence of their official at the inauguration of this disgraceful tribute to an enemy of humanity.

With the blessing of the Vatican, Mussolini's Fascist army invaded and occupied Ethiopia during 1935-41 and perpetrated the crime of genocide in which 1 million innocent Ethiopians perished. In Addis Ababa alone, within a matter of a few hours, 30,000 people were murdered by the Fascist occupiers. Furthermore, 300 priests, monks and nuns were killed by the Fascists at the famous Debre Libanos monastery. In addition, 2000 churches and 525,000 homes were destroyed. The mustard gas that was sprayed by droves of Fascist planes throughout Ethiopia devastated not only hundreds of thousands of people but also millions of animals as well as the environment.

Should there be any doubt as to the complicity of the Vatican in the Fascists' atrocious deeds; one need only refer to the statement by Pope Pius XI who had declared that



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Mussolini was a man that had been sent by Providence as well as the signing of the Lateran Treaty between the Fascist party and the Catholic Church.

Pope Pius delivered this congratulatory message upon the Fascists' occupation of Ethiopia: "The triumphant joy of an entire, great and good people over a place which, it is hoped and intended, will be an effective contribution and prelude to the true place in Europe and the World."

The Pope's joy was expressed in a more cogent and graphic declaration by the Archbishop of Torano with the following words: "The war against Ethiopia should be considered as a holy war, a crusade" (as Italian victory would) "open Ethiopia, a country of infidels and schismatics, to the expansion of the Catholic Faith."

It must be mentioned that the Archbishop's statement was rather strange considering the fact that according to the Bible, the Acts, Chapter 8 vs 26-39, Ethiopians started accepting Christianity only a few months after Jesus Christ's resurrection. On his way back from Jerusalem in his carriage, the Ethiopian Treasurer accepted Christ and was baptized at Gaza by Philip. It is well known that the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is one of the oldest Christian entities. Therefore, the statement by the Archbishop was not only inappropriate but also deserving of condemnation because of its blatant support to the Fascist crime in Ethiopia.

The Alliance demands: (a) a Vatican apology to the Ethiopian people similar to the one expressed to the Jews (b) restitution of looted properties currently in the possession of the Vatican Library, to the Ethiopian people; (c) the Vatican's support for the dismantlement of the Graziani monument.

It is with a great sense of admiration that we refer to the Vatican's apology for the Holocaust committed by the Nazis against the Jews. As an example, here is how your predecessor, Pope Paul II, expressed his apology: "The Vatican has apologized to Jews on behalf of the entire Roman Catholic community for failing to speak out against the Nazi holocaust during World War II." In his letter accompanying the apology, the Pope (Pope Paul II) said: "the Holocaust remained an indelible stain on the 20th century." We also recall that Pope Benedict XVI, soon after his election, visited Cologne's main synagogue where he described the extermination of 6 million Jews as an "unimaginable crime".



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It is evident that the Fascist crime committed against Ethiopia with the support of the Vatican is not less “unimaginable” than the one committed by the Nazis against the Jews. Therefore, this appeal is submitted to the Vatican with the fullest respect and humility, to offer the Vatican’s formal apology to the Ethiopian people to bring justice and fairness to a cause that has remained an open wound for so long.

We sincerely seek justice for the genocide and will never rest until this goal is met. We humbly request the Vatican take the first step toward meeting us in brotherly conciliation and add its voice to the tens of thousands already calling for the dismantlement of the Graziani monument.

Yours in Christ,

Kidane Alemayehu
Global Alliance for Justice: The Ethiopian Cause

cc:

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General
Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission
Martin Schultz, President of the European Parliament
Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe