

# Pope Francis meets with delegation from US Holocaust Museum

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**25 Oct. 2023 - A representative of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC says that Pope Francis' decision to open the Vatican Archives is "so important; to be transparent is so important."**

Before leading the General Audience in St. Peter's Square on Wednesday morning, Pope Francis received a delegation from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

The group thanked him for opening the Vatican Archives, which document the activities of Pope Pius XII during World War II, and presented him with a letter concerning the Israel-Hamas conflict.

The director of the Museum's International Programmes, Suzanne Brown Fleming, was at the meeting, and spoke to Vatican News' Stephanie Stahlhofen about the group's conversation with the Pope.

## Open letter

Ms. Fleming said that the group had "presented His Holiness an open letter written by Holocaust survivors, condemning the attacks on Jewish people by Hamas, and calling for the world to recognise that this was the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust."

The delegation, a group of 23 persons, was formed of staff and board members of the Holocaust Museum.

"Many of them," Ms. Fleming noted, "are also children of Holocaust survivors. So it was really an amazing moment."

## Opening of archives

The delegation also discussed Pope Francis' decision to open the parts of the Vatican Archives pertaining to Pope Pius XII's activities during the Second World War.

"The Holocaust Museum's director, Sarah Bloomfield," said Ms. Fleming, "and also the children of survivors on our board, on behalf of their parents, thanked [the Pope] for this. He said that the truth is always the most important thing. And to be transparent is so important, and memory of this event is so important."

"One of the best moments," Ms. Fleming added, came when "a child of a Holocaust survivor said that some people still deny the Holocaust, and the Holy Father made a sign saying: 'You know, isn't that crazy?'."

## Reflections

Ms. Fleming – who was the only Catholic in the Holocaust Museum delegation – said the meeting

was “really incredible for me personally, because I have personally admired, particularly this Pope, so much for his work with the poor.”

“We also called attention to it – the Museum Director thanked him for his work with the poor as well. He is a role model for many people in the world and also for me personally.”

Asked what the meeting might have meant for the children of Holocaust survivors in the group, she said, “I think our director really said it best: The Pope has demonstrated such leadership and fearlessness in opening these archives, speaking out for peace and humanity and for the children of Holocaust survivors. The fact that what happened to their families is now more accessible to study means everything to them.”

Source: [Vatican News](#).