

# In defense of Pius XII

BY BART JONES

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A decade ago, Long Beach resident Gary Krupp was knighted by Pope John Paul II, becoming only the seventh Jewish papal knight in history.

Now, Krupp, who gained the honor mainly for helping to build an Italian hospital, is using his post and his nonprofit foundation to wade into the controversy over Pope Pius XII.

Pope Benedict XVI has helped stir the controversy by moving Pius toward sainthood, a move that has set off protests among Jewish groups and critics who contend Pius did not do enough to denounce the Holocaust or help Jews hide or escape.

Krupp disagrees, and believes the historical record shows that Pius, who was pope from 1939 to 1958, went to extensive lengths to protect Jews.

He says the Vatican has made available to him and his researchers hundreds of documents from previously closed files on Pius that describe his efforts during World War II.

The documents show "that he was not a Nazi sympathizer, that he hated Nazism far more than Communism. He was not anti-Semitic," said Krupp, 62.

He added that Pius performed numerous acts "to save Jews and do positive things for the Jewish people."

Historians have questioned



Gary Krupp of Long Beach, greeting Pope John Paul II, says he has seen documents showing Pius XII helped Jews during WWII.

why Pius never publicly condemned the Holocaust and whether he indeed acted to help save Jews. The Catholic Church says he worked behind the scenes to avoid retaliation from Nazi and Italian fascist authorities.

Krupp has come under attack from some historians who scoff at his credentials as a researcher and believe the Vatican may be using him. He brushes the critiques off, and says he is merely unearthing — and digitalizing — the documents so that bona fide historians can see them and clear Pius' name themselves.

He said he thinks some of the attacks come because his

findings are contradicting previously held ideas about Pius.

"We are attacked by scholars but not because what we are finding is not relevant . . . they criticize us for looking," he said. "They should be cheering us."

Krupp, who heads the nonprofit Manhattan-based Pave the Way Foundation, dedicated to promoting interreligious understanding, said he met personally with Pope John Paul II five times and with Benedict XVI seven times since he became pope.

In 2008 he hosted a three-day conference on Pius XII near Rome that was attended by Benedict XVI.