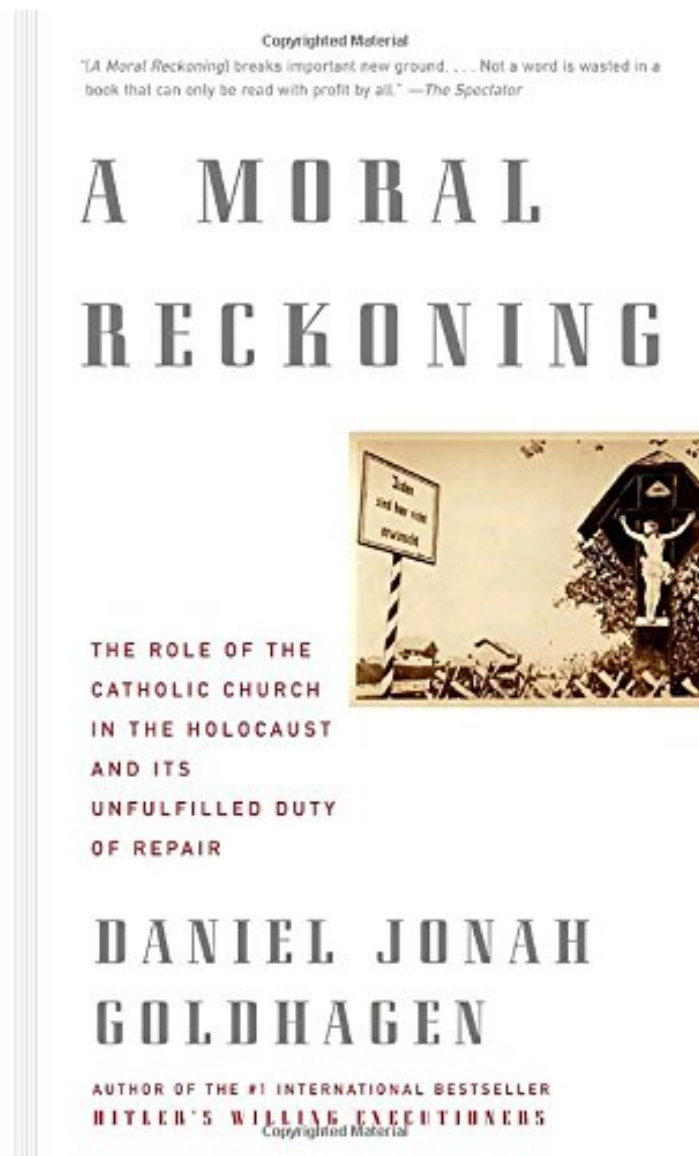


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A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen

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Daniel Jonah Goldhagen : A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair:

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3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A valuable piece of the puzzle
By S.J. Tagliareni
The difficult part in examining the era of the Nazi's is that dialogue is often problematic because of the labeling. The Church, and especially the papacy are not easily defined in the question of the Holocaust. This is a valuable attempt to present one side of the equation and should not be dismissed as anti-catholic. However, there are other sources which differ from Goldhagen's research and taken together we may find more answers.
S.J. Tagliareni
author of Hitler's Priest

With his first book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen dramatically revised our understanding of the role ordinary Germans played in the Holocaust. Now he brings his formidable powers of research and argument to bear on the Catholic Church and its complicity in the destruction of European Jewry. What emerges is a work that goes far beyond the familiar inquiries most of which focus solely on Pope Pius XII to address an entire history of hatred and persecution that culminated, in some cases, in an active participation in mass-murder. More than a chronicle, *A Moral Reckoning* is also an assessment of culpability and a bold attempt at defining what actions the Church must take to repair the harm it did to Jews and to repair itself. Impressive in its scholarship, rigorous in its ethical focus, the result is a book of lasting importance.

From *Publishers Weekly*
Harvard scholar Goldhagen, author of the bestselling and controversial *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, turns to a question left unanswered in his earlier work: to what extent are Catholics and the Catholic Church morally culpable for the Holocaust? As in his earlier book, Goldhagen pulls no punches. In the second paragraph he writes, "Christianity is a religion that consecrated... a megatharian hatred of one group of people: the Jews." The story of this hatred, which Goldhagen views as a betrayal of Christianity's own moral principles, has been told many times and, most recently, in the works of Susan Zuccotti and Michael Phayer. In contrast to these accounts, Goldhagen offers not an objective history of the Church's role in the Holocaust but, as the title promises, a moral examination. Goldhagen makes no apology for engaging in a sustained ethical inquiry and rendering judgment. (In fact, much of the book is either a direct or indirect defense of his much-criticized first work.) Goldhagen demands material, political and moral restitution but ends questioning whether the Catholic Church can "muster the will" to undertake these actions. There is little new information here; a definitive history of this dark chapter must await the opening of the Vatican archives. Readers should not skip the extensive and detailed endnotes, which contain a wealth of fascinating material. 25 bw photos.
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From *Library Journal*
Courting more controversy after *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, Goldhagen considers the Catholic Church's participation in the Holocaust. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From *Booklist*
Goldhagen is a confusing writer. In his controversial *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1998), he claimed to reject the concept of collective guilt; he then proceeded to collectively brand German culture and Germans as thoroughly tainted with extreme anti-Semitism through his chronic use of sweeping generalizations and maddeningly imprecise language. In his latest work, likely to engender similar controversy, he examines the Catholic Church's responsibility, in terms of its attitudes and actions, for the Holocaust. Again, Goldhagen begins by rejecting collective guilt. However, the Catholic Church is an institution, not a person; so to successfully navigate the minefield of distinguishing between condemning the actions of particular church officials and collectively condemning the entire church requires a refined skill--one that Goldhagen certainly lacks. His assertions regarding the failure of Pope Pius XII to defend Jews is familiar but credible, and his indictments of the blatant anti-Semitism of some prelates in Latvia and Croatia is devastating. Yet his prose is loose and unreflective, and he throws around vague clichés such as "vast majority." He seems incapable of distinguishing between mild racial or ethnic prejudice (a near-universal trait) and virulent racial hatred. He claims the anti-Semitism of "the Gospels" is at the root of Christian anti-Semitism, but he does not distinguish between a clearly anti-Semitic Gospel such as John and the Gospel of Matthew, which is aimed at a Jewish audience and almost certainly written by a Jew. The responsibility of the church and of Christianity in fostering hatred of Jews is an ongoing and deadly serious issue, so expect this contentious book to be asked for in public libraries. Jay Freeman
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