







# Pius XII and Decolonization: Catholicism in North Africa and the Levant, 1939-1958



## 10-11 November 2025

**Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo (NVIC)** 

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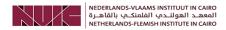








DIPARTIMENTO DI STORIA, PATRIMONIO CULTURALE, FORMAZIONE E SOCIETÀ









## Pius XII and Decolonization: Catholicism in North Africa and the Levant, 1939-1958

### **Monday November 10**

08.30-9.00 Welcome tea/coffee at NVIC

9.00- 9.15 Greetings by Marleen De Meyer (Director Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo)

9.15- 9.30 Introduction of the main themes by the conference organizers

Erica Moretti (Fashion Institute of Technology–SUNY)
Jacopo Pili (University of Rome Tor Vergata)
Simon Unger (DHI Rom)

**09.30-10.30** The Algerian War Through the Papers of the Paris Apostolic Nunciature **Gianfranco Armando** (Vatican Apostolic Archives)

10.30 Coffee Break

11.00-13.00 International Agencies, Humanitarian Intervention, and the Catholic Church Chair: Erica Moretti, Jacopo Pili

From Mission to Development: The Case of the Upper Egypt Association for Education and Development (1940–1960)

Annalaura Turiano (CNRS, Iremam, amU)

Catholic Action in the Arab World during the Pontificate of Pius XII **Sam Kuijken** (Kadoc-KU Leuven)

Sacred Missions, Secular Agendas: The Catholic Church, International Agencies, and Education in Decolonizing French Africa Marialuisa Lucia Sergio (Roma Tre University)

An In-Between Humanitarian Actor: Pius XII, the Catholic Church, and Palestinian Refugees (1948-early 1950s)

Marie Levant (Ecole française de Rome, IFPO)

13.00-14.30 Lunch at the NVIC

#### 14.30-16.30 Interaction Between Periphery and the Center

Chair: Martin Baumeister

Petitioning Rome from the Margins: Refugee Letters to the Vatican and Catholic Humanitarianism across Postwar Mediterranean Borders

Katarzyna Nowak (University of Vienna)

The Pontificate of Pius XII and the Test of Decolonization: Doctrinal Orientations and Lines of Intervention Lucia Ceci (University of Rome Tor Vergata)

When the Empire Ends: The Vatican and the Native Clergy as Agents of Decolonization at the Horn of Africa (1939–1958) Maria Bonaria Urban (Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome)

The Catholic Church in the Evolving Middle East: A Study of Iraq and Jordan **Paolo Maggiolini** (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan)

16.30-17.00 Open discussion of first day findings

19.30 dinner at Granita restaurant (5 Michel Lutfallah Street)



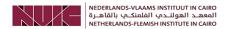








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### **Tuesday November 11**

08.30-9.30 Welcome tea/coffee at NVIC

**9.30-10.45** Keynote: Bringing the Vatican into Global History: Decolonization and the Recentering of the Periphery **Giuliana Chamedes** (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

10.45-11.00 Tea/Coffee Break

11.00-13.00 Interfaith Debates on Decolonization

Chair: Simon Unger (DHI Rom)

Africanising the Priesthood, Navigating Empire: The Pope's Secretariat of State, Propaganda Fide, and the Belgian Congo Elisabeth Bruyère (KU Leuven)

Decolonization, Religion, and Nationhood: Pakistan's Islamic Ideological Formation and Its Parallels with North African Catholic Debates

Jamil Akhtar (University of the Punjab)

The Church's Encounter with Islamic Reform Movements: Dialogue or Defensive Posture? **Vedran Obućina** (Centre for Interreligious Dialogue Rijeka, Croatia)

"Everything but the Communion?": Towards a (Coptic) Catholic Community Archive in Egypt Mina Ibrahim (Marburg University, Shubra's Archive)

13.30-14.30 Lunch at the NVIC

14.30 Final roundtable: open discussion and concluding remarks

19.30 dinner (optional) at Five Bells (13 Ismail Mohammed, Abu Al Feda)

Organizers: Erica Moretti, Jacopo Pili, Simon Unger