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AIDE STRESSES CHURCH'S ROLE IN PREVENTING WAR

Sends Message for World War II Anniversary

VATICAN CITY, SEPT. 6, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- On the 70 anniversary of the beginning of World War II, the Vatican spokesman is affirming that the Church has a mission to do everything possible so that a similar tragedy will never happen again.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Vatican press office, stated this on the latest edition of "Octava Dies," which he dedicated to recalling the contributions that Benedict XVI and John Paul II have made to heal the wounds caused by the war.

The priest began by repeating the words that the current Pope spoke on the occasion of this anniversary of the war: "In the memory of the peoples, the human tragedies and the absurdity of the war still remain.

"We ask God that the spirit of pardon, peace and reconciliation will prevail in the hearts of mankind."

Father Lombardi acknowledged that the number of primary witnesses of the war is dwindling, and thus, the number of those who "had the courage to pronounce words of repentance, of forgiveness, and to build new peaceful relations between peoples" is also decreasing.

The spokesman particularly recalled the words of Benedict XVI on May 19, 2005, when he said that both he and the former Pontiff, "in their youth -- although on opposite fronts and in different situations -- had to be exposed to the barbarism of World War II, and the insane violence of men against men, of peoples against peoples."

Father Lombardi noted that both Popes had gone to visit Auschwitz, affirming the necessity of going.

He also added that, a few days ago, the bishops of Poland and Germany came together to reaffirm that the "reconciliation between our peoples is a gift that we can give to the history of united Europe."

"When we recall the absurdity of hate," the priest concluded, "the faithful remember at the same time the necessity of and the commitment to forgiveness and reconciliation.

He added, "Only in this way can we build peace and say with conviction, 'Never again war.'"