

0. HOW CAN A SINGLE ACTION CHANGE OUR DESTINY?
- Story Preface

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This image depicts a picture of Edgardo Mortara (the sixth-born child in his family) with some of his brothers. The photo has been kept in the Archivio Storico San Pietro in Vincoli (the Church of St. Peter in Chains) in Rome for many decades. The photo is undated and shows Edgardo as "Father Pio Maria Mortara," standing third-from-left. Edgardo was only six years old when papal police removed him from his family.

Edgardo ultimately settled at the Abbey of the Canons Regular in Bouhay, Belgium (near Liege). Highly educated, he spoke six languages. Edgardo became a world-famous priest who never ceased to tell the story of how an illiterate servant girl rescued him for the Catholic Church. He rarely saw his family.

He died (aged 88) at the Bouhay Abbey, in 1940, just two months before Nazi soldiers swooped into Belgium. Edgardo, who had taken the name Pio (Pius) after his mentor, the Pope, was barely dead when Nazis began to send Jews in Belgium to death camps.

The Italian Inquistitor, Father Feletti, was ultimately tried for issuing the order to kidnap Edgardo. Once Bologna was out of church hands, the secular courts were free to proceed as they would against anyone accused of kidnapping.

Bologna may have been out of church hands, but the judges who decided cases were not technically out of church control. The court was bound to rule based on laws in effect at the time of the alleged crime, not laws in effect at the time of trial.

A panel of six judges decided the Inquisitor had followed the law in effect at the time. Father Feletti, jailed fifteen weeks in a cold Bologna tower without a window, was freed. The court held:

*...there were not, and are not, grounds for proceeding criminally against the executors of the above-mentioned action [the taking of Edgardo], and thus against the defendant Pier Gaetano Feletti of the Order of Preachers, formerly Inquisitor of the Holy Office in Bologna. Consequently, he should be immediately released from jail. (Page 240, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara.*)*

No longer an Inquisitor, Father Feletti was still a Dominican who had endeared himself to the Pope. He was sent to Rome where he was in charge of a Dominican convent until he died in 1881. He was 84.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HOW-CAN-A-SINGLE-ACTION-CHANGE-OUR-DESTINY-Kidnapping-of-Edgardo-Mortara>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/HOW-CAN-A-SINGLE-ACTION-CHANGE-OUR-DESTINY-Kidnapping-of-Edgardo-Mortara>

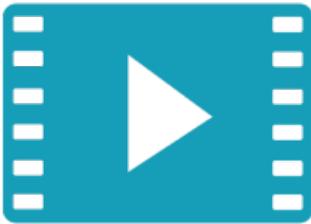
Media Stream



Map of Belgium

Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Germany on the Offensive - Invasion of the Low Countries

UK Newsreel, 15 May 1940, online courtesy Google Video.

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