

Jan. 7, St. Raymond of Peñafort

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Jan. 7, 2010 NCR Today

Today is the feast of [St. Raymond of Peñafort](#), [1] 1175-1275, who became Third Master General of the Order of Preachers, following St. Dominic de Guzman and Blessed Jordan of Saxony.

He "studied at Bologna and then taught law between 1218 and 1221. After his return to Barcelona, he entered the Dominican order in 1222. Pope Gregory IX summoned him to Rome in 1230 and asked him to compile a new codification that would reduce all earlier collections of decretals into one volume."

--from *The History of Medieval Canon Law in the Classical Period, 1140-1234: From Gratian to the Decretals of Pope Gregory IX*, [2] edited by Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington, published by the Catholic University of America Press, 2008.

After resigning from his position as Master General, Raymond of Peñafort, who would live to be a hundred, concentrated on the work he considered most important -- the conversion of Jews and Muslims. He was instrumental in arranging the famous debate in Barcelona in 1263 between a rabbi and a Dominican who had converted from Judaism. The disputation resulted in a public burning of the Talmud, as these [public displays of Jew-hatred](#) [3] typically did.

(Centuries later, Fr. Feeney would still be praising the Church's burning of Jewish books and yearning for the days of "Saint Simon Stock, Saint Peter Nolasco, Saint Raymond of Peñafort, Saint Thomas of Hereford", et al., when the Church could employ "prudent devices" like ghettos and badges against the "Jewish infection". Click [here](#) [4] for more Feeney.) (Remember him?)

[Rabbi Meir ben Baruch](#) [5] witnessed the "public burning of twenty-four cartloads of Talmudic manuscripts" before the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris in 1244. He "bewailed this tragedy in his celebrated 'Kina' *Shaali serufah* (???? ?????) which is still recited on Tisha B'Av."

Raymond of Peñafort, like another saint, Pope Sylvester I, whose feast day was a week ago, bears a lot of responsibility for the Church's shameful history of persecution of the Jews.

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Links:

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raymond_of_Penyafort

[2] http://www.amazon.com/History-Medieval-Classical-Period-1140-1234/dp/0813214912/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1262791710&sr=1-3#noop

[3] http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0019_0_19544.html

[4] <http://www.aryanunion.org/point/57-feb.html>

[5] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meir_of_Rothenburg