

## Common Core Close Reading: The Assisi Underground

Text Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions for Students
<p>The only time in history when there is a record of Jews living in Assisi, Italy was during the <b>Holocaust</b>, when the town and its churches, <b>monasteries</b> and <b>convents</b> became a safe haven for several hundred Jews.</p> <p>Shortly after the German <b>occupation</b>, when the manhunt for Jews began, the Bishop of Assisi, Giuseppe Nicolini, ordered Father Brunacci to head the rescue operation of Jews and to arrange sheltering places in some twenty-six monasteries and convents. The Bishop <b>authorized</b> the hiding of Jews in places that were closed to outsiders by monastic regulations. The Committee of Assistance that Bishop Nicolini organized <b>transformed</b> Assisi into a shelter for many Jews. In addition, many other Jews were provided with false papers <b>enabling</b> them to travel and survive in other places. Later, Father Brunacci was arrested and tried in court for his involvement in Jewish rescue efforts but was released after the <b>intervention</b> by the Vatican.</p> <p>Father Rufino Niccacci, the Guardian of the St. Damiano Monastery, played an important role in the network. He arranged false papers and found hiding places in the monasteries and convents, disguising the Jews as monks and nuns. The network not only saved Jewish lives, but also made great efforts to supply Jews with some of their religious needs. After the war, Father Brunacci described how during <b>Yom Kipper</b>, the Day of <b>Atonement</b> and the highest holiday in the Jewish religion was celebrated in Assisi in 1943. The Convent nuns prepared the special meal for the ending of the fast.</p>	<p><b>Holocaust</b>-the murder of millions of European Jews and others by Nazi Germany and its allies.</p> <p><b>monasteries</b>-buildings which house priests or monks.</p> <p><b>convents</b>-buildings which house nuns.</p> <p><b>occupation</b>-military control of a territory.</p> <p><b>authorized</b>-to give permission.</p> <p><b>transformed</b>-to change.</p> <p><b>enabling</b>-to permit or empower.</p> <p><b>intervention</b>-direct involvement in another country.</p> <p><b>Yom Kipper</b>-the holiest Jewish holiday on which fasting and prayer are required.</p> <p><b>Atonement</b>-to correct and reflect on the sins of the past year.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why did Jews move to Assisi?</li>   <li>2. How did the Bishop of Assisi, Giuseppe Nicolini, react to the German occupation?</li>   <li>3. Explain what happened to Father Brunacci as a result of his rescue efforts.</li>   <li>4. How did Father Rufino Nicacci's role in the rescue network help Jews?</li> </ol>

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<p>Not only priest and nuns of the church participated in this collective effort, but many others played key roles in the rescue of Jews. One such person was Luigi Brizi who owned a souvenir shop in Assisi that operated a printing press. Brizi and his son became members of the Assisi rescue network and risked their lives by printing false papers for the <b>persecuted</b> Jews. Luigi's son, Trento, bicycled to Foligno, 20 kilometers from Assisi, to a friend who used his <b>etching</b> skills to produce seals in order to stamp the false documents. The Viterbi family was one of the families that lived openly due to the false papers provided by Brizi.</p> <p>After the war, Brunacci remarked that about 200 Jews had been saved from the persecutors. As a result, <b>Yad Vashem</b> in Israel, honored the following people for their role in saving Jews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Father Rufino Niccacci was recognized as <b><u>Righteous Among the Nations</u></b> in 1976.</li> <li>- Bishop Giuseppe Nicolini and Father Brunacci were recognized as <b><u>Righteous Among the Nations</u></b> in 1977.</li> <li>- Luigi Brizi and his son Trento were recognized as <b><u>Righteous Among the Nations</u></b> in 1977.</li> </ul>	<p><b>persecuted</b>-the ill treatment or oppression of individuals</p> <p><b>etching</b>-a technique of printmaking and engraving.</p> <p><b>Yad Vashem</b>-Israel's memorial to the victims of the Holocaust which was established in 1953.</p> <p><b>Righteous Among the Nations</b>-Yad Vashem's honor given to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.</p>	<p>5. How did Luigi Brizi and his son Trento participate in the saving of Jews?</p> <p>6. How did the Jewish people give thanks to those who saved their lives in Assisi?</p>

## **Essay Assessment:**

Write a response to the following question that includes an introduction, body paragraph and a conclusion.

To what extent were the activities of the Assisi Underground network successful in the saving of Jews during the Holocaust?

In your response, be sure to address the following:

- supporting evidence from the reading
- action of individuals
- results of action taken