

Diary of a Pontificate

From Conclave to Funeral *25 August - 4 October 1978*

25 August - At 19.00 the announcement of the *extra omnes* heralds in the conclave, it marks the first such event since the Second Vatican Council. At the time the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Albino Luciani, in his last letter to his sister Antonia writes: «Ahead of me lies no danger».

26 August - By the fourth ballot the quorum is reached with an almost unanimous consent. Cardinal Albino Luciani assents to the election and takes the name of John Paul. At 19.20 the proto-deacon Cardinal Pericle Felici announces the *Habemus Papam*. At 19.30 John Paul I appears at the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to impart his Apostolic blessing. The cardinals prolong their stay in the conclave area until the following morning.

27 August - At 9.30 Eucharistic concelebration together with all the cardinals: those to elect him and those over eighty, excluded from the conclave because of their age. His first *Urbi et Orbi* radio message outlines the six point programme, or 'vogliamo', of his pontificate. At his first Angelus appearance he says: «I hope you will support me with your prayers». Unexpectedly he renounces the traditional plural *maiestatis*, or royal we. Takes possession of his private apartment on the third floor of the Apostolic Palace accompanied by his secretary, Don Diego Lorenzo.

28 August - Names Cardinal Jean Villot as Secretary of State and reconfirms all other official curial posts.

29 August - Names Monsignor Giuseppe Bosa as apostolic administrator of Venice and sends a message to Venetians. Sister Vincenza Taffarel, a collaborator of his since the days he was Bishop of Vittorio Veneto, arrives in the Vatican to assist him with the running of the papal apartment.

30 August - Addresses the College of Cardinals. Speaking in Italian he sets aside the official written text and speaks entirely off-the-cuff. Expresses his words to the cardinals in the first person singular: «Let's try all together to present to the world a united front». Confirms the third General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America scheduled from 12- 28 October in Puebla. Also confirms Father John Magee as first secretary in continuity with his predecessor Paul VI.

31 August - Address to diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See focusing on the duty to be peace builders.

1 September - Address to representatives of the international press in which he remarks: «If St Paul were to appear today he would be a journalist».

2 September - Receives his relatives. Encounters delegations from non-catholic churches. Sends letter to Venetian emigrants on the occasion of their meeting in Einsiedeln, Switzerland.

3 September - Meets and holds conversations with pilgrims respectively from Belluno, Vittorio Veneto and Venice. At the Angelus asks for: «more prayers and fewer battles». Renounces the rite of coronation and presides over the solemn Mass to mark the initiation of his ministry as pastor of the universal Church. Imposition of the pallium and greetings to each one of the hundred and four cardinals who renew their obedience to him. Lunch with the nuns from the Maria Bambina Institute. The team of four members of religious sisters to assist in the running of the papal apartment is formed. Receives the visit of his personal doctor, Antonio Da Ros.

4 September - Address to the official delegations of state present for the beginning of the pontificate in which he asks that: «Our heart be open to all peoples, to all races». Private audiences with heads of state. Encounter with the bishops of Triveneto. Names Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, already president of the Pontifical Council for *Justice and Peace*, as president of the Pontifical Council *Cor Unum*.

5 September - Private audience with Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorod, who dies in his arms. «Never before had I heard such beautiful words regarding the Church», the Pope remarks. Audiences with apostolic nuncios to Australia, Sri Lanka and Thailand and with government ministers from Brazil and Egypt.

6 September - First general audience during which he chooses to focus on humility. On this occasion he renounces being carried in on the customary 'sedia gestatoria' (the portable papal throne) and singles out a young boy from Malta for a moment of face to face dialogue. Appeals for peace in the Middle East. Angelo Gugel begins his work as adjutant of the papal chamber.

7 September - Encounter and dialogue with the Roman clergy promoting: «trust between one brother and another». Audience with the Cardinal Vicar of Rome Ugo Poletti, with three Patriarchs of the Orient: Chaldean, Maronite, Armenian. And private audience with the philologist Vittore Branca.

8 September - Suffrage for Metropolitan Nikodim. Receives the Russian delegation, among those present is the future Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and of All Russia. The pope decides to send Cardinal Johannes Willebrands to the Soviet Union as representative of the Holy See at the funeral of the Metropolitan. Audience with the apostolic nuncio to Pakistan. Message on the occasion of the 85th *Katholikentag* in Freiburg, Germany. Cardinal Antonio Poma, president of the Italian Episcopal Conference is invited to dine.

9 September - No official audience. Sends a message of gratitude to Silvio Oddi as the Cardinal marks the 25th anniversary of his episcopal ordination.

10 September - Angelus: «God is our father; even more he is our mother». Prayer for peace in the Middle East to mark the Camp David talks in unison with the three presidents belonging to the three monotheistic religions.

11 September - Audiences with the Archbishop of Guatemala, Cardinal Mario Casariego, the secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, the apostolic nuncio to Spain. Appointment of the new director general of the Vatican Museums, Carlo Pietrangeli.

12 September - Audience with the Vicar of the diocese of Rome, Ugo Poletti and with the apostolic nuncios to India and Ruanda. First steps taken towards the establishment of

diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Fiji Islands. Prayer at the tomb of Paul VI a month after his funeral.

13 September - Second general audience which has as focus: faith. Private audience with the metropolitan delegates from the Orthodox Church in Cyprus. Receives cases of books from his Venetian library and personal archives. Receives the visit of Doctor Da Ros. Has lunch with the bursar of the Venice patriarchate, Monsignor Fortunato Marchi.

14 September - Receives in audience Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy. Audience with the Bishop of Tshumbe in Congo. Letter to the Venice Seminary. Lunch with his niece Pia Luciani.

15 September - Audience with the prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Gabriel-Marie Garrone and with the Bishop of Accra in Ghana.

16 September - Receives in audience the President of the Republic of Somalia, General Mohamed Siad Barre. Audience with Alfonso López Trujillo, coadjutor Bishop of Medellin in Colombia, Secretary General of 'CELAM' and of the third Conference of the Episcopal Council of Latin American Bishops scheduled to be held in Puebla. Receives in audience the apostolic nuncios to Canada and Cuba.

17 September - At the Angelus speaks of school and society. In the afternoon he goes for a walk in the Vatican gardens in the company of Cardinal Jean Villot.

18 September - Audiences with Cardinal Laurean Rugambwa, Archbishop of Dar-es-Salaam and with the Holy See's Observer to the United Nations, Monsignor Giovanni Cheli. Sends telegram to Iran as the nation is hit by a tragic earthquake.

19 September - Audiences with Ivo Lorscheiter, Bishop of Santa Maria and Secretary of the Episcopal Conference of Brazil; with the apostolic nuncio to Yugoslavia and with a delegation from the Syro-Orthodox Church.

20 September - Third general audience during which he focuses on hope. Letter to the bishops of the Conferences of Argentina and Chile with reference to the dispute over the Beagle Canal. Dines with his brother Edoardo who stays overnight in the papal apartment.

21 September - *Ad limina* visit of a group of bishops from the United States. Letter to President Carter of the United States at the conclusion of the Camp David peace talks. Receives in audience Jean Jérôme Hamer, O.P., Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

22 September - Audience with the prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, Corrado Bafile, and with the apostolic nuncio to Indonesia. Dines with the Bishop of Belluno-Feltre Maffeo Ducoli.

23 September - Audiences with Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio, prefect of the Congregation of Bishops; with the apostolic nuncios to Switzerland and Madagascar and with the director of the «L'Osservatore Romano», Valerio Volpini. Takes possession of his Cathedral of St John Lateran installing himself in the *Cathedra romana*. Previously holds a meeting at the foot of the Capitoline hill with Giulio Carlo Argan, Rome's mayor and his team. In his homily during

concelebration in the Lateran Basilica he remarks: «My one wish is to be at your service». Visit of doctor Antonio Da Ros during which it is agreed doctor Renato Buzzonetti of the Vatican health service might take on the responsibility for the care of the pope.

24 September - At the Angelus the pope highlights how: «Not violence, but love, can do everything».

25 September - Audiences with Cardinal Agnelo Rossi, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and with Cardinal José Humberto Quintero, Archbishop of Caracas in Venezuela.

26 September - Letter to the Venice Seminary.

27 September - Greetings in German to pilgrims in the Vatican Basilica. Fourth general audience: his words focus on charity. Towards the end of the audience he singles out a child to come and help him with the catechesis. Audience with the Patriarch of Antioch, of the Greek - Melkites, Maximos V Hakim.

28 September - *Ad limina* visit of a group of bishops from the Philippines. Audiences with Cardinal Bernardin Gantin and his collaborators; with the apostolic nuncios to Brazil and Holland; with Gianni Crovato, director of the daily «Il Gazzettino». The Pope spends the afternoon in his apartment and before dining meets with the Secretary of State, Cardinal Jean Villot. After dinner, at around 21.00, he speaks on the phone for about half an hour with the Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Giovanni Colombo. Following this phone call he retires to his bedroom. Dies.

29 September - At around 5.20 he is found dead in his bed by his housekeepers, Sister Vincenza Taffarel and Sister Margherita Marin. At 6.00 doctor Renato Buzzonetti registers his death and draws up the canonical act, the *Recognitio cadaveris*. The announcement of his death takes place at 7.30 over the microphones of Vatican Radio. Meanwhile his body is taken to the Clementine Hall. At 19.00 the preservation process of the corpse begins, ending at 3.30 the following morning.

30 September - Translation of the body of John Paul I to the Vatican Basilica where it lies in state until the third of October. Over a million people come to pay homage.

4 October - The funeral takes place. His body is moved to the Vatican crypt for burial.