



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL I

ANGELUS

Sunday, 27 August 1978

Yesterday morning I went to the Sistine Chapel to vote tranquilly. Never could I have imagined what was about to happen. As soon as the danger for me had begun, the two colleagues who were beside me whispered words of encouragement. One said: "Courage! If the Lord gives a burden, he also gives the strength to carry it." The other colleague said: "Don't be afraid; there are so many people in the whole world who are praying for the new Pope." When the moment of decision came, I accepted.

Then there was the question of the name, for they also ask what name you wish to take, and I had thought little about it. My thoughts ran along these lines: Pope John had decided to consecrate me himself in St Peter's Basilica, then, however unworthy, I succeeded him in Venice on the Chair of St Mark, in that Venice which is still full of Pope John. He is remembered by the gondoliers, the Sisters, everyone.

Then Pope Paul not only made me a Cardinal, but some months earlier, on the wide footbridge in St Mark's Square, he made me blush to the roots of my hair in the presence of 20,000 people, because he removed his stole and placed it on my shoulders. Never have I blushed so much!

Furthermore, during his fifteen years of pontificate this Pope has shown, not only to me but to the whole world, how to love, how to serve, how to labour and to suffer for the Church of Christ.

For that reason I said: "I shall be called John Paul." I have neither the "wisdom of the heart" of Pope John, nor the preparation and culture of Pope Paul, but I am in their place. I must seek to serve the Church. I hope that you will help me with your prayers.

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