



On October 16th 1978, Karol Wojtyla entered a small room in St Peter's Basilica, put on a white robe, a short red cape and a white scull cap. A few minutes later he stood at a balcony facing St. Peter's Square. He had become John Paul II, the 264th Pope, the spiritual leader of one out of every five people on the planet. As "the Holy Father", he headed an institution that had outlasted the Roman Empire, encompassed more territory than the lands of Alexander the Great and had a more significant impact on history than the dynasties of Spain, France and England combined. He could influence the behavior of government officials in their anti-rooms, corporations in their boardrooms and private citizens in their bedrooms.

I wanted to know why the papacy was so important. What it's been doing for the past 2000 years and what it's going to do in the future.

In the middle of my trip to Rome John Paul II died. Hundreds of television, radio and newspaper reporters came to cover the story. And over two million pilgrims arrived to say good-bye to a man whose papacy lasted for 27 years and changed the world. My questions were more valid than ever.



IN THE BEGINNING

The first thing I learned is that the history of the papacy is not just the history of the Catholic Church. The story of the papacy is actually an essential part of the history of the entire world.

Christ was a traveling rabbi who preached in Palestine. His life on earth, death and resurrection were seen as having been prophesized in the sacred books of Judaism. His followers were centralized in Jerusalem but within a decade of his death, Christianity began spreading throughout the Middle East. The primary messenger was St. Paul.

Paul was a well-educated Roman citizen who believed that Christ's message was not only for the Jews. Paul taught that Christianity offered everyone the opportunity to be reconciled with God. Paul was the messenger of the early Church but not the leader. That was the responsibility of Peter, a fisherman from Galilee who became the spokesman for the Apostles.

CARL ANDERSON
Supreme Knight
Knights of Columbus:

To understand the papacy, I think we have to begin by understanding the Apostles. These are Disciples of Jesus that he chose, and then commissioned to go out into the world and teach. So essentially the papacy is a teaching office. But then Peter has something else.

Peter from the beginning is seen as someone who has received revelation from the Father, and a special commission and authority from the Son. And so he's seen at the beginning as the head of the Church in Jerusalem. He goes to Rome and is seen as the head of the Church in Rome. And this special status is respected from the very beginning.

At the time, Rome was the center of the Empire and had a thriving Jewish population of about 50,000. They were in close touch with the Jews of Palestine and were well aware of the events surrounding Christ.

MONSIGNOR WILLIAM A. KERR
Executive Director
Pope John Paul II Cultural Center:

The Jewish Diaspora had Jewish peoples living all over the Roman Empire, but many had migrated and settled in Rome. There was a strong Jewish community and these people were integrated into the Empire, they were powerful, they were significant. But they were also held in suspicion by the Romans. They became interested early on in what was going on in Jerusalem, they became interested in the Christ, they began to convert to Christianity, and when Peter and Paul came to them, they were welcomed by these people.

They were curious, they wanted to hear what Peter and Paul had to say, but they also wanted to be instructed by them.

Christianity was spreading quickly and the Emperor Nero took notice of both Peter and Paul. He was offended by their teachings and in the middle of the first century had them put to death. But that did little to stop the growth of Christianity. The followers of Christ continued to practice their faith.

They met in private homes and market places. There was no single individual in charge and many conflicting opinions as to what was the "true" faith. It became increasingly apparent that a more structured approach was necessary. The answer

became the papacy, a single bishop carrying on the tradition of St Peter.

VATICAN CITY

Today Rome's Vatican City is the epicenter of the papacy. With a population of only 550 and a landmass of just over 100 acres, it's the world's smallest independent state. It has its own newspaper with an international circulation. Its own book publisher. Its own television network. Its own police force. Its own stamps and a postal service to go along with them.

It also has its own radio station that went on the air in 1931. It was one of the first international stations and was actually built by Marconi who was the inventor of wireless communication.

The word *Vatican* comes from a Latin word meaning prophecy and during Roman times Vatican Hill was a place where fortune-tellers would offer their advice, for a fee, to the general public.

During the first century a racetrack was built nearby and used by the emperor Nero to stage elaborate spectacles. His favorite was killing Christians.

Nero's circus is gone, replaced by St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican. It was built in 1656 and is almost the same size as the ancient Roman Forum. It's partially enclosed by two semicircular colonnades. Above the colonnades are statues of saints and martyrs.

The double-colonnades symbolize the outstretched arms of the Church, welcoming and protecting the faithful. It is considered to be one of the world's finest examples of civic architecture and can hold over 250,000 people. The square is the approach to St. Peter's Basilica.



ST. PETER'S BASILICA

Historians believe that the basilica was built right next to the spot where St. Peter was martyred. As a condemned criminal he was not permitted a normal burial so his remains were secretly recovered and placed in the public necropolis on Vatican Hill.

In 1940, workmen digging below the basilica found a burial chamber that dated to the first century. A small space below the chamber appeared to be the tomb of St. Peter. That belief is supported by an adjacent wall that is covered with the names of pilgrims asking for St. Peter's help.

CARL ANDERSON:

And then they found something very unusual, or, you might say they didn't find something they expected and that was there were no feet on the skeleton. Saint Peter was crucified upside down, so they surmise the easiest way for the Romans to take him down was simply to cut him off at the feet and let the body drop. Peter had chosen a successor, Linus, as the next Bishop of Rome, and it was Linus who took the body, and with colleagues, buried it.

At the beginning of the 4th century, Constantine, was the

emperor of Rome and believed that a dream with a vision of the cross gave him an important military victory. He converted and made Christianity the official religion of the empire.

Constantine's conversion may or may not have been heartfelt, but it was definitely part of his big plan. He did everything he could to advance the Christians' standing with the Romans and at the same time everything he could to advance his own standing with the Christians.

In 323, he ordered the construction of a huge basilica designed to sit directly above the cemetery where the remains of St. Peter were buried.

CARL ANDERSON:

It was a difficult project because number one he wanted to put the altar of the church right over the tomb of St. Peter which meant he had to cover a pagan cemetery which was sacred ground. And aristocracy was buried there so it was very controversial. Secondly it's on a hillside. He's got to move tons of earth. Third he's got a stream moving through it. So he's got to work around the stream. In any event he builds the Basilica but he goes through all of that effort, all of that controversy, because he wants the basilica over the tomb of St. Peter. Why, because St. Peter is so revered by the early church.

Additional churches and monasteries were constructed alongside the basilica, as well as buildings to house and feed the thousands of pilgrims who came to pay tribute to St. Peter. The basilica itself stood up to continual use for 1200 years.

But during the 1400s it began to disintegrate and a plan was developed for a new structure. Michelangelo built a 16-foot high model of the dome so he could make a series of stress tests. His dome was 137 feet wide and 440 feet above the floor of the basilica. He was an artist, an architect and an engineer.

Work got under way in 1450 but like most construction projects it ran over budget. To help raise the needed funds the Church offered to pray for your well-being in the afterlife in exchange for a meaningful donation during your present life. Some people considered this scandalous and it became a major irritant for Martin Luther. Construction on St. Peter's also ran a little late. The opening dedication took place in 1626—226 years after workers began digging the foundation.



Today St. Peter's Basilica is the largest Christian church in the world. On the base of the dome are the words that Christ spoke to Peter. Taken from chapter sixteen of Matthew's Gospel they make Peter the head of the Church on earth.

"Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Peter is linked directly to Christ. And the Pope is seen as the successor to Peter. The authority of the Pope rests in the continuity of that relationship. Throughout its history the papacy has had two major tasks. First it had to develop a

uniform vision of Christianity and see that the vision was taught in every Catholic Church throughout the world. And secondly it had to act as a counter balance to the power of the world's secular leaders.

SAN GIOVANNI IN LATERANO

St. Peter's is the most visited church in Rome, but San Giovanni in Laterano is the official Cathedral of Rome and the church of the Pope. For the last two thousand years San Laterano is where the Popes were crowned. And only a Pope may say Mass at the main altar.

Originally this was the home of a wealthy Roman family. In 67 AD, the head of the family was implicated in a plot against Nero and executed.

The building passed to a member of the family named Fausta. It was part of her dowry when she married the Emperor Constantine, and when the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Empire he donated the building to the Church. It soon became the official residence of the Popes and remained so until the 1500s.

In the year 326, Constantine's mother, St. Helena, had 28 marble steps removed from the palace of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem and brought to San Giovanni. It was the staircase that Jesus climbed to face Pontius Pilate. It's called the Scala Santa, "the sacred staircase." During the 16th century it was moved across the street to a new Papal palace. Today, the faithful make the ascent on their knees.

At the top of the steps is the Sancta Sanctorum. For centuries it was the private chapel of the Popes and held two silver busts containing the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul. During the 1920s they were moved to Vatican City.

San Giovanni is also the site of what may be the first Christian baptistery. It is an eight-sided building detached from the basilica. It became the architectural prototype for all the baptisteries that followed.

In the center of the piazza, in front of the church, is the world's largest ancient obelisk. An obelisk is a single tapered pillar. They were originally put up in pairs to mark the entrance to ancient Egyptian temples. The sides are covered with Egyptian characters that refer to the Sun god and the achievements of the pharaohs.

In 30 BC Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire and suddenly everything Egyptian was hot stuff. They took hundreds of important Egyptian works of art and moved them to Rome. Today Rome has thirteen important obelisks, Egypt only five.

THE BASILICA OF SAN CLEMENTE

Another church of considerable importance to the history of Christianity in Rome is the Basilica of San Clemente. My guide was Father Paul Lawlor, who was born in Ireland and coordinated the restoration activities of the church.

FATHER PAUL LAWLOR

Really you have to understand that San Clemente lies in a valley between two of the hills of Rome. On one side you've got the Celian Hill, on the other side the Appian Hill. And over the centuries the street level rose. So it was necessary to fill in the lower buildings in order to build a new structure. And so the buildings underneath were filled in and preserved.

The fourth century level is where the Christians built a basilica sometime at the end of the fourth century. And we've got records of this church going right up to the twelfth century, but between those periods — the fourth century and the twelfth century — every century added something to the building. From the columns you can see, the mosaic floor — very simple, typical of the sixth century when they're reusing marble. There are a whole series of paintings, particularly from the eleventh century when they're trying to show the importance of the papacy. Gregory VII had been exiled, and they tried to show that the papacy had its own importance.

At the twelfth century level, the twelfth century basilica, again the street level is rising, the lower building becomes dark, damp, damaged by war and is filled in. There is a mosaic which represents the tree of life. You've got the cross at the center, planted in the ground and this great tree comes out from the base of the cross. There is an inscription that says the tree represents the church. And then there are little scenes of daily life of women looking after sheep and goats, feeding chickens, men also as shepherds, hunting scenes. Everything is involved in this great tree and everything is brought back up to heaven. So it is a powerful, powerful mosaic.

On the floor is a design which is laid out by the Cosmoti, a great family of marble workers. They had learned how to cut columns into slices, like cutting up salami. They laid out a beautiful pattern, that weaves in and out like a tree stretching right through the church. It's a cross made at the same time as the mosaic, perhaps a reflection of the cross in the mosaic. By coming into the church we are involved in the branches of the tree, which this time is rooted in the altar. And the sacrifice of Christ of course on the altar which gave life to this new tree of life which stretches right through the church. It's a magnificent idea.

Everything is represented from the early Christian world right through to the twelfth century, then the Renaissance and then the Baroque world right up to our own time. And it is still being used today.

THE SISTINE CHAPEL

In 1508, Pope Julius II entered his private chapel. Walking next to him was Michelangelo, considered to be one of the greatest artists of the time. The Pope pointed to the ceiling, looked at Michelangelo and said, "Paint it." Michelangelo spent the next four years of his life standing on a scaffold and painting a fresco. He even made sketches of himself at work.

A fresco is produced by putting fresh plaster on a surface and then painting a picture on the plaster. The artist uses paints that are made from colored powder mixed with water. When



the water dries out the powder sets into the plaster. The color becomes a permanent part of the wall or in this case the ceiling. It's the perfect medium for large murals, but it's a difficult technique. The painter must work fast, completing a section before the plaster is dry and mistakes cannot be corrected by overpainting. Make a mistake and you must start again with fresh plaster.

The fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is considered to be one of the greatest works of art. It presents events from the Old Testament.



The Popes were good clients for Michelangelo, and Pope Paul III brought him back to paint the west wall of the chapel. He was eighty years old.

Today the Sistine Chapel is the room used by the Sacred College of Cardinals when they meet to elect a new Pope.

BOOKS AND RECORDS

In the early 400s, Pope Innocent I dropped a note to the bishops of Africa.

The note pointed out that it was divine authority that gave the papacy the right to approve all religious activities in the Christian world. The Pope began to take on a role that was similar to that of the chief justice of the Supreme Court.

Cases were decided and recorded. They became the basis for a vast system of papal law—laws that ended up having a major impact on Western ideas. We tend to think of courts of appeal and legal precedents as concepts that developed in the secular world. But in fact it was the papacy that popularized the idea of a court of appeals.

MONSIGNOR WILLIAM A. KERR:

When nations were developing their codified systems, and were moving away from the absolute rule of a prince or a king, it was to the Roman laws that they turned. Laws that were codified by the papacy. I think probably "due process" is one of the great contributions the papacy has made to the life of civilization today.

PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION

On the night of August 10th 1992, a section of the mosaic covering the dome of the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament broke off and fell 400 feet to the floor below. Rainwater had seeped into the ceiling and weakened the glue that held the mosaic chips to the dome. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but a restoration program was needed and it had to begin immediately.

A mosaic is made by taking pieces of colored glass, marble or stone and pasting them onto a surface that has been prepared with glue. The ancient Romans learned the technique from the Greeks and used it to decorate their homes and temples.

By the third century mosaics were being used to present sacred images. At the time, people were losing interest in sculpture and the mosaic gradually took over as the most convincing way to picture a religious event.

When the great paintings inside St. Peter's Basilica began to

deteriorate in the 1600s they were recreated in mosaic. But if you didn't know that and you didn't look for the tiny stones, you'd think they were paintings.

The restoration program for the dome was undertaken by the Mosaic Studio of the Vatican. Its work dates back to the 1500s and it is considered to be the finest mosaic studio in the world. It also has the largest collection of the stones that are used to produce the works.

The artists have about 30,000 different colors to choose from and there are samples for each color. On the back of each chip is the identification number.

In the next room there are hundreds of bins filled with the tiles that are necessary to make the mosaics. Each number on the samples matches up with the numbers on the bin. Almost all of the tiles were made in the Vatican mosaic studio. And many are hundreds of years old.

Some of the tiny chips are stone, some are marble and some are glass. The glass chips are produced in the studio. Small pieces of glass mixed with chemicals that give it color are fused together at a temperature of 800 degrees centigrade.

The hot glass is pulled at both ends to produce a filament. A bladed hammer and a wedge of steel are used to cut the filament into the size and shape that the artist wants for a specific spot in the mosaic.

The mosaic on the dome was put in place in 1656 and presents "The mystery of the Eucharist." The only way to work on it was to build a scaffold up to the vault. Each section of the mosaic that needed repair was copied and coordinated on numbered sheets that were fixed to the vault. When



the chips were reattached the bonding glue was made from an ancient recipe that combined marble dust, lime, and flax oil.

The restoration took almost two years and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The funding came from The Knights of Columbus in the United States who were attracted to the project because of its cultural and artistic importance and because they felt it stood as a metaphor for life.

They pointed out that a mosaic is made by placing one stone next to another stone until we have a masterwork and that life is similar. We place one minute next to the next minute until we are the masterwork of the Divine Artist.

THE EARLY YEARS

During the third century, corruption, civil war and a series of plagues spread chaos throughout the Empire. The average citizen lived in a state of constant anxiety. In contrast to the government however, the Church offered a vision of the world that was simple and secure, especially its promise of an afterlife. The Church had also developed a reliable infrastructure that continued to offer lifesaving charity to the poor.

Constantine saw the Christian Church as a force for unity that could hold his empire together. His conversion turned the bishops of the Roman Empire into men of power and influence

and they wanted that power to be seen by everyone. They began working with Constantine to build some of the great churches of Rome.

But in 324, Constantine packed up and headed east. His plan was to build a new capital for the Roman Empire, which in keeping with his level of modesty he called Constantinople.

The Popes were left with the complex task of building Christian Rome, but within a hundred years they were able to construct dozens of elaborate churches.

Perhaps the most magnificent is Santa Maria Maggiore. In 353, Pope Lieberius had a vision of the Virgin Mary commanding him to build a church dedicated to her on a snow-covered hill. Considering that it almost never snows in Rome and this was the middle of the summer, Lieberius had a hard time understanding the request. However, on August 5th it began to snow and the hill was covered in white.

The Pope got the point and started building a church which stood there for about 200 years until it was replaced by the present basilica.

Inside, there is a gold and silver relic case said to contain a piece of Jesus' cradle. The ceiling is made of gold brought from the Americas and donated by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. As you may recall, Isabella put up the front money for Columbus.



The activities surrounding the Pope became more formal. Detailed rituals were introduced, feast-days were announced, and music was composed for each occasion. The elaborate activities of the papacy fascinated the newly converted population of Europe. Kings, churchmen and the devoted, who could afford the trip, came to Rome to be near the great relics of the Church which had been carefully preserved and were elaborately presented. If you wanted to be close to God and request that your sins be forgiven, Rome seemed the right place to make your appeal.

BONIFACE'S BONUS MILES

On the 22nd of April, in the year 1300, Pope Boniface VIII stood on the balcony of the Church of San Giovanni in Laterano and announced the first Jubilee Year. He had gotten the idea from the biblical book of Leviticus which described a jubilee year that took place every fifty years and required that all slaves be freed and all debts paid.

Pope Boniface declared that anyone who came to Rome during the Jubilee Year, confessed their sins and visited St. Peter's would be pardoned from the temporal punishment that was due as a result of those sins.

It was like saying to your kid, "You're forgiven, but you still have to pay the consequences." Not a free flight but definitely the ultimate bonus miles program. And everybody who could take advantage of the offer came to Rome. During the year 1300 over a million people visited this city.

The Church intended to mark every hundredth year as a Holy Year. But in 1334, the interval was shortened to 33 years, the

length of the life of Christ. In 1464 Pope Paul II reduced it to 25 years. The quarter-century spacing has been in use ever since.

A Holy Year begins on the preceding Christmas Eve when the Pope opens the Holy Door, the Porta Santa of St. Peter's. Traditionally the Pope would use a hammer to knock down a temporary wall that was erected in front of the door, after that, the door was opened. But there are also special occasions that call for a Holy Year. The year 1983 was a Holy Year that marked 1,950 years since the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

In 1500, the name was changed from Jubilee Year to Holy Year but the offer of forgiveness remained.

The visits enhance the image of the papacy. People discovered the extraordinary buildings that had been commissioned by the Popes. They saw the art that came into being at the command of the Popes. They witnessed the pageantry that honored the saints. And they heard music that was specifically composed to lift the hearts of the faithful. They went back to their homes throughout Europe with a new awareness of the importance of the papacy. More than any other organization in the history of the world, the papacy has promoted tourism and tourism has promoted tolerance and understanding.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

During the early decades of the 20th century, the Pope was the infallible voice of the Church, the spiritual leader of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world, and the most powerful force opposing godless behavior.

He was also almost landless, ignored by most contemporary governments, and despised by the fascists and the communists who were coming to power.

The first Pope of the 20th century was Giuseppe Sarto. His father was the postman in a small village in Northern Italy and his mother was a seamstress. He was approachable, warm and clearly a Pope of the people.

He took the name Pius X and in 1910, reduced the age of the First Communion from twelve to seven. The objective was to celebrate the idea of the family, and bring together the community and that is precisely what it did and still does. During the past few years, I have attended First Communions in Mexico City, Chicago and Rome and each time I was aware of family bonds being reestablished and strengthened.

During World War II the Vatican literally emptied its bank accounts in order to establish programs on behalf of the wounded soldiers and the refugees of war. The Popes began to oppose the imperialism of 20th century governments and to promote respect for the cultures that were being overrun.

The Popes began to consecrate bishops from China, Japan, India and Southeast Asia. At a time when nations were becoming more and more nationalistic, the papacy was promoting the acceptance of all cultures.

Papal policy during the second half of the 20th century showed a continuing interest in international events. In 1963, Pope John XXIII published a document titled, *Pacem in Terris*, Peace on Earth. It was addressed not to the bishops of the Church but to "all men of good will". It supported the right of every individual to practice the religion of his or her choice, both privately and publicly. It championed the role of women in

government. It called for improved conditions for workers. And it denounced war in the nuclear age as “utterly irrational”

The American theologian John Courtney Murray was the main draftsman for the decree on religious liberty. He felt that it was essential if the Church was to be respected by democratic nations. The centuries old idea that the Jews could be held responsible for the death of Christ was denounced.

JOHN PAUL II

A key supporter of the changes presented in Pope John XXIII's request for peace on earth was the Archbishop of Krakow who was living under communist domination. Freedom of religion would be a valuable tool in his battle with the communist dictators who with the aid of Russian troops controlled Poland. The Archbishop of Krakow was Karol Wojtyla, the future Pope John Paul II.



John Paul II was the first non-Italian to be elected Pope in almost 500 years. During the Nazi occupation of Poland he had been a student, then a worker in a stone quarry and then a chemical factory.

I went to Poland to visit the Museum of the Archdiocese of Krakow. It houses a collection of religious art but most important the building contains the actual room in which Pope John Paul II lived before he became Pope.

PROFESSOR ZDZISLAW KLIS:

The room looks just like it did in 1952 when Father Wojtyla was a priest. He shared that place with his professor Father Starowiejski. It was a difficult time after second World War. There is the desk by which he worked, his picture as a child, also his family, parents, mother and father. His skis are here, the first ones he used and a second more advanced pair. There is even a collection of his writing.

I think his Doctorate was about John of the Cross, a Spanish Saint. The Pope learned Spanish in those days, to read all those writings in Spanish. There are also photographs of him as a young man studying Polish literature in the University. He was an actor in those days.

He had a girlfriend and was the first Pope in over two hundred years to have lived a life that was similar to the average person. When he decided to become a priest he was violating the anti-religious laws of the communist party and had to begin his studies in secret.

Determined to do whatever he could to defend the people of Poland against the communist dictatorship he visited the country in 1979. He traveled from one end of the nation to the other and actually spoke to one third of the population. Government controlled television producers were instructed never to show the jubilant crowds. The cameras were to be locked on close-ups of the Pope.

His visit to Poland and his moral and financial support of Lech Walesa and the Solidarity movement was a key element

in toppling the communist government and bringing democracy to Poland.

The 20th century has challenged the Church to respond to the needs of the modern world. And much of that challenge was met by John Paul II. He took over 90 trips to more than 120 countries, trying to respond to the needs of people all over the world.

CARL ANDERSON:

When he came on to the Balcony of Saint Peter's after his election, and said, be not afraid, open wide the doors, he meant in every country, in every culture. And the Pope has been a pilgrim into all of these places.

Historians are going to look to him and see how the papacy really changed in a dramatic way under his leadership. First of all, it is a global papacy now, in a way that it never was before.

At the most sacred moment of his ordination in Poland a fellow laborer from his days in the Krakow chemical factory called to him by his nickname with a message of encouragement, “Lolek, don't let anybody get you down.”

As the years passed and I watched the slow progression of the Pope's illness, I got the feeling that his old pal's message of support was always with him. John Paul II sent a signal that no matter what happens to the body, the soul survives.

ELECTING THE NEW POPE

When a Pope dies the Cardinals in charge of all Vatican offices are immediately suspended with three exceptions: the Cardinal in charge of the Papal household, the Cardinal judging the most serious cases involving papal law, and the Cardinal who will oversee the burial ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica.

The Cardinal in charge of the Pope's household is responsible for confirming the death. That was traditionally done by tapping the Pope's forehead repeatedly with a silver hammer while calling him by his baptismal name. These days however the task has been given over to medical authorities.

The Cardinal in charge of the household also has the task of crushing the Fisherman's Ring, a gold signet ring once used to seal all Papal documents. A new ring is made for each Pope.

There are nine days of mourning then the Pope is laid to rest below St. Peter's Basilica. Popes are buried in triple coffins. The inner container is made of cypress wood, the middle of lead, and the outer of elm.

Between fifteen and twenty days after the announcement of the Pope's death all the Cardinals of the Church come to Vatican City and assemble in conclave to elect a new Pope. The word “conclave” actually means under lock and key and for centuries that's what happened. They were locked together until their work was completed.

In the past, accommodations for all the cardinals and their personnel was a serious problem and the conditions were often miserable. These days things are different. In 1996, John Paul II opened the House of St. Martha, a building that was especially designed to house the cardinals and their attendants during a conclave. There are also rooms for medical personnel and the catering staff.

Once the conclave has begun the House of St. Martha and the Sistine Chapel are sealed off from the outside world in the hope that no external pressures will be brought to bear on the proceedings.

ARCHBISHOP JOHN P. FOLEY
President

Pontifical Council for Social Communications:

Every morning the Cardinals are taken over to the Sistine Chapel and twice a day they meet. There are two votes each time and a vote of two-thirds plus one is needed during the first thirty ballots. If no one is elected after 30 ballots it goes to a majority plus one. And after the first three days of voting which should be about twelve ballots if nobody has been elected they take a pause for a day of recollection, a day of prayer. In theory any male Catholic can be elected Pope but since 1389 it has always been a member of the College of Cardinals.

They take an oath that everything they do will be secret which is understandable because you don't want revelations later that would be divisive. Each individual holds up his ballot, which he has signed, and he says "I swear before God that I am voting for the person whom I believe to be best qualified." So he puts the vote in a big chalice, a large container. Then those votes are taken; and they are counted first to make sure that there are no more votes than there are Cardinals.



MONSIGNOR ROBERT TRISCO
Professor Emeritus of Church History
The Catholic University of America

We know in times past some of the conclaves were very long, and the one that took place beginning in 1268, lasted two years, nine months and three days. That was held at Viterbo, a town in central Italy, where the previous Pope had died. It was the custom then to hold the conclaves wherever the previous Pope, had died. And the towns people became so impatient that they walled the Cardinals up and allowed only a small amount of food to go in, and even took the roof off of the building. Finally they came to an agreement.

If a vote does not result in the election of a new Pope, the papers are burned in a stove with a chimney that is visible in St. Peter's Square. A chemical is added to the fire, which produces a heavy black smoke, which tells the public that the vote was indecisive. If a Pope has been elected the chemical is left out and the smoke is pure white.

Once a new Pope has been elected, the Cardinal Dean stands in front of him, and asks him by what name he wishes to be known. The man who was elected announces his name as Pope and puts on his new robes. Three robes, one in small, one in medium and one in large are always held at the ready.

By this time St. Peter's Square is filled with tens of thousands of people. The Senior Cardinal Deacon steps to the balcony overlooking the square and calls out, "I announce to you a great joy, we have a Pope adding the Pope's old name and the

name that he has chosen as Pope. The Pope comes to the window and gives his blessing to the crowd below.

WHAT REMAINS

CARL ANDERSON:

The twenty-first century most likely will be a century of profound religion and religious growth and expectation. And so inter-religious dialogue, getting to know the faith and values of others around the globe will be tremendously important. Important for Catholics and Christians but also at the same time important for non-Christians to understand better what has been a vital force in the West for 2,000 years and now is more and more an important animating force in Latin America, in Asia, and in Africa.



The papacy has been the inspiration behind much of our most moving music. The stimulus for some of the finest art in the world. The preserver and protector of some of the most important books in western literature. A primary source of our appellate court system. The counter force against abusive governments. The advocate for a more righteous life. A great and ongoing source of charitable works.

In many ways the history of the papacy is similar to the history of any large institution—you have your good days and your not so good days. Of course in the case of the papacy you're looking at centuries not days. Nevertheless, you can look back over its 2,000-year history and see that it is clearly the source of some of our greatest achievements.

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