



# The Promise of His Smile...

By JOHN M. HAFFERT

Just two weeks before Pope John Paul I died, I was near the front of the Nerni Hall during the Pontiff's second General Audience. I brought back a glowing report for SOUL plus a second article on what effect this new Pope might have on the Blue Army.

He was all that we had hoped for in a Pope, and more. In the few general audiences of his pontificate he spoke of *world peace*, of Faith to lead the post-Conciliar Church *in the path of truth*, and of the *incompatibility of Christianity and Communism*.

The promise of his smile was taken quickly from us.

Was his brief pontificate a ray of God's special promise at this critical moment...but a promise not yet sufficiently earned? Was this a bright indication of what COULD be, if only WE would respond to the requests of Our Lady of Fatima as we should?

### *Close to Fatima*

Last year, as Cardinal of Venice, the new Pope spent two hours with Lucia during a visit to Fatima...during which he concelebrated Mass with the International President of the Blue Army, Most Rev. John Venancio.

During that audience the now dead Pope asked Lucia if Our Lady would be pleased if a Pilgrim Virgin were carried throughout Italy for two years, beginning on the tenth anniversary of Padre Pio's death (this past September). From that meeting with Lucia the new Pope had brought back the answer that

YES, Our Lady would be pleased... little dreaming that he would be Pope when that pilgrimage began.

### *Pilgrimage Goes On*

Just four days after our audience with the Pope, we witnessed the opening of that two year journey of the Pilgrim Virgin at San Giovanni Rotondo...over the tomb of Padre Pio. The statue had been blessed at Fatima last August 13th, on the eve of the Blue Army international meetings at Fatima. The next day it was taken to the Vatican where it remained until it was flown by helicopter to San Giovanni Rotondo on September 16th.

In conclusion, I would like to quote at least a paragraph from the article I had written for SOUL about Pope John Paul but which it now seems useless to print. It reads:

*"In over a hundred different Papal audiences which I have attended over the years I never heard a Pope speak to the Church so intimately, so personally as did*

*Pope John Paul I. In this second general audience, after greeting everyone with wide arms and smiles, His Holiness spoke WITHOUT NOTES, as though chatting with friends. Three times he quoted Pope John XXIII and twice Pope Paul VI. He was indeed Pope 'John Paul.' But at the same time he gave the impression of individual strength sufficient to take the Church a great step further along the path of his predecessors."*

The Holy Spirit gave us a brief, brilliant bridge between the Popes of the Second Vatican Council...and the Pope who must now lead the Church in that path of truth, with compassion for the right and left but firmness in the truth.

In the same faith which Pope John Paul said must illumine our way, let us redouble our prayers for the new Vicar of Christ...that he may lead us ever more quickly and surely to the triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart, promised at Fatima.