

# A Jewish Appraisal of Paul's Pontificate

By RABBI MARCH TANNENBAUM

New York (RNS) — I had the privilege of meeting Pope Paul VI on three separate occasions in Vatican City and in New York. The overriding impression that I carry with me of the late pope is that of a complex, dedicated, highly intellectual person who, at the same time, was a deeply spiritual man. He was warmer than first appearances indicated, and he genuinely cared for human beings.

Pope Paul entered the diplomatic service of the Vatican Secretariate of State in 1923, three years after his ordination. He spent most of his adult life in Vatican City. He had, therefore, little opportunity to get to know Jewish people, their religion and culture. Vatican Council II, which flung open the windows of the Catholic Church to the world outside Italy, became, in effect, an extraordinary "on the job" training for Pope Paul to experience first-hand that outside world, including the world of the Jewish people and Israel.

Pope Paul clearly went through an evolution in his attitudes toward Jews, Judaism and the State of Israel. Some of his pronouncements inevitably reflected his limited contact with Jews and Judaism. Thus, in his first encyclical, he invited Jews, Muslims, and followers of "the Afro-Asiatic religions" to join with the Catholic Church in "defending common ideals of religious liberty, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare and civil order."

But, in the same breath, he declared, "loyalty requests us to declare openly our conviction that there is only one true religion — that of Christianity. It is our hope that all who seek God and adore Him may come to acknowledge its truth." Needless to say, Muslims and Eastern religions were no happier with that attitude than were Jews who do not believe that their religion is inadequate or unfulfilled.

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It is a genuine tribute to Pope Paul, however, that his native intellectual integrity and his genuine, if cautious, openness to new ideas and experiences led him increasingly to modify his traditionalist views as he gained fresh insights. Some of his new insights began to emerge from his growing number of audiences with various Jewish leaders from 1963 through 1978.

His changing attitudes were perhaps most clearly expressed during one of his first audiences, and in his last. Referring to the trauma of the Nazi holocaust, Pope Paul in 1964, told an American Jewish Committee delegation that he "strongly deplores the horrible ordeals, the many trials and sufferings, of which the Jews have been the victims in recent years."

Anticipating the Vatican Declaration which condemned anti-Semitism and repudiated the false charge of collective Jewish guilt for the death of Christ, Pope Paul then declared that he "does not believe Jews should be held responsible for the death of Jesus" ... and the Jewish people should "never undergo any diminution of your human rights."

Finally he spoke of his appreciation of Judaism in these words: "Ours is a particular consideration of the Jewish religious tradition with which Christianity is so intimately linked, and from which it derives hope for trusting relations and for a happy future." The pope concluded the audience with a blessing to the AJC leaders, saying, "We wish you every favor from God whom we invoke with all our hearts on your behalf and that of all those who are near and dear to you." To underscore the significance of his declaration, papal

authorities had the pope's full text reprinted on the front page of the official Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano.

In his last address on Jewish-Christian relations, Pope Paul spoke even more forthrightly of "the connection between Jewish thought and Christian thought," noting that in the past "there has been real and profound mutual esteem (between Christian and Jewish scholars) and a conviction that we had something to learn from one another."

Again, with a special warmth, Pope Paul expressed for the Jewish leaders "and for your families, but widely still for the entire Jewish people our best wishes for happiness and peace."

The most dramatic expression of his growing interest and appreciation of Judaism as a source of religious insight and inspiration became manifest in his study of several books on the Philosophy of Judaism by the late Rabbi Heschel, with whom he developed a personal friendship. From the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, in 1969, Pope Paul quoted from the texts of Rabbi Heschel's books and spoke of the spiritual treasures of Judaism which he commended to the attention of the Catholic faithful before him. To my knowledge, that was the first time in 1,900 years that a reigning pope cited a Rabbi and the texts of Judaism as a spiritual resource.

While Pope John XXIII deserves the credit for beginning the process of changing the Catholic Church's negative or ambivalent attitudes towards Jews and Judaism, to Pope Paul VI belongs the merit of personally creating the Vatican Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, which is the first instrument in the Catholic Church's history charged with specific responsibility for translating ideas into realities — in revising textbooks, liturgy, sermons, and promoting joint social action.

## Through the Conclave, Step by Step

By PAMELA MENDELS  
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Vatican City — As rumors and speculation about the next Pope continued to fly about the Eternal City, one thing remained fixed, firm and certain: the process by which the successor to Pope Paul VI will be chosen.

The manner in which the choosing of his successor will be conducted has been spelled out in minute detail by the late pontiff himself in his 1975 Apostolic Constitution on the Election of the Roman Pontiff.

The cardinal electors — 111 by the count of Aug. 18, and all under 80 years of age — may choose one of three ways or forms to elect Paul's successor: by "acclamation or by inspiration" by "delegation," or by "scrutiny."

The first method, somewhat unlikely, though it has occurred in the past, "occurs when the cardinal electors, as if were through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, freely and spontaneously, unanimously and aloud, proclaim an individual as Supreme Pontiff."

Election by acclamation, says the document, could take place, for example, "one of the cardinal electors spontaneously and without there having been any special agreement concerning the name of the person to be elected (says): 'Most eminent Father, in view of the singular virtue and probity of the Most Reverend N. N. I would judge him worthy to be elected

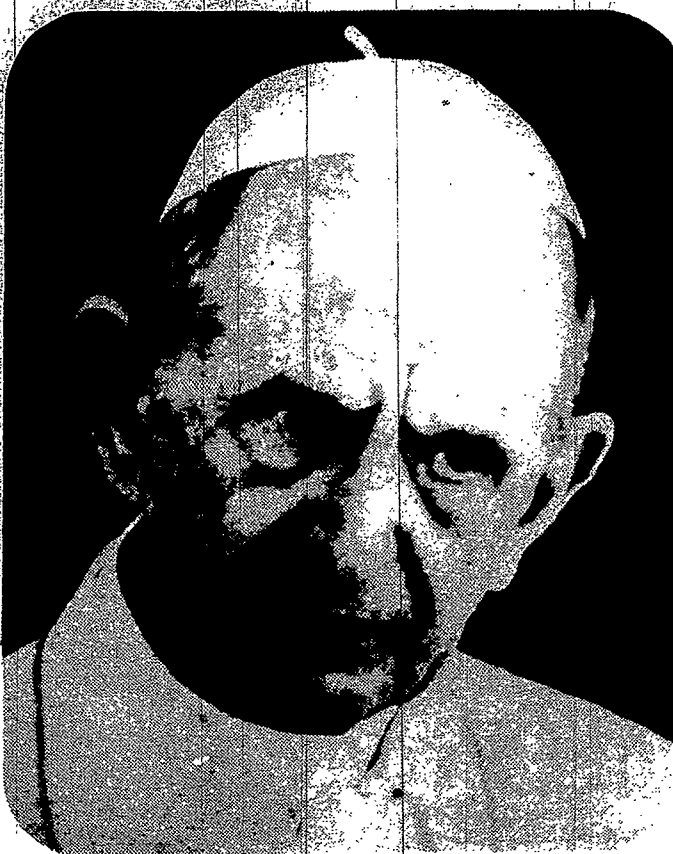
Roman Pontiff and I now choose him as Pope,' and all the others without exception would follow his example, repeating in an intelligible way the word *eligo* (I elect), or, should anyone be unable to do so, expressing it in writing."

In the second method, by delegation, the cardinal electors are allowed "in certain particular circumstances" to "entrust to a group of their members — from a minimum of 9 to a maximum of 15 — the power of electing, on behalf of them all, the Pastor of the Catholic Church."

The third "and ordinary" manner of electing the Roman Pontiff is "by scrutiny," that is, by individual secret balloting. Two thirds plus one of the expected 111 cardinal electors, or 75, must vote for the same man in order for him to be elected Pope.

The Apostolic Constitution of Pope Paul details precisely the procedure for vote by scrutiny. Each cardinal receives a tiny card, which "must be rectangular in shape and must bear in the center of the upper half, in print if possible, the (Latin) words *Eligo in Summum Pontificem* (I elect as Supreme Pontiff); on the lower half there must be a space left for writing the name of the person chosen. The card must also be made in such a way that "it can be folded in two."

Paul's document specifies that each elector "will write down, as far as possible in writing that cannot be identified as his, the name of the person he chooses."



Pope Paul VI in a photograph taken at the general audience on July 19, at Castelgandolfo.

The electors are also instructed to fold his card "down the center" so that "the card is reduced to the width of about an inch."

Each cardinal is then to hold up his card "so that it can be seen" and carry it to the altar on which is placed "a receptacle" (usually a chalice), covered with a plate, for receiving the cards.

"Having reached the altar," says the document, "the cardinal elector kneels, prays for a short time and then rises and pronounces aloud the following form of oath: 'I call to witness Christ the Lord who will be my judge, that my vote is given to the one who before God I consider should be elected.'

"He then places the card on the plate, with which he drops it into the receptacle. Having done this, he bows to the altar and returns to his place."

Three "Scrutineers," who have been chosen by lot from among the cardinal electors, are to "scrutinize" each card, note the names written thereon, and read out aloud each name "so that all the electors present can make a note of the vote on a sheet of paper prepared for the purpose."

One of the Scrutineers then "pierces each one (of the cards) with a threaded needle through the word *Eligo* and places it on the thread," which is knotted "after the last name has been read out."

Three "Revisers," also chosen by lot from among the cardinal electors, check the cards and the vote tally "in order to make sure that the Scrutineers have performed their task exactly and faithfully."

Immediately after the checking and before the cardinal electors leave the chapel, "all the cards are to be burnt by the Scrutineers," with the assistance of other officials.

"If, however, a second vote is to take place immediately, the cards from the first voting will be burned only at the end, together with the cards from the second voting." Also to be burned, with the cards, are "whatsoever kind of notes (a cardinal elector) may have in his possession concerning the result of the scrutiny."

At the end of the conclave, the results of all the voting sessions are "to be kept in the (Vatican) archives, in a sealed envelope which may be opened by no one unless the Supreme Pontiff give explicit permission."

Pope Paul set up procedures in his Constitution for the cardinal electors to follow if the voting should continue without success for a long time. When the voting sessions have gone on for three days (two in the morning, two in the afternoon) with no final result, "the sessions are to be suspended for a maximum of one day to allow a pause for prayer, free discussion among the voters, and a brief spiritual exhortation" by a senior cardinal.

If, after seven more voting sessions, no one has

been elected Pope, another one day pause is prescribed. Another seven voting sessions can then be carried out, if necessary.

At this point, if there still has been no election, the cardinals can decide, but only by unanimous vote, to change the procedure. They can decide to try voting by delegation, or they can change the balloting procedure and allow a man to be elected Pope by an "absolute majority of votes plus one," instead of a two-thirds plus one majority. They can also decide on a run-off between "the two (men) who in the session immediately preceding have gained the greatest number of votes."

When, finally, the successor to Pope Paul has been elected, he will be asked by the electors "Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff?"

If he answers yes, he is then asked "By what name do you wish to be called?"

After the new Pope has been clothed in papal garments and taken his seat, the electors will "approach (one by one) to make their act of homage and obedience to the newly-elected Supreme Pontiff."

After "an act of thanksgiving to God," the new Pope will go to the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, overlooking the huge plaza. The senior cardinal deacon will proclaim "to the waiting people" in the square "the new Pontiff, who immediately imparts (his) apostolic blessing *Urbi et Orbi* (To the City of Rome and the World)."