

¶Do you know that legally any Catholic male may be chosen Pope?

HOW THE POPE IS CHOSEN

THE responsibility for choosing wisely the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church rests with the Sacred College of Cardinals, assembled in solemn Conclave. By canon law previous Conclaves began within ten days of the Pope's passing. The Conclave originated in 1271, after the Cardinals had been deadlocked for two years in the vote for Pope Clement IV's successor. The impatient populace locked that College into the episcopal palace at Viterbo and, when the stalemate persisted, removed the roof and fed the prelates bread and water. Even so it was not until nine months afterward that Gregory X was chosen.

Present procedure is similar but less drastic. The first ceremony is High Mass and communion in the Pauline Chapel. Then the Cardinals, clad in purple robes and white surplices, enter the Conclave and their allotted "cells." Toward evening, the master of ceremonies shouts "*Extra omnes!* (All out!)" Everyone except the Cardinals, their secretaries, valets, and clerks—altogether about 300 persons—must leave the palace. Windows are sealed on the in-

side with lead. For emergency messages, the Cardinal Camerlengo installs a revolving drum in one portal then locks all gates from the inside. The Master of the Conclave—traditionally one of the Princes Chigi—bolts the gates on the outside. No one enters or leaves until a Pope is "made."

Every man within is sworn to perpetual secrecy (a regulation imposed by Pius X after Cardinal Mathieu of France had published intimate details of the 1903 election). Following the tradition established at Viterbo, both food (cooked by nuns) and furniture verge on the ascetic.

On the second morning balloting begins. The Cardinals seat themselves under baldachins (canopies) lining the walls of the Sistine Chapel. On individual ballots each names his candidate and signs with his own name and identifying symbol. He then goes to the altar and deposits his ballot in a chalice. Thus the prelates are polled four times daily.

When all have voted, a clerk dumps the ballots into another chalice, counts them, passes them to a second clerk, who

passes them to a third, who reads the votes aloud.

If a two-thirds majority for any candidate is lacking, the presiding Cardinal Dean takes the ballots to an incongruous-looking cast-iron coal stove and puts them inside with a bunch of straw. Carried through the roof via a crude stovepipe, the resulting black smoke informs the multitude waiting in St. Peter's Square that voting will continue. When a majority has been achieved, the Dean examines the signatures to make certain the Cardinal chosen has not illegally voted for himself. Then he burns the papers without straw, and the smoke—white, this time—broadcasts the fact of election.

The moment a candidate attains the majority, the Dean steps before him: "Dost thou accept?" If the nominee does not, voting goes on (as it did when Cardinal Laurenti humbly refused in 1922). If he murmurs "Accepto," all Cardinals except he immediately lower their baldachins in token that he is their superior. The Dean asks: "How dost thou wish to be called?" Because Jesus gave Simon the pontifical name Peter, the new Pope chooses a name other than his own.

The Pope now retires to the sacristy, where sets of white papal robes in three sizes have

been prepared. When he returns, the Cardinals kiss his foot and hand in homage, then receive his kiss of peace. The Cardinal Camerlengo encircles his finger with the new Fisherman's Ring. Finally another member of the College steps to the outer loggia of St. Peter's and shouts to the crowd below "Habemus Pontificem! (We have a Pontiff!)" The Holy Father then appears and pronounces his first blessing "to the city and to the world!"

Under canon law, any adult Catholic male may be elected Pius' successor. But since 1378 the Pope has always been a Cardinal; since 1532, always an Italian.

Of the present 35 Italian cardinals, eleven are over 70, hence regarded as too old, sixteen others are members of the Curia—those who work in Rome as administrators, diplomats, and papal advisers. In the past popes were selected from "evangelical" candidates, religious-minded rather than political. A papal Secretary of State had never been elected—and that, on grounds of precedent, at least—should have eliminated the best-known Cardinal of all, Eugenio Pacelli. In spite of these considerations, however, Cardinal Pacelli was chosen Pope. He has taken the name of Pius XII.—*Based on Newsweek.*