



# God's Candidate: The Life and Times of Pope John Paul I

*Paul Spackman*

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Few episodes in the history of the papacy have caused as much sensational commentary and wild speculation as the sudden death of Pope John Paul I after a pontificate of only thirty-three days. In this short time he had endeared himself to the world for his gentle charm, his humility, and his simple and practical approach to the awesome responsibility of being the Vicar of Christ on earth. His election had raised the hopes of millions - he was a man of such radiant friendliness and obvious humanity that the atmosphere of vitality and hope that he brought to the Vatican had set the world aglow. By popular acclaim he quickly became known as 'the smiling Pope'. His untimely death would send shockwaves across the globe. Here is a thorough account of the extraordinary life of Albino Luciani (1912-1978), the first full analysis in English of his whole life -- not merely another account of the circumstances surrounding his short papacy and death - which lays to rest many popular misconceptions and a great deal of false information. By considering the Pope's whole life, in the context of change and continuity, it is possible to reach a much more mature and balanced view of his papacy and legacy to the Church. Luciani was a very private individual, but his life, actions and thought are accessible through his writings, speeches and the testimony of relatives, friends, colleagues and other critical observers. As relatively little has previously been published in English in easily accessible form, this book presents important new material to an English-speaking readership for the first time. Today the papacy remains one of the most influential, and also the most controversial, institutions in the world. The very human story of the life and times of this highly popular teacher will have a broad appeal to both lay reader and church historian, to Catholic and non-Catholic alike. The Process to have Albino Luciani declared a Saint is well advanced. God's Candidate places his life and achievements firmly on the record; as Monsignor Loris Capovilla, former Private Secretary to Pope John XXIII, said "There was more in his shop than he put in his window". Paul Spackman is a graduate of King Alfred's College, Winchester. He has written widely on history, politics and religion for International Minds and other journals. This is his first book. He is currently working on aspects of twentieth-century Soviet and Italian political and social history. Publication to coincide with 30th anniversary of election (26th August) and death

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