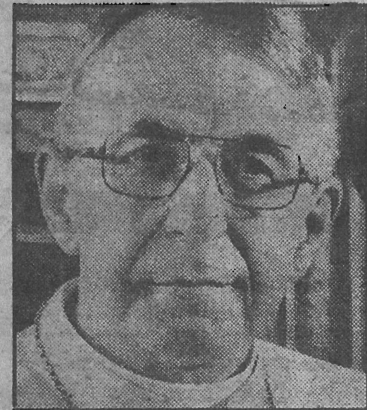


This used car is old, rusty – & worthy of reverence



JOHN PAUL I

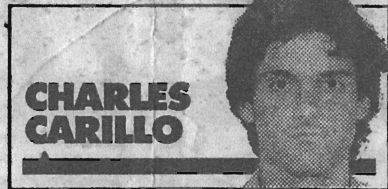
"Would you buy a . . ."

TEN years of sun, snow and rain have faded its color from dark blue to a shade of sky blue, and there are coin-sized rust spots on its trunk, hood and fenders.

The dashboard clock is frozen at 1:36. The odometer reads 42,469 kilometers, almost all of which were driven prior to 1980. The steering wheel is made of wood, and the engine is said to be in good shape.

The license plate reads VE 261885, as the car was registered in Venice, Italy. It's a Lancia 2000, a modest but capable vehicle.

These days, it's parked beside a dented tow truck on the upper level



of a shadowy West Side garage. Its previous parking spot was outdoors, on the Hudson River.

Then the city closed its Marine Fire Company 2, and the firemen who looked after Father Peter Jacobs' car reluctantly told him it had to go.

So he moved it to this garage, but only temporarily. Now Fa-

ther Jake, as he is known, must find a reasonably priced spot for the car.

All this fuss over an aging vehicle has to do with its original owner, a mild-mannered fellow who only had the car long enough to take it for one really long drive, from his home in Venice to Rome.

"You don't need cars in Venice," noted Father Jake. "Venice is all gondolas, for transit."

So now we come to the biggest cliché in the world about used cars, the one about how it was owned by a little old man who only used it to drive to church on Sundays.

Except in this case, it's the truth. The God's truth, if you will. The man who plunked down two million lire for the car in January 1978 was named Albino Luciani. Seven months later, the world hailed him as Pope John Paul I.

He died after just 34 days as pope, and suddenly here was his personal secretary, a priest named Diego Lorenzi, making a transatlantic call to Father Jake in Manhattan.

The two had worked together on many charitable causes. "Would you like his car?" Father Lorenzi asked. At first, Father Jake was too flabbergasted to speak. He fi-

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