



The Holy See

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ANGELUS

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Up there in Veneto I heard it said: every good thief has his devotion. The Pope has a number of devotions; among others, to St Gregory the Great, whose feast falls today. In Belluno the seminary is called Gregorian in honour of St Gregory the Great. I spent seven years there as a student and twenty as a teacher. It so happens that today, 3 September, he was elected Pope and I am officially beginning my service of the universal Church. He was a Roman, who became the first Magistrate of the city. Then he gave everything to the poor, entered a monastery, and became the Pope's Secretary. On the Pope's death, he was elected and he did not want to accept. The Emperor, the people, intervened. Afterwards, he finally accepted and wrote to his friend Leandro, Bishop of Seville: "I feel like weeping more than talking." And to the Emperor's sister: "The Emperor has wanted a monkey to become a lion." One sees that in those times, too, it was difficult to be Pope. He was so good to the poor; he converted England. Above all he wrote beautiful books; one is the "Pastoral Rule": it teaches bishops their trade, but, in the last part, it has the following words: "I have described the good shepherd but I am not one, I have shown the shore of perfection at which to arrive, but personally I am still in the breakers of my faults and my shortcomings, and so: please", he said "so that I will not be shipwrecked, throw me a safety belt with your prayers." I say the same; yet it is not just the Pope who needs prayers, but the world. A Spanish writer has written: "the world is going wrong because there are more battles than prayers." Let us try to see that there may be more prayers and fewer battles.