

After the Borgias, Colonnas and Medici . . .

By Reg Green

The excitement of electing a new pope reminds me of a moment when I participated in great secrecy in what could have been one of the most revolutionary changes in papal history.

My wife, Maggie, our five-year-old daughter, Eleanor, and I were on a private tour of the Vatican. This was strange enough, walking with just a guide along unending empty corridors normally bursting with other tourists. The Sistine Chapel, usually deafening, was so quiet we spoke in whispers.

At length we went into the papal robing room and saw what must surely be the most sumptuous collection of clothing anywhere on earth. Caught up in the exhilaration of the moment, the guide reached for a papal mitre and popped it on Eleanor's head..

As I gazed down at her innocent little face, topped by a nearly foot-high headpiece, I felt as if we were laying the groundwork for a brand-new dynasty of popes: American, female and first-grade.

