

THE BLACK BOX TREASURES (#34)

There is an interesting term called the “black box theory”. It speaks about an object which can be analyzed in terms of its input and output, but there is no knowledge of its internal workings...

(The head of Spiderman and Pope John Paul II #34)

Although many places in Rome are closed during summer it's not the case when it comes to our Roman Archives! A few months ago we moved our museum to a new location within the Roman House and we also transferred our library which is now located in the space under the church. With the help of a seminarian (who was sent to us from Poland), we have been working in the “new library” reorganizing the material and focusing on all those old books some of which were used by our early Fathers. Those publications are not just books from the past but in many of them our Fathers made their comments or notes. For example, there is a book called a *house rule* which was personally revised by Fr. Paul Smolikowski, C.R. and another a book which was given by the

author to Fr. Jerome Kajsiewicz. One of the oldest titles in our collection is *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa* by Jean Jacques Manget, a collection of alchemical texts published in Latin, in Geneva in 1702. There is one section dedicated to so called *clavis* created by a famous alchemist Basil Valentine. Those keys show the steps in the process by which the philosopher's stone may be created (the philosopher's stone is a legendary alchemical substance capable of turning base metals into gold). I wish it would work 😊.

The “new” books which we have, also form quite an interesting collection. Special attention is paid to a comic book published by Marvel Comics Group called *The life of John Paul II* in January 1983. This comic was sold at that time for just \$1.50 (unfortunately it is not worth a fortune today like some of the first issues like Stan Lee's and Jack Kirby's *X-Men* series that sold for \$492,937.50 in 2012). On the Italian Amazon it sells for just 85 euros.

Today I would like to show you a few pages from this comic book. The front is a close-up image of the Pope at an audience. On the left-hand side it has the head of Spiderman. The image on the back is of John Paul II's coat of arms. Enjoy!



\$1.50 1

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP



THE LIFE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II



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THE ENTIRE STORY!

FROM HIS CHILDHOOD IN POLAND TO THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT!

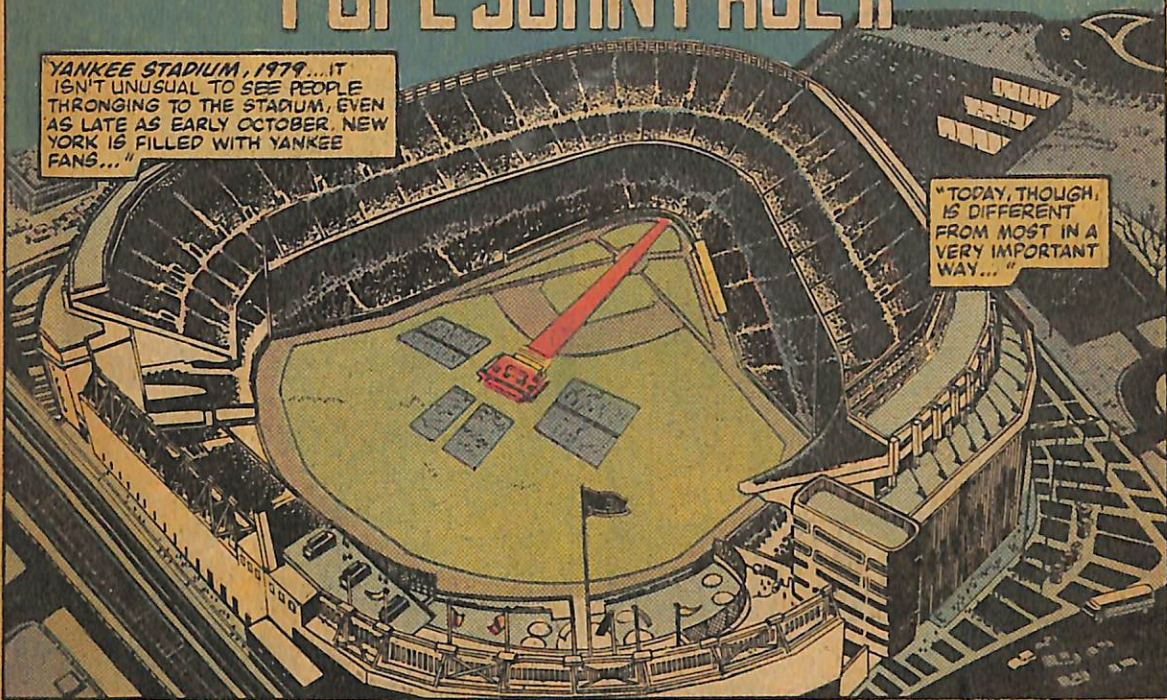


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THE LIFE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

YANKEE STADIUM, 1979... IT ISN'T UNUSUAL TO SEE PEOPLE THROGGING TO THE STADIUM, EVEN AS LATE AS EARLY OCTOBER, NEW YORK IS FILLED WITH YANKEE FANS..."

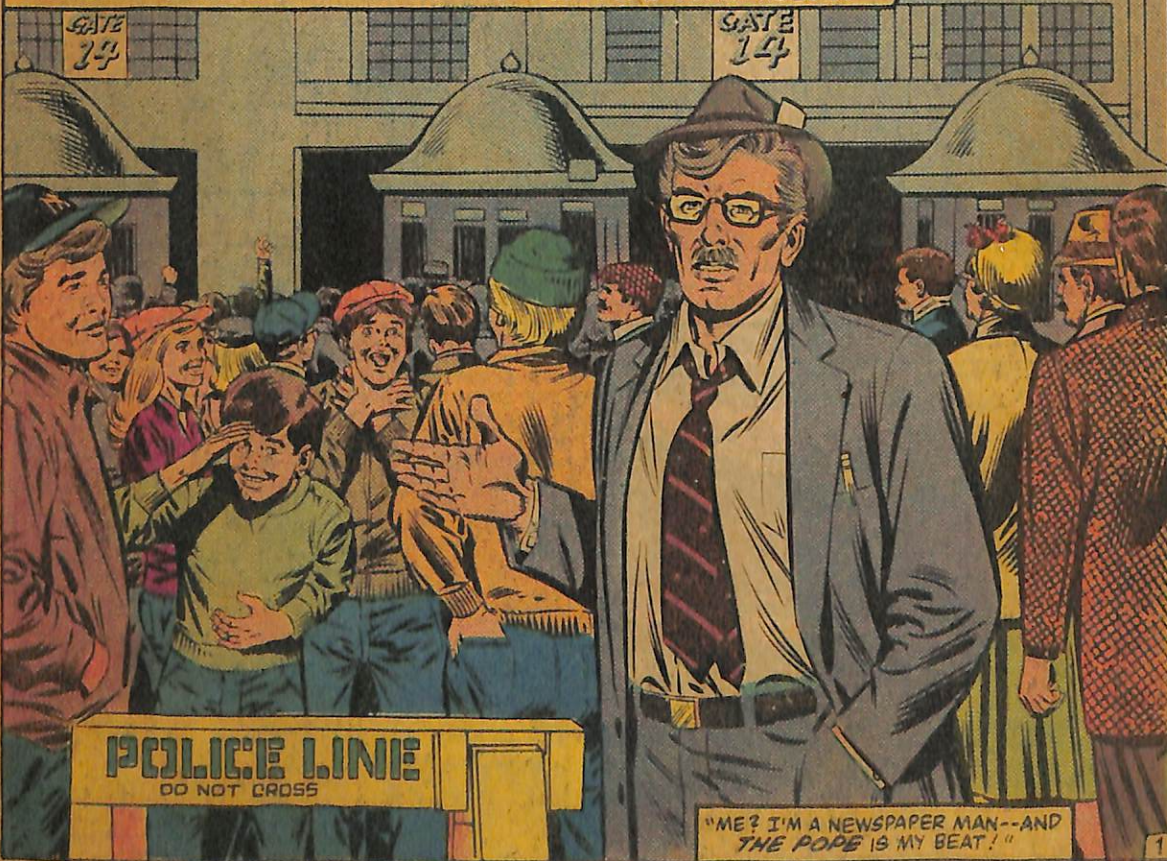
"TODAY, THOUGH, IS DIFFERENT FROM MOST IN A VERY IMPORTANT WAY..."



"THESE PEOPLE -- MORE THAN I COULD COUNT AND OF A GREATER VARIETY THAN I HAD EXPECTED -- AREN'T HERE FOR ANY BASEBALL GAME. THEY ARE HERE TO SEE POPE JOHN PAUL II!"

GATE 14

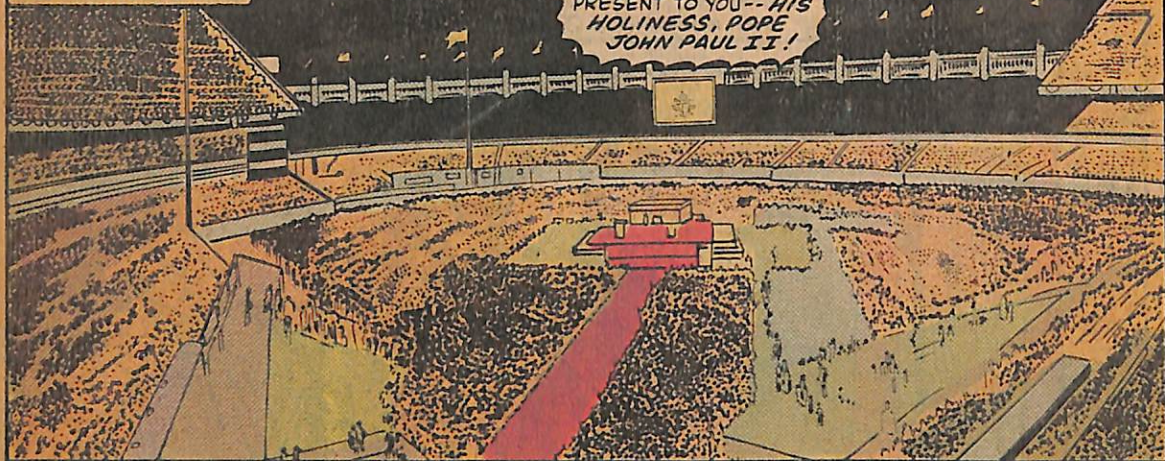
GATE 14



"ME? I'M A NEWSPAPER MAN -- AND THE POPE IS MY BEAT!"

"MAYBE I'M JUST BEING FOOLISH, YOU CAN'T SUM UP A MAN-- ANY MAN-- IN ONE OR TWO LINES."

IT'S MY GREAT HONOR TO PRESENT TO YOU-- HIS HOLINESS, POPE JOHN PAUL II!



RACK 'EM UP, STACK 'EM UP, BUST 'EM IN TWO! HOLY FATHER, WE'RE FOR YOU!

HEY, MAN! WHAT YOU LOOKIN' AT?



PUNKS!

HOW CAN THEY LET HOODLUMS LIKE THAT IN HERE? THIS IS GOING TO BE A DISASTER!



"EPILOGUE-- I AM WRONG IN THAT MOMENT OF DOUBT, I AM WRONG."

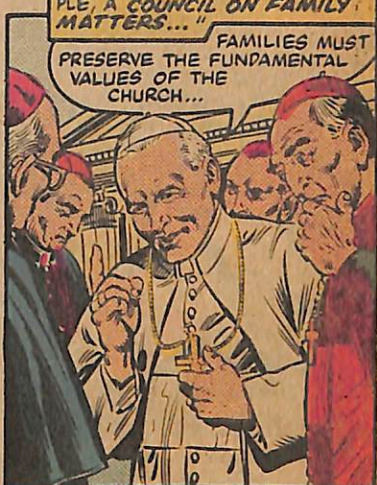
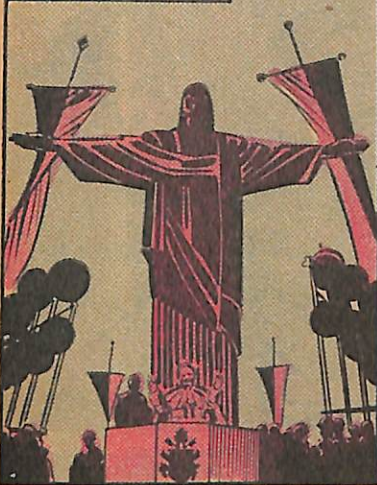
"SUDDENLY, HE IS THERE AND YOU CAN FEEL THE CONTAGIOUS EXCITEMENT CRACKLING THROUGH THE STAMPS, AND THE SILENCE SPREADS LIKE A HUSHED WIND..."



"IN BRAZIL, HE REPEATS THE MESSAGE HE GAVE TO MEXICO: ALL MEN HAVE INALIENABLE RIGHTS THAT EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF MEN MUST NOT TREAD UPON..."

"IN TURKEY, POPE JOHN PAUL II PLEADS FOR ECUMENISM WITH THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CHURCH -- AND PRAISES ISLAM AND ITS MAJOR VIRTUES, SUCH AS ITS DOCTRINE OF THE ONE TRUE GOD..."

"AND, OF COURSE, DUTIES IN ROME OCCUPY MOST OF HIS TIME AND THOUGHT, AS HE STRUGGLES TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD... FORMING, FOR EXAMPLE, A COUNCIL ON FAMILY MATTERS..."



FAMILIES MUST PRESERVE THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF THE CHURCH...

"THEN, ON MAY 13, 1981 --"

