

58/83.

THE POPE LAID TO REST:

In silent sorrow Rome's mourning thousands awaited the last return of Pope Pius 12th. To St. Peters, the very centre of Catholicism, the mortal remains of His Holiness were borne from Castel Gandolfo, the place where he died. The Cortage passed the Colosseum, where pagan emperors martyred early Christians. Reminders of the turbulent ages when popes sometimes called upon armed defenders, marched the noble guard and swiss guard.

In thousands, members of the priesthood, and monks of holy orders, had poured into Rome from far and wide, to pay their last homage to the Holy Father. He was Bishop of Rome, and his body was to rest in St. Peters, Rome; he was vicar of Christ, and his Divine Father had summoned from earth the immortal soul of Pius 12th. In the Basilica where he had so often exhorted great congregations to live according to the Faith, the Pontiff was now taken to lie in state, so that vast numbers who had revered him all their lives might see him, ere he was laid to rest.

Each of the 23 Cardinals now in Rome gave blessing, and then the body was lowered into the Clementine crypt, in the triple coffin of cypress, lead and polished elm. The Holy Father will lie close to the reputed grave of St. Peter. With the death of Pope Pius 12th., "a great light is extinguished from the earth"....