

Home   About Us   Contacts   Products	
 <h1>Catholic News Service</h1>	
<b>News Items:</b>	<b>CNS Story:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headlines</li> <li>News Briefs</li> <li>Stories</li> <li>Movies</li> <li>Word To Life</li> <li><b>More News:</b></li> <li>Vatican</li> <li>Africa</li> <li><b>Special Sections:</b></li> <li>2006 in review</li> <li>Inside the Curia</li> <li><b>Archives:</b></li> <li>Vatican II at 40</li> <li>John Paul II</li> <li><b>Other Items:</b></li> <li>Client Area</li> <li>Links</li> <li>Origins</li> <li><b>Did You Know...</b></li> </ul> <p>The whole CNS public Web site headlines, briefs stories, etc, represents less than one percent of the daily news report.</p> <p><b>Get all the news!</b></p> <p>If you would like more information about the Catholic News Service daily news report, please contact CNS at one of the following:  cns@catholicnews.com  or  (202) 541-3250</p>	<p>JOHNPAUL-SKI Jan-23-2007 (440 words) Sidebar to JOHNPAUL-BOOK. xxxi</p> <h2>Hardly a Vatican prisoner: Late pope made secret outings, says aide</h2> <p>By John Thavis  Catholic News Service</p> <p>ROME (CNS) -- Pope John Paul II made more than 100 clandestine trips to ski or hike in the Italian mountains and was rarely recognized by others on the slopes, his former secretary said.</p> <p>Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz described the secret outings in a book of memoirs, "A Life With Karol," which was being published in late January. An excerpt appeared Jan. 23 in the Rome newspaper <i>Il Messaggero</i>.</p> <p>The cardinal, who was Pope John Paul's personal secretary for 38 years, wrote that the pope, an avid skier and hiker in his youth, often felt pent up inside the Vatican.</p> <p>In the winter of 1981, the pope, his secretary and two of his Polish aides decided to make a "getaway" to the mountains from the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo.</p> <p>They packed into a car owned by one of the priests, in order not to raise suspicions, and when they passed the Swiss Guard post one prelate opened wide a newspaper to hide the pontiff in the back seat.</p> <p>Then they drove to the central Italian ski town of Ovindoli without an escort, winding through mountain towns and carefully respecting the speed limits.</p> <p>Once they arrived, they chose a deserted slope and the pope was able to ski all day long. On the way back, the pope smiled and said, "We did it!" It was the first of many such escapes, the papal secretary said.</p> <p>In the beginning, no one -- including journalists and other Vatican officials -- knew about the mountain excursions.</p> <p>And the odd thing was that, for a long time, no one recognized the pope, Cardinal Dziwisz said. He would dress as other skiers, with a ski jacket, beret and sunglasses, taking his place in line at the lifts with the rest.</p>

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One of the first people to recognize the pope was a young cross-country skier, a boy no more than 10 years old, who was lagging behind the rest of his family when he came upon the papal party. He asked them if they had seen his family go by, and one of the priests pointed to the trail.

At that moment, the pope arrived at the bottom of the slope.

The boy looked astonished, pointed to the pontiff and began yelling, "The pope! The pope!"

One of the pope's aides intervened quickly: "What are you saying, silly! You'd better think instead about hurrying up, you're going to lose your group."

The boy skied away, and the pope and his friends quickly returned to their car and headed for Rome before the word got out.

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