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Blast From the Past: Pius VII

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Distinctly Catholic

I mentioned Pope Pius VI's trip to Vienna in 1782 this morning. This excerpt from Eamon Duffy's masterful history of the papacy recounts the tale of Pope Pius VII's trip to Paris in 1804 for the coronation of Napoleon. Once again, those tyrants who sought to subject the Church and its Pope were done in by the simple faith of their own people.

"The slow journey through northern Italy and France was a triumph, and a revelation. Wherever the Pope went, he was mobbed by emotional crowds. His carriage drove between lines of kneeling devotees, men pressed forward to have their rosaries blessed, women married by civil rites under the Revolution to have their wedding-rings touched by the Pope. It was clear to everyone that the papal office had gained more mystique than it had lost in the flux and turmoil of Revolution. Napoleon was not pleased."

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