

# A Christian Witness in the Modern World



## **Pope Saint John XXIII**

### **Papacy**

Papacy began	: 28 October 1958
Papacy ended	: 03 June 1963
Predecessor	: Pope Pius XII
Successor	: Pope Paul VI
Apostolic Palace	: Vatican City

### **Holy Orders**

Ordained Priest	:10 August 1904	by Giuseppe Ceppetelli
Consecrated Bishop	:19 March 1925	by Giovanni Tacci Porcelli
Created Cardinal	:12 January 1953	by Pope Pius XII

### **Personal Details**

Born	: on 25 November 1881
Birth place	: Sotto il Monte, Bergamo, Kingdom of Italy

Baptismal name : Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli  
Died : on 3 June 1963 (at the age of 81)

### **Previous posts**

Titular Archbishop of Areopolis (1925–34)

Official to Bulgaria (1925–31)

Apostolic Delegate to Bulgaria (1931–34)

Titular Archbishop of Mesembria (1934–53)

Apostolic Delegate to Turkey (1934–44)

Apostolic Delegate to Greece (1934–44)

Apostolic Nuncio to France (1944–53)

Cardinal-Priest of Santa Prisca (1953–58)

Patriarch of Venice (1953–58)

## **Life and Mission of Pope Saint John XXIII**

### **Pope St. John XIII at a Glance**

Pope Saint John XXIII (Latin: Ioannes XXIII), Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli ( 25 November 1881 – 3 June 1963), was Pope from 28 October 1958 to his death on 3 June 1963.

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was the fourth of fourteen children born to a family of sharecroppers that lived in a village in Lombardy in Italy He was ordained a priest on 10 August 1904 and served in a number of posts, including papal nuncio in France and a delegate to Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. In a consistory on 12 January 1953 Pope Pius XII made Roncalli a cardinal as the Cardinal-Priest of Santa Prisca in addition to naming him the Patriarch of Venice.

Roncalli was elected Pope on 28 October 1958 at age 76 after 11 ballots. His selection was unexpected, and Roncalli himself had come to Rome with a return train ticket to Venice. He was the first Pope to take the pontifical name of "John" upon election in more than 500 years, and his choice settled the complicated question of official numbering attached to this papal name due to the antipope of this name.

Pope John XXIII surprised those who expected him to be a caretaker Pope by calling the historic Second Vatican Council (1962–65), the first session opening on 11 October 1962. He did not live to see it to completion. John died of

stomach cancer on 3 June 1963, four and a half years after his election and two months after the completion of his final and famed encyclical, “Pacem in Terris” (Peace on Earth).

His passionate views on equality were summed up in his famous statement: 'We were all made in God's image, and thus, we are all Godly alike.' John XXIII made many passionate speeches during his pontificate, one of which was on the day that he announced the Second Vatican Council in the middle of the night to the crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square: "Dear children, returning home, you will find children: give your children a caress and say: This is the caress of the Pope!"

Pope John XXIII was buried in the Vatican grottoes beneath Saint Peter's Basilica on 6 June 1963 and his cause for canonization was opened on 18 November 1965 by his successor, Pope Paul VI, who declared him a Servant of God. In addition to being named Venerable on 20 December 1999, he was beatified on 3 September 2000 by Pope John Paul II alongside Pope Pius IX and three others. Following his beatification, his body was moved on 3 June 2001 from its original place to the altar of Saint Jerome where it could be seen by the faithful. On 5 July 2013, Pope Francis - bypassing the traditionally required second miracle - declared John XXIII a Saint based on his merits of opening the Second Vatican Council. He was canonized alongside John Paul II on 27 April 2014. John XXIII today is affectionately known as the "Good Pope" and in Italian, "il Papa buono".

### [More Details of Pope St. John XIII](#)

#### [Priest](#)

He was ordained Priest on 10 August 1904 by Bishop Giuseppe Ceppetelli. In 1905, Giacomo Radini-Tedeschi, the new Bishop of Bergamo, appointed Roncalli as his secretary. Roncalli worked for Radini-Tedeschi until the bishop's death on August 22, 1914, two days after the death of Pope Pius X. Radini-Tedeschi's last words to Roncalli were "Angelo, pray for peace". During this period Roncalli was also a lecturer in the diocesan seminary in Bergamo.

During World War I, Roncalli was drafted into the Royal Italian Army as a sergeant, serving in the medical corps as a stretcher-bearer and as a chaplain. After being discharged from the army in early 1919, he was named spiritual director of the seminary. On 6 November 1921, Roncalli travelled to Rome where he was scheduled to meet with the Pope. After their meeting, Pope

Benedict XV appointed him as the Italian president of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Roncalli would recall Benedict XV as being the most sympathetic of the Popes he had met.

### Bishop

In February 1925, the Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri summoned him to the Vatican and informed him of Pope Pius XI's decision to appoint him as the Apostolic Visitor to Bulgaria (1925–35). On March 3, Pius XI also named him for consecration as titular archbishop of Areopolis, Jordan. Roncalli was initially reluctant about a mission to Bulgaria, but he would soon relent. His nomination as apostolic visitor was made official on March 19. Roncalli was consecrated by Giovanni Tacci Porcelli in the church of San Carlo alla Corso in Rome. After he was consecrated, he introduced his family to Pope Pius XI. He chose as his episcopal motto: *Obedientia et Pax* ("Obedience and Peace"), which became his guiding motto. While he was in Bulgaria, an earthquake struck in a town not too far from where he was. Unaffected, he wrote to his sisters Ancilla and Maria and told them both that he was fine.

On November 30, 1934, he was appointed Apostolic Delegate to Turkey and Greece and titular archbishop of Mesembria, Bulgaria. Roncalli took up this post in 1935 and used his office to help the Jewish underground in saving thousands of refugees in Europe, leading some to consider him to be a Righteous Gentile. In October 1935, he led Bulgarian pilgrims to Rome and introduced them to Pope Pius XI on October 14.

In February 1939, he received news from his sisters that his mother was dying. On February 10, 1939, Pope Pius XI died. Roncalli was unable to see his mother for the end as the death of a Pontiff meant that he would have to stay at his post until the election of a new Pontiff. Unfortunately, she died on February 20, 1939, during the nine days of mourning for the late Pius XI. He was sent a letter by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, and Roncalli later recalled that it was probably the last letter Pacelli sent until his election as Pope Pius XII on March 2, 1939. Roncalli expressed happiness that Pacelli was elected, and, on radio, listened to the coronation of the new Pontiff.

Roncalli remained in Bulgaria at the time that World War II commenced, optimistically writing in his journal in April 1939, "I don't believe we will have a war". At the time that the war did in fact commence, he was in Rome, meeting with Pope Pius XII on 5 September 1939. In 1940, Roncalli was asked by the

Vatican to devote more of his time to Greece; therefore, he made several visits there in January and May that year.

## Nuncio

On December 22, 1944, during World War II, Pope Pius XII named him to be the new Apostolic Nuncio to recently liberated France. In this capacity he had to negotiate the retirement of bishops who had collaborated with the German occupying power.

Roncalli was chosen among several other candidates, one of which was Archbishop Joseph Fietta. Roncalli met with Domenico Tardini to discuss his new appointment, and their conversation suggested that Tardini did not approve of it. One curial prelate referred to Roncalli as an "old fogey".

Roncalli left Ankara on 27 December 1944 on a series of short-haul flights that took him to several places, such as Beirut, Cairo and Naples. He ventured to Rome on the 28 December and met with both Tardini and his friend Giovanni Battista Montini. He left for France the next day.

## Efforts during the Holocaust

As nuncio, Roncalli made various efforts during the Holocaust in World War II to save refugees, mostly Jewish people, from the Nazis. Among his efforts were:

Jewish refugees who arrived in Istanbul and were assisted in going on to Palestine or other destinations.

Slovakian children managed to leave the country due to his interventions.

Jewish refugees whose names were included on a list submitted by Rabbi Markus of Istanbul to Nuncio Roncalli.

Jews held at Jasenovac concentration camp, near Stara Gradiška, were liberated as a result of his intervention.

Bulgarian Jews who left Bulgaria, a result of his request to King Boris of Bulgaria.

Romanian Jews from Transnistria left Romania as a result of his intervention.

Italian Jews helped by the Vatican as a result of his interventions.

Orphaned children of Transnistria on board a refugee ship that weighed anchor from Constanța to Istanbul, and later arriving in Palestine as a result of his interventions.

Jews held at the Sered concentration camp who were spared from being deported to German death camps as a result of his intervention.

Hungarian Jews who saved themselves through their conversions to Christianity through the baptismal certificates sent by Nuncio Roncalli to the Hungarian Nuncio, Monsignor Angelo Rota.

In 1965, the Catholic Herald newspaper quoted Pope John XXIII as saying:

**We are conscious today that many, many centuries of blindness have cloaked our eyes so that we can no longer see the beauty of Thy chosen people nor recognize in their faces the features of our privileged brethren. We realize that the mark of Cain stands upon our foreheads. Across the centuries our brother Abel has lain in blood which we drew, or shed tears we caused by forgetting Thy love. Forgive us for the curse we falsely attached to their name as Jews. Forgive us for crucifying Thee a second time in their flesh. For we know not what we did."**

On 7 September 2000, the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation launched the International Campaign for the Acknowledgement of the Humanitarian Actions undertaken by Vatican Nuncio Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli for people, most of whom were Jewish, persecuted by the Nazi regime. The launching took place at the Permanent Observation Mission of the Vatican to the United Nations, in the presence of Vatican State Secretary Cardinal Angelo Sodano.

The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation has carried out exhaustive historical research related to different events connected with interventions of Nuncio Roncalli in favour of Jewish refugees during the Holocaust. Until now, three reports have been published compiling different studies and materials of historical research about the humanitarian actions carried out by Roncalli when he was Nuncio.

In 2011, the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation submitted a massive file (the Roncalli Dossier) to Yad Vashem, with a strong petition and recommendation to bestow upon him the title of Righteous among the Nations.

**[Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli: Cardinal & Patriarch of Venice \(1953-1958\).](#)**

Roncalli received a message from Mgr. Montini on 14 November 1952 asking him if he would want to become the new Patriarch of Venice in the light of the nearing death of Carlo Agostini. Furthermore, Montini said to him via letter on 29 November 1952 that Pius XII had decided to raise him to the cardinalate. Roncalli knew that he would be appointed to lead the patriarchy of Venice due to the death of Agostini who was also to be raised to the rank of cardinal. On January 12, 1953, he was appointed Patriarch of Venice and, accordingly, raised to the rank of Cardinal-Priest of Santa Prisca by Pope Pius XII. Roncalli left France for Venice on 23 February 1953 stopping briefly in Milan and then to Rome. On 15 March 1953, he took possession of his new diocese in Venice. As a sign of his esteem, the President of France, Vincent Auriol, claimed the ancient privilege possessed by French monarchs and bestowed the red biretta on Roncalli at a ceremony in the Élysée Palace. It was around this time that he, with the aid of Monsignor Bruno Heim, —formed his coat of arms with a lion of Saint Mark on a white ground.

Roncalli decided to live on the second floor of the residence reserved for the patriarch, choosing not to live in the first floor room once resided in by Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto, who later became Pope Pius X. On 29 May 1954, the late Pius X was canonized and Roncalli ensured that the late pontiff's patriarchal room was remodeled into a 1903 (the year of the new saint's papal election) look in his honor. With Pius X's few surviving relatives, Roncalli celebrated a mass in his honor.

His sister Ancilla would soon be diagnosed with stomach cancer in the early 1950s. Roncalli's last letter to her was dated on 8 November 1953 where he promised to visit her within the next week. He could not keep that promise, as Ancilla died on 11 November 1953 at the time when he was consecrating a new church in Venice. He attended her funeral back in his hometown. In his will around this time, he mentioned that he wished to be buried in the crypt of Saint Mark's in Venice with some of his predecessors rather than with the family in Sotto il Monte.

### **Papacy: Pope John XXIII**

A Pope is referred as “His Holiness”. He is addressed as “Your Holiness”, and reverentially and fondly called as “Holy Father”.

Following the death of Pope Pius XII on 9 October 1958, Roncalli watched the live funeral on his last full day in Venice on 11 October. His journal was

specifically concerned with the funeral and the abused state of the late pontiff's corpse. Roncalli left Venice for the conclave in Rome well aware of the fact that he was "papabile" (eligible to be elected as Pope). As he himself had sensed, after eleven ballots, he was elected to succeed the late Pope Pius XII, so it came as no surprise to him, though he had even arrived at the Vatican with a return train ticket to Venice.

Many had considered Giovanni Battista Montini, the Archbishop of Milan, a possible candidate, but, although he was the archbishop of one of the most ancient and prominent sees in Italy, he had not yet been made a cardinal. Though his absence from the 1958 conclave did not make him ineligible – under Canon Law any Catholic male may be elected – the College of Cardinals usually chose the new Pontiff from among themselves.

After the long pontificate of Pope Pius XII, the cardinals chose a man who – it was presumed because of his advanced age – would be a short-term or "stop-gap" Pope. They wished to choose a candidate that would do little during the new pontificate. In John XXIII's first consistory on December 15 of that same year, Montini was created a cardinal and would become John XXIII's successor in 1963, taking the name of Paul VI.



Pope John XXIII's coronation was on 4 November 1958. He was crowned wearing the 1877 Palatine Tiara.

Roncalli was summoned to the final ballot of the conclave at 4.00 p. m. He was elected pope at 4.30 p. m. with a total of 38 votes. Upon his election, Cardinal Eugene Tisserant asked him the ritual questions of if he would accept and if so, what name he would take for himself. Roncalli gave the first of his many surprises when he chose "John" as his papal name. Roncalli's exact words were "I will be called John". This was the first time in over 500 years that this name had been chosen; previous popes had avoided its use since the time of the Antipope John XXIII during the Western Schism several centuries before.

On the choice of his papal name, Pope John XXIII said to the cardinals:

I choose John... a name sweet to us because it is the name of our father, dear to me because it is the name of the humble parish church where I was baptized, the solemn name of numberless cathedrals scattered throughout the world,

including our own basilica (St. John Lateran). Twenty-two Johns of indisputable legitimacy have been Pope, and almost all had a brief pontificate. We have preferred to hide the smallness of our name behind this magnificent succession of Roman Popes.

Upon his choosing the name, there was some confusion as to whether he would be known as John XXIII or John XXIV; in response, he declared that he was John XXIII, thus affirming the antipapal status of antipope John XXIII.



Before this antipope, the most recent popes called John were John XXII (1316–34) and John XXI (1276–77). However, there was no Pope John XX, owing to confusion caused by medieval historians misreading the “Liber Pontificalis” to refer to another Pope John between John XIV and John XV.

After his election, he confided in Cardinal Maurice Feltin that he had chosen the name "in memory of France and in the memory of John XXII who continued the history of the papacy in France".

After he answered the two ritual questions, the traditional “Habemus Papam” announcement was delivered by Cardinal Nicola Canali to the people at 6. 08 p. m. an exact hour after the white smoke appeared. A short while later, he appeared on the balcony and gave his first “Urbi et Orbi” blessing to the crowds of the faithful below in Saint Peter's Square. That same night, he appointed Domenico Tardini as his Secretary of State.

His coronation took place on November 4, 1958 on the feast of Saint Charles Borromeo, and it occurred on the central loggia of the Vatican. He was crowned with the 1877 Palatine Tiara. His coronation ran for the traditional five hours.

### Visits around Rome

On 25 December 1958, he became the first pope since 1870 to make pastoral visits in his Diocese of Rome, when he visited children infected with polio at the Bambino Gesù Hospital and then visited Santo Spirito Hospital. The

following day, he visited Rome's Regina Coeli prison, where he told the inmates: "You could not come to me, so I came to you." These acts created a sensation, and he wrote in his diary:

...great astonishment in the Roman, Italian and international press. I was hemmed in on all sides: authorities, photographers, prisoners, wardens..."

During these visits, John XXIII put aside the normal papal use of the formal "we" when referring to himself, such as when he visited a reformatory school for juvenile delinquents in Rome telling them "I have wanted to come here for some time". The media noticed this and reported that "He talked to the youths in their own language".

His frequent habit of sneaking out of the Vatican late at night to walk the streets of the city of Rome earned him the nickname of "Johnny Walker", a pun on the whisky brand name.

### Relation with Jews

One of the first acts of Pope John XXIII was to eliminate the description of Jews as "perfidious" in the Good Friday liturgy. He interrupted the first Good Friday liturgy in his pontificate to address this issue when he first heard a celebrant refer to the Jews with that word. He also made a confession for the Church of the sin of anti-semitism through the centuries. In 1960, he removed the word "faithless" from the prayer for the conversion of the Jews. It was later revised to read something else. While Vatican II was being held, John XXIII tasked Cardinal Augustin Bea with the creation of several important documents that pertained to reconciliation with Jewish people.

### Calling the Council

Far from being a mere "stop-gap" Pope, to great excitement, John XXIII called for an ecumenical council fewer than ninety years after the First Vatican Council (Vatican - I's predecessor, the Council of Trent, had been held in the 16th century). This decision was announced on January 29, 1959 at the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls. Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, who later became Pope Paul VI, remarked to Giulio Bevilacqua that "this holy old boy doesn't realize what a hornet's nest he's stirring up". From the Second Vatican Council came changes that reshaped the face of Catholicism: a comprehensively revised liturgy, a stronger emphasis on ecumenism, and a new approach to the world.

Prior to the first session of the council, John XXIII visited Assisi and Loreto on 4 October 1962 to pray for the new upcoming Council as well as to mark the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi. He was the first Pope to travel outside of Rome since Pope Pius IX. Along the way, there were several halts at Orte, Narni, Terni, Spoleto, Foligno, Fabriano, Iesi, Falconara and Ancona where the crowds greeted him.

John XXIII greeted sportsmen for the 1960 Summer Olympics on 28 August 1960.

### Moral theology

**Contraception:** In 1963, John XXIII established a commission of six non-theologians to investigate questions of birth control. He had expressed a prohibitive view of contraceptives in the encyclical “Mater et Magistra” (Mother and Teacher) which was released on May 15.

### Human rights

John XXIII was an advocate for human rights which included the unborn and the elderly. He wrote about human rights in his “Pacem in Terris” (Peace on Earth). He wrote, "Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, he has the right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood."

### Divorce

In regards to the topic of divorce, John XXIII said that human life was transmitted through the family which was founded on the sacrament of marriage and was both one and indissoluble as a union in God, therefore, it was against the teachings of the church for a married couple to get a divorce.

### Pope John XXIII and papal ceremonial

Pope John XXIII was the last Pope to use full papal ceremony, some of which was abolished after Vatican II, while the rest fell into disuse. His papal coronation ran for the traditional five hours (Pope Paul VI, by contrast, opted

for a shorter ceremony, while later Popes declined to be crowned). Pope John, like his predecessor Pius XII, chose to have the coronation itself take place on the balcony of Saint Peter's Basilica, in view of the crowds assembled in Saint Peter's Square below.

He wore a number of papal tiaras during his papacy. On the most formal occasions would he don the 1877 Palatine tiara he received at his coronation, but on other occasions, he used the 1922 tiara of Pope Pius XI, which was used so often that it was associated with him quite strongly. Like those before him, he was bestowed with an expensive silver tiara by the people of Bergamo. John XXIII requested that the number of jewels used be halved and that the money be given to the poor.

### Liturgical reform

Maintaining continuity with his predecessors, John XXIII continued the gradual reform of the Roman liturgy, and published changes that resulted in the 1962 Roman Missal, before the major reform after Vatican II concluded. The 1962 Missal was the last typical edition of the Tridentine Mass expanded on in 1570 by Pope Pius V, but was in future formally recognized by Pope Benedict XVI as an extraordinary form of the Roman Rite, in 2007.

### Vatican II: The first session

On 11 October 1962, the first session of the Second Vatican Council was held in the Vatican. He gave the “Gaudet Mater Ecclesia” (Rejoice Mother Church) speech, which served as the opening address for the Council. The day was basically electing members for several Council commissions that would work on the issues presented in the Council. On that same night following the conclusion of the first session, the people in Saint Peter's Square chanted and yelled with the sole objective of getting John XXIII to appear at the window to address them.

Pope John XXIII did indeed appear at the window and delivered a speech to the people below, and told them to return home and hug their children, telling them that it came from the Pope. This speech would later become known as the so-called 'Speech of the Moon'.

The first session ended in a solemn ceremony on 8 December 1962 with the next session scheduled to occur in 1963 from May 12 to June 29 - this was announced on 12 November 1962. John XXIII's closing speech made subtle

references to Pope Pius IX, and he had expressed the desire to see Pius IX beatified and eventually canonized. In his journal in 1959 during a spiritual retreat, John XXIII made this remark: "I always think of Pius IX of holy and glorious memory, and by imitating him in his sacrifices, I would like to be worthy to celebrate his canonization".

### Final months and death

On 23 September 1962, Pope John XXIII was first diagnosed with stomach cancer. The diagnosis, which was kept from the public, followed nearly eight months of occasional stomach hemorrhages, and reduced the Pontiff's appearances. Looking pale and drawn during these events, he gave a hint to his ultimate fate in April 1963, when he said to visitors, "That which happens to all men perhaps will happen soon to the Pope who speaks to you today."

Pope John XXIII offered to mediate between US President John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. Both men applauded the Pope for his deep commitment to peace. Khrushchev would later send a message via Norman Cousins and the letter expressed his best wishes for the Pontiff's ailing health. John XXIII personally typed and sent a message back to him, thanking him for his letter. Cousins, meanwhile, travelled to New York City and ensured that John would become Time magazine's 'Man of the Year'. John XXIII became the first Pope to receive the title, followed by John Paul II in 1994 and Francis in 2013.

On 10 February 1963, John XXIII officially opened the process of beatification for the late Cardinal Andrea Carlo Ferrari, formerly the archbishop of Milan.

On 7 March 1963, the feast of the University's patron Saint Thomas Aquinas, Pope John XXIII visited the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, "Angelicum" and with the "motu proprio Dominicanus Ordo", raised the "Angelicum" to the rank of Pontifical University. Thereafter it would be known as the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in the City.

On 10 May 1963, John XXIII received the Balzan Prize in private at the Vatican but deflected achievements of himself to the five Popes of his lifetime, Pope Leo XIII to Pius XII. On 11 May, the Italian President Antonio Segni officially awarded Pope John XXIII with the **Balzan Prize for his engagement for peace**. While in the car en route to the official ceremony, he suffered great stomach pains but insisted on meeting with Segni to receive the award in the

Quirinal Palace, refusing to do so within the Vatican. He stated that it would have been an insult to honour a Pontiff on the remains of the crucified Saint Peter. It was the Pope's last public appearance.

On 25 May 1963, the Pope suffered another haemorrhage and required several blood transfusions, but the cancer had perforated the stomach wall and peritonitis soon set in. The doctors conferred in a decision regarding this matter and John XXIII's aide Loris F. Capovilla broke the news to him saying that the cancer had done its work and nothing could be done for him. Around this time, his remaining siblings arrived to be with him. By 31 May, it had become clear that the cancer had overcome the resistance of John XXIII – it had left him confined to his bed.

"At 11.00 a. m. Petrus Canisius Van Lierde as Papal Sacristan was at the bedside of the dying Pope, ready to anoint him. The Pope began to speak for the very last time: **"I had the great grace to be born into a Christian family, modest and poor, but with the fear of the Lord. My time on earth is drawing to a close. But Christ lives on and continues his work in the Church. Souls, souls, 'ut omnes unum sint' (that all may be one)."** Van Lierde then anointed his eyes, ears, mouth, hands and feet. Overcome by emotion, Van Lierde forgot the right order of anointing. John XXIII gently helped him before bidding those present a last farewell.

John XXIII died of peritonitis caused by a perforated stomach at 19.49 local time on 3 June 1963 at the age of 81, ending a historic pontificate of four years and seven months. He died just as a mass for him finished in Saint Peter's Square below. After he died, his brow was ritually tapped to see if he was dead, and those with him in the room said prayers. Then, the room was illuminated, thus, informing the people of what had happened. He was buried on 6 June in the Vatican grottos. Two wreaths, placed on the two sides of his tomb, were donated by the prisoners of the "Regina Coeli" prison and the Mantova jail in Verona. On 22 June 1963, one day after, his friend and successor Pope Paul VI was elected, the latter prayed at his tomb.

**On 3 December 1963, US President Lyndon B. Johnson posthumously awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian award, in recognition of the good relationship between Pope John XXIII and the United States of America.** In his speech on 6 December 1963, Johnson said: "I have also determined to confer the Presidential Medal of

Freedom posthumously on another noble man whose death we mourned 6 months ago: His Holiness, Pope John XXIII. He was a man of simple origins, of simple faith, of simple charity. In this exalted office he was still the gentle pastor. He believed in discussion and persuasion. He profoundly respected the dignity of man. He gave the world immortal statements of the rights of man, of the obligations of men to each other, of their duty to strive for a world community in which all can live in peace and fraternal friendship. His goodness reached across temporal boundaries to warm the hearts of men of all nations and of all faiths".

The citation for the medal reads: His Holiness Pope John XXIII, dedicated servant of God. He brought to all citizens of the planet a heightened sense of the dignity of the individual, of the brotherhood of man, and of the common duty to build an environment of peace for all human kind.

### Beatification and canonization

He was known affectionately as "Good Pope John". On 3 September 2000, John XXIII was declared "Blessed" alongside Pope Pius IX by Pope John Paul II, the penultimate step on the road to sainthood after a miracle of curing an ill woman was discovered. He was the first pope since Pope Pius X to receive this honour. Following his beatification, his body was moved from its original burial place in the grottoes below the Vatican to the altar of St. Jerome and displayed for the veneration of the faithful.

At the time, the body was observed to be extremely well preserved—a condition which the Church ascribes to embalming, and the lack of air flow in his sealed triple coffin rather than a miracle. When John XXIII's body was moved in 2001, the original vault above the floor was removed and a new one built beneath the ground; it was here that the body of Pope John Paul II was entombed from 9 April 2005 to April 2011, before being moved for his beatification on 1 May 2011.

The 50th anniversary of his death was celebrated on 3 June 2013 by Pope Francis, who visited his tomb and prayed there, then addressing the gathered crowd and spoke about the late Pope. The people that gathered there at the tomb were from Bergamo, the province where the late Pope came from. A month later, on 5 July 2013, Pope Francis approved Pope John XXIII for canonization, along with Pope John Paul II without the traditional second miracle required. Instead, Pope Francis based this decision on John XXIII's merits for the Second

Vatican Council. **On Sunday, 27 April 2014, John XXIII and Pope John Paul II were declared Saints on Divine Mercy Sunday.**

The date assigned for the liturgical celebration of Pope St. John XXIII is not 3 June, the anniversary of his death as would be usual, but 11 October, the anniversary of his opening of the Second Vatican Council. He is also commemorated in the Anglican Church of Canada and some other Churches with a feast day of 4 June, changed originally from 3 June.

### Legacy

From his teens when he entered the seminary, he maintained a diary of spiritual reflections that was subsequently published as the Journal of a Soul. The collection of writings charts Roncalli's goals and his efforts as a young man to "grow in holiness" and continued after his election to the papacy; it remains widely read.

**Good Pope St. John XXIII, Thank you for your inspiring life and mission for the whole human race and the Church. Please, pray for us and for the whole human family and the Church of Christ Jesus, our Saviour.**

(Courtesy: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

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for the ACECI Website: [www.knowlordjesus.com/org](http://www.knowlordjesus.com/org) )