

Pope St. John XXIII



1881–1963

Feast Day:

October 11

Angelo Roncalli was born to a large Italian farming family. He completed his seminary studies and became a priest when he was 23. Fr. Angelo was assigned to work of secretary to his bishop.

During World War I, Fr. Angelo was drafted to serve as a sergeant, stretcher-bearer, and chaplain. After the war, the Pope appointed him to help spread the Faith in Italy. The next Pope had Fr. Angelo consecrated a bishop and sent him to work in dioceses in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Bishop Angelo helped thousands of Jewish and European refugees find safety.

When World War II began, Bishop Angelo was sent as Apostolic Nuncio (a person in charge of a diplomatic mission) to France. He helped save thousands of refugees, especially Jews, from the Holocaust. After the war, he was made a Cardinal. Shortly afterwards, he was elected Pope, and he took the name John.

Pope John XXIII visited children in hospitals as well as prisoners and young people in reformatory school. He wrote about marriage and divorce, illness and age. He wrote that each person is valuable and has the right to live, and that every person has the duty to care for other people. On October 11, 1962, he began the Ecumenical Council, Vatican II, in order to preserve, teach, and spread the truth of our Catholic Faith in our current age. He died of stomach cancer a few months later.

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