



Pope St. John XXIII (O.F.S.)

[November 25, 1881 – June 3, 1963]

(Feast Day: October 11)

He was born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli at Sotto il Monte, Italy, in the Diocese of Bergamo on November 25, 1881. He was the fourth in a family of 14. He entered the Bergamo seminary in 1892. Here he began the practice of making spiritual notes, which he continued in one form or another until his death, and which have been gathered together in the *Journal of a Soul*. Here he also began the deeply cherished practice of regular spiritual direction. In 1896, he was admitted to the **Secular Franciscan Order** by the spiritual director of the Bergamo seminary, Fr. Luigi Isacchi; he made a profession of its *Rule* of life on May 23, 1897.

From 1901 to 1905, he was a student at the Pontifical Roman Seminary. On August 10, 1904 he was ordained a priest in the church of Santa Maria in Monte Santo in Rome's Piazza del Popolo. In 1905 he was appointed secretary to the new Bishop of Bergamo. When Italy went to war in 1915 he was drafted as a sergeant in the medical corps and became a chaplain to wounded soldiers. When the war ended, he opened a "Student House" for the spiritual needs of young people.

In 1919, he was made spiritual director of the seminary, but in 1921 he was called to the service of the Holy See. Benedict XV brought him to Rome to be the Italian president of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. On March 19, 1925 he was ordained Bishop and left for Bulgaria. He was granted the title Apostolic Delegate and remained in Bulgaria until 1935, visiting Catholic communities and establishing relationships of respect and esteem with the other Christian communities.

In 1935, he was named Apostolic Delegate in Turkey and Greece. His ministry among the Catholics was intense, and his respectful approach and dialogue with the worlds of Orthodoxy and Islam became a feature of his tenure. In December 1944, Pius XII appointed him Nuncio in France.

At the death of Pius XII, he was elected Pope on October 28, 1958, taking the name John XXIII. His pontificate, which lasted less than five years, presented him to the entire world as an authentic image of the Good Shepherd. Meek and gentle, enterprising and courageous, simple and active, he carried out the Christian duties of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy: visiting the imprisoned and the sick, welcoming those of every nation and faith, bestowing on all his exquisite fatherly care.

Pope St. John XXIII was pope from 1958-1963, best known for convening the Second Vatican Council. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II [now Pope St. John Paul II] on September 3, 2000 and canonized by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014. His feast is assigned to the day on which the first session of Vatican II opened in 1962.