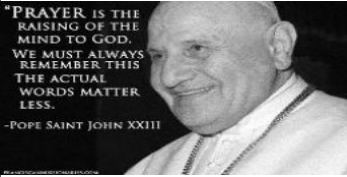


TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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October 11, 2017



Feast day of St. John XXIII, Pope

Our Lady of Fatima Parish

2010 12th Avenue

www.ourladyoffatimaaltoona.com

Rectory Office Hours:

Monday – Friday 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Parish Office: 814-942-0371

Our Lady of Fatima Mass Schedule

Sunday: 10:30 AM - Holy Days: 6:00 PM

Rosary: 10:05 AM - Rosary: 5:40 PM

Our Lady of Fatima Parish Administrator

Reverend Monsignor Robert C. Mazur

Parish Secretary

Carol Z. Smith

Secretary's Assistant

Ellen Kelly

Eucharist for the home bound - weekly:

Patty Flanagan 942-0371 for arrangements.

Our Lady of Fatima Church is open

Monday through Friday: 9AM - 6PM

for visits before the Blessed Sacrament.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals will be held at Our Lady of Fatima.

Preparation for Baptism, and Weddings will be held at the Cathedral. 944-4603

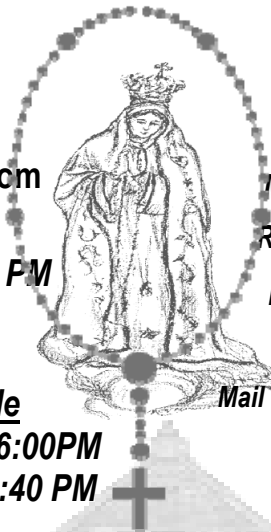
Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

Parishioners wishing to receive the sacrament of healing may call the Cathedral Parish Office to make arrangements. 944-4603

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH IS A RESULT OF THE MERGER BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF SS. PETER & PAUL AND ST. LEO THE GREAT IN 1995.

Our Lady of Fatima

Pleaded that we pray the Holy Rosary before Sunday Mass and privately from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm daily.



October 15, 2017

I can do all things
in him who strengthens me.

— Philippians 4:13

Cathedral Church Office: 814-944-4603

One Cathedral Square

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Robert C. Mazur, Rector

Rev. Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

Christian Initiation Team: 944-4603

Catholics returning Home: 944-4603

Mail Ministry to Elderly, Homebound, Seriously Sick and Grieving - 944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Altoona Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 381-7011

Hollidaysburg Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 695-6112

Middle School Campus (Grades 5 thru 8) - 942-7835

Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School:

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org – 944-4014

Directors of Religious Education:

Chris Laraia – Pre-K thru 8 - 312-7317

Jean Koury – 9 thru 12 – 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays – 943-7424

Director of Music Ministry

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 944-2044

E-Mail: ltayer@dioceseaj.org

Reconciliation @ Cathedral: 7:00 PM Wednesday
12:30 PM Saturday

Religious Education @ Cathedral: Pre-K through 11

Sacramental Formation @ Cathedral: First Reconciliation
First Communion
Confirmation

Sacramental Formation @ the Cathedral: Baptismal Prep
Marriage Prep

Christian Initiation

Hospital Visitation: Call the Cathedral: 944-4603

Cathedral Eucharist:

Sunday: 5:00 PM (Vigil) Holy Days: 5:30 PM (Vigil) Weekdays: 6:45 AM

8:00 AM 8:00 AM 8:00 AM

10:00 AM 12:00 Noon 12:00 Noon

12:00 Noon 5:30 PM Saturday: 8:00 AM

5:00 PM 12:00 Noon

October 15, 2017

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saint John XXIII, Pope, (continued from last Sunday)

Pope John XXIII did the best he could although his health and doctors were failing. On June 3, 1963, Pope John XXIII died in his bed at age 81.

The world mourned John XXIII and he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Johnson in December 1963.

Pope John XXIII generally maintained a good reputation among those who remembered him and he was often titled "the Good."

On September 3, 2000, Pope John Paul beatified him. Miracles were attributed to him and his body was found to be in an uncorrupted state, a phenomenon consistent with sainthood. His body was put on display for the veneration of the faithful.

Pope Francis approved John XXIII for canonization on June 3, 2013, the 50th anniversary of his death.

Bl. Pope John XXIII will be canonized on April 27, 2014 alongside Bl. Pope John Paul II in a historic ceremony to be presided by Pope Emeritus Benedict and Pope Francis. It will be a historic ceremony with two living men with the title of pontiff presiding together.

Pope John XXIII's feast day will be October 11, as opposed to the day of his death, which is June 3. This special feast day is intended as a commemoration of the opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962.

My guiding principles remain the same: humility in everything, especially in my speech, union with God and the will of God, and not my own, in all I do. — Pope John XXIII

- In the days immediately after being elected Pope, John XXIII received a letter from Bruno, a twelve year-old boy. "My dear Pope: I am undecided. I want to be a policeman or a pope. What do you think?" The new pontiff replied promptly saying: "My little Bruno. If you want my opinion, learn how to be a policeman. . . . Anybody can be a pope; the proof of this is that I have become one. If you ever should be in Rome, come to see me. I would be glad to talk all of this over with you."

During the tense days of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, American Journalist Norman Cousins acted as an emissary hand delivering messages between John Kennedy, Nikita Krushchev and Pope John XXIII. As Cousins sat in Pope John's study to report on his encounter with Krushchev, he recalls how the Pope, whom he had never met, went out of his way to put Cousins at ease: "We have very much to talk about," the Pope said. "Just remember, I am an ordinary man; I have two eyes, a nose — a very large nose. . . . You must feel completely relaxed. We will talk man to man."

Those two vignettes convey the warmth, kindness and humility which consistently characterized Pope John XXIII, making him one of the most admired and loved popes by both Catholics and non-Catholics. The man who would become "Good Pope John" was born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli on Nov. 25, 1881 (130 years ago), in a tiny village in the province of Bergamo, Italy. His parents were tenant farmers.

As a child, Angelo lived in an atmosphere of faith that instilled in him a deep and profound sense of spirituality. In the household where he lived with his large extended family, the Catholic faith was practiced and lived out daily. They attended Mass each morning and recited prayers each evening after dinner. This was vital spiritual formation for young Angelo.

In 1893, when he was 12, Angelo took an entrance exam in which he placed third and which allowed him entry into a "seminary," a Catholic school where he received a high school education. By the time he was a young teenager, his mind was entirely focused on the spiritual life and service to the Church as a priest. In fact, in his fourteenth year he began to keep a journal and maintain it for the next 67 years of his life. Published as *Journal of a Soul*, it is one of the finest modern spiritual autobiographies ever published.

Angelo's first entry, when he was only 14, begins with a listing of spiritual practices he wanted to engage in. His first priority was to "choose a spiritual director from among the most exemplary, prudent and learned, in whom you may have full trust. . . and complete confidence." In the journal he describes what he wanted to do daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. Anyone seeking to evolve spiritually would do well to follow young Angelo's blueprint. Some examples from his journal include:

Daily

- Devote at least a quarter of an hour to prayer upon waking up; devote a quarter hour to spiritual reading;
- Before dinner make an examination concerning ways to rid yourself of vices or failings and replace them with virtues;
- Read carefully and thoughtfully a whole chapter from *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A. Kempis;

Weekly

Confession; fast Friday and Saturday; on those days devote an extra quarter of an hour to prayer or spiritual reading, if possible in the quiet of some church; meet with the spiritual director for accountability.

Monthly

- Ask one of the "most exemplary and zealous" spiritual friends to observe your behavior and candidly but charitably identify any faults;
- Confer with the spiritual director about faults identified and the best way to correct them.

Yearly

Go on retreat to do the spiritual exercises of Ignatius Loyola; before going on a yearly vacation, consult with spiritual director for suggestions to use the time for spiritual profit. (Continued on inside back cover)

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
October 15, 2017
10:30 AM

OUR LADY OF FATIMA MASS INTENTIONS

Readings: Is 25:6-10; Phil 4:12-14, 19-20; Mt 22:1-14

October 15, Twenty-Eighth Sunday in OT

Today's Intention — Jack Douglass, Ann

Readings: Is 45:1, 4-6; 1 Thes 1:1-5b; Mt 22:15-21

October 22, Twenty-Ninth Sunday in OT

Hattie R. Zaczek, Ann., Children

CATHEDRAL MASS INTENTIONS

October 16: Monday: Sts. Hedwig & Margaret Mary Alacoque

Readings: Rom 1:1-7; Lk 11:29-32

***6:45 AM BeBe Milliron (John & Lisa Karl)**

8:00 AM John Bauer (Jim & Steph Kilcoyne)

12:00 PM Patty Geis (Diane & Bill Blylos)

October 17, Tuesday: St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bp. & Martyr

Readings: Rom 1:16-25; Lk 11:37-41

6:45 AM No Mass

8:00 AM No Mass

12:00 PM Anthony Kibelbak, Health (Family)

October 18, Wednesday: Saint Luke, Evangelist

Readings: 2 Tm 4:10-17; Lk 10:1-9

6:45 AM No Mass

8:00 AM No Mass

12:00 PM Jim Davidson (Mary Ann Bell)

October 19, Thursday: Sts. John de Brebeuf & Isaac Jogues

Readings: Rom 3:21-30; Lk 11:47-54

6:45 AM Terrance Shea, Anniv. (Mary & James Farrell)

***8:00 AM Bernadette Weakland (M/M Thomas Heasley, Jr.)**

12:00 PM Millie Boyle (Mike & Sherry Byrne)

October 20, Friday: USA: St. Paul of the Cross, Priest

Readings: Rom 4:1-8; Lk 12:1-7

6:45 AM Marian Clemens, Anniv. (Daughter, Carole)

8:00 AM Edward Hallinan (Family)

12:00 PM Alma Reismeier (Husband, Fred)

October 21, Saturday: Weekday, BVM

Readings: Rom 4:13, 16-18; Lk 12:8-12

8:00 AM Fr. Paul Turnbull (Maureen & Dave Hanekamp)

12:00 PM Herbert Kuttruff (M/M Joe Knott)

Vigil: Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: Is 45:1, 4-6; 1 Thes 1:1-5; Mt 22:15-21

5:00 PM Frances Pagliaro (Beezie Crum)

OCTOBER 15, 2017
Scripture Reflection

The early Christian movement attracted fallen-away Jews and Gentiles but not Israel's leadership. This was a great mystery to Matthew. The parable tells us only when the chief priests and elders rejected Jesus, then did God turn to sinners and Gentiles to populate his kingdom.

The parable has a surprise ending with a guest showing up without the proper wedding garment and is thrown out. Biblical scholars have not reached consensus over the meaning of the wedding garment. Wedding celebrations especially were ceremonial events involving the appropriate participation of the guests. The invitation issued by the servants was indiscriminate but not compulsory. Anyone who said yes to it would have known that they were going to an affair that required appropriate dress and courteous interaction. The etiquette added to the joy; dancing, drinking and feasting each had their own ritual action and these added to the memorable qualities of the day (similarly today, the ritual of the best man's toast can be one of the most memorable parts of a wedding celebration).

Patristic authors found the wedding garment to be a symbol of Christian love. They derived this from literary cues like the king's generosity, the wedding and the tokens of respect due a host. They also taught that the wedding garment makes us resemble Christ, the divine bridegroom. Gregory the Great, for instance, argued that the wedding garment was not baptism, which was symbolized simply by entering the feasting hall. To participate in the feast, one must be clothed like the bridegroom in compassion, generosity, forgiveness and love. Similarly today, many call themselves Christians. Only those attired with a love like Christ's will experience the joy of God's feast.

- Do you see yourself as clothed in Christ?
- Are you wearing the garment of hospitality, compassion, forgiveness, and love?

Our Lady of Fatima asks us to:
"Pray the Rosary daily for Peace."

Remember Our Sick and Dying in your prayers.

Jesus, Son of the Living Father,
Have Mercy on Me, A Sinner

AMERICA MAGAZINE, "Clothing Ourselves in Love", Michael R. Simone, S.J., September 21, 2017.

CEMETERY CLEANUP will begin after October 15, 2017. Please remove any items that you want to keep before that date. Cemetery workers will remove flowers from Oct.15 until November 15.

Priests and Deacons Fall Clergy Gathering

On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, October 16, 17, and 18, 2017, the priests and deacons of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese will gather with Bishop Mark Bartchak, J.C.D., for their Fall Clergy Gathering at Seven Springs in Champion, Pennsylvania. In order to make it possible for all active priests and deacons to attend this important meeting, Rev. Christopher Panagoplos, T.O.R., Phone: (814)207-5847, will celebrate Noon Mass at the Cathedral on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and will be available to provide emergency coverage throughout Blair County.

OCTOBER 22nd IS WORLD MISSION SUNDAY... An envelope is placed in today's bulletin to be returned in next Sunday's collection.. There will be a second collection next weekend. Please be as generous as you are able!

SAVE THE DATE October 29th @ 3PM!

The Shroud of Turin Talk will be held once again at St. Benedict Parish, 2310 Bedford St., Johnstown, history and science of the Shroud of Turin and tackle the biggest mystery... Is the shroud the actual burial cloth? Personal research coupled with the knowledge and help of the original photographer, Barrie Schwartz, for scientific evaluation in 1978 make for a powerful and comprehensive presentation that will not disappoint. You are invited to hear the talk and see the full size replica of the Shroud of Turin. Attendees are encouraged to bring their cameras. Priests will be available after the presentation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. No tickets are required; a love offering will be collected. For more information contact Deacon Michael at 814-288-3036. All are welcome!

ST. JUDE TRIDUUM - St. Mark's Catholic Church, 416 6th Avenue, Altoona will hold its Annual St. Jude Triduum with Mass at 5:30 PM, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, October 25, 26, and 27 in the church. Father Ronald V. Osinski will be Celebrant and Homilist at the Masses. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered prior to each Mass. Triduum Prayers will be prayed at each Mass followed by Veneration of the Relic of St. Jude.

Adult Faith Formation

Faith formation is a life-long endeavor. By virtue of our baptism, we are called to continually grow closer to Christ through a life of prayer, service, and knowledge of our faith. The Office of Adult Enrichment and Lay Ecclesial Ministry has announced the following classes for the 2017 fall schedule: Heart of Faith, Old Testament, New Testament, Wisdom Literature and Psalms, The Writings of John 11 and Ecclesiology. For a description of classes, locations, times, registration forms and to learn more about our program visit: www.dioceseaj.org/lay-ecclesial-ministry/ or contact Marybeth at (814) 361-2000. All are welcome!

OUR LADY OF LOURDES HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE

Our Lady of Lourdes on Broad Ave. will hold their annual Holiday boutique on Saturday, November 4 from 8AM-3PM. Breakfast & lunch will be offered.

Booths include: Food for Thought, Buy Now-Dine Later, Crafts, Baked Goods, Jewelry, Balloon Pop, Prize-a rama, Baskets Galore, Kids Corner, Sr. Basil's Lollipops, Books & Movies, and Collectibles (yard sale).

Santa will arrive at 11:00AM – 1:00PM for pictures.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PIEROGI SALE, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH...

Potato Pierogi with Cheddar Cheese, w/ Pepper Jack Cheese, w/ White American, w/ Sauerkraut.

Fruit Pierogi are Apple, Blueberry and Prune. These can be deep fried and rolled in confectioners sugar. Eat as is or with your favorite ice cream.

Also available are Ricotta Gnocchi, and 6-Cheese Ravioli's. Cost of pierogi and gnocchi are \$7.00, the ravioli's are \$8.00 per bag. All product is weighed in 15 oz. pkgs, is uncooked and frozen.

Deadline for orders is November 1st at noon.



Be Our Guest

The Dorothy Day Outreach Center

At Saint Francis University

Invites you to share a catered Thanksgiving meal

Honoring our Senior Citizens

November 22, 2016

10:30am to 1:00pm

At the Torvian Dining Hall

On the University Campus

117 Evergreen Drive Loretto, PA 15940

Must reserve by November 17, 2016

For questions, or to reserve seating, please call:
The Dorothy Day Outreach Center at
814-472-2877 or 814-472-2878

<p style="text-align: center;">ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY</p>	<p><i>Liturgical Reflection...</i></p> <p>At Mass celebrating Matrimony, the rite concludes with the solemn blessing provided in the ritual. There is no dismissal. Another local custom which is popular in the Diocese is to introduce the newly married couple to those gathered in the church. The priest presents the new husband and new wife to the Christian assembly. Now married in Christ, this man and woman assume mutual fidelity, as Christ, the Bridegroom, is ever faithful to his bride, the Church. The Church celebrates and supports this couple as they begin their new life together.</p> <p>2017 Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.</p>
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October 15 Mt. 22:1-14

The king in today's gospel had a bottom line beyond which he would not negotiate. As parents we need to identify what is critical (non-negotiable) and what is open to discussion. Not all issues are equal.

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 15)

Stewardship is opening our hearts, hands, and schedules to others. Being available and willing to listen and give our time and love to others, also shows our willingness to prepare others to join in the feast in God's Kingdom.

Our Lady of Fatima Blessed our parish with a surprise visit from Br. Athanasius (formerly Richard) Fornwalt, FFHS, on the Anniversary of the Sixth apparition of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal.

Fr. Athanasius arrived home Thursday night to visit his Mother and Grandmother for the weekend. He wanted to have Mass in Our Lady of Fatima parish on the Anniversary of the 6th Apparition. Chris Keagy made a phone call to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament and his wish was granted at 9 AM Friday Morning. He also conducted the 2 hr. Holy Hour Friday evening with the permission of Bishop Mark and Msgr. Mazur. Congratulations Br. Athanasius on your priestly Ordination! Our Lady of Fatima is good to us!

BOSCOV'S, 25 % OFF SHOPPING PASS... LAST CALL...

Oct.17th is Friend's Helping Friend's Day

Buy pass NOW & from our parish. See Paul or call the rectory 942-0371.

Fund Raising Coupon Tab Booklet—\$5.00 with 46 coupons...

21 Years Same Great Value, Same Great Price. Choose the Tab Coupon Booklet. A way of getting the best values in your community and supporting your local area groups at the same time.

2017 Catholic Ministries Drive

Our shortfall is now \$1503. Thank You to those who have just pledged! WE can make this goal! Please pray about giving and give what you can!

October 2017 Contributions

Oct 8, 2017	Env Used 57 /147
Weekly	1083.25
Cmas Club	10.00
Votives	71.00
Children's	7.00
Shrine	30.00
Music	10.00
Fuel	1.00
Hurricane Relief	108.00
Total Dep	1320.25

2017 Catholic Ministries Drive

Goal	\$10973.
Pledged to date	9470.
Short fall	\$1503.

Happy Anniversary

10/19 Bert & Bill Bravin

10/20 Robyn and Steve Kasun

Happy Birthday!

10/19 Stanley J. Krish II

10/20 Jim Hosgood

10/23 John Waksmonski

Adult Enrichment Classes...

Education is a lifelong journey. Since we are all called to holiness, we have an obligation to grow and nurture our faith. Classes are offered through the Office of Adult Enrichment and Lay Ecclesial Ministry to help nurture YOUR faith. Beginning November 14th the 8 week course, Old Testament, taught by Fr. Brian Saylor, will be offered at St. Rose of Lima, Altoona, Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 PM. The class Sacraments, will be offered in two locations this January: Msgr. Robert Mazur will be teaching at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament-Seton Suite, Altoona, Mondays, 6:30-9:00 PM, beginning January 8th. Fr. D. Timothy Grimme will be teaching at St. Michael Church Hall, St. Michael, Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 PM, beginning January 9th. These classes are open to all interested. For further information and registration please contact Marybeth at (814) 361-2000. Class information and forms are available online at www.dioceneaj.org/lay-ecclesial-ministry

Meet Fr. Athanasius Fornwalt, FHS: First to be ordained for religious community

By Tony Gutiérrez -Jun 20, 2017



Fr. Athanasius Fornwalt, FHS, will be serving as prefect for studies for his community while he completes an STL in pastoral theology with an emphasis on the New Evangelization at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit. (Billy Hardiman/CATHOLIC SUN)

With his ordination to the priesthood June 3, Fr. Athanasius Fornwalt, FHS, marked a major milestone for himself and his community: he was the first of the Franciscan Friars of the Holy Spirit to be ordained a priest.

Fr. Athanasius was among seven founders — five of whom were already priests — of the community that was established last year. Even though he's a religious, because the community is directly under the bishop, he was ordained for the diocese.

"It's a great honor to belong to this priesthood ... and also to be able to serve in the diocese," said Fr. Athanasius.

Born Richard Fornwalt, he first felt a call to the priesthood while in high school when he was an altar server at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona, Pennsylvania, particularly during the Triduum.

"I felt at peace close to the altar in the sanctuary," he said.

He was introduced to the Franciscan spirituality while attending Mount Aloysius College in Cresson, Pennsylvania. After his father passed away, the grieving student joined a prayer group led by Fr. Joseph Francis LePage, who would later join him in establishing the community.

"We got into how to pray. I experienced my faith in a different way, so it was through that personal contact," Fr. Athanasius recalled. "After that experience, just having the life of St. Francis — I thought his life was very beautiful and it attracted me."

After graduating, he studied philosophy for a year on his own before entering the Franciscan Friars of the Third Order Regular and attending the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

While in seminary, he discerned a call to help establish the Franciscan Friars of the Holy Spirit with a charism to serve the Native American communities. He professed final vows to Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted and received the religious name of "Athanasius" last July before finishing his studies at CUA. He became the first person ordained on a reservation in the diocese last November when Bishop Olmsted ordained him a deacon at St. John Parish in Laveen, where the friary is located.

As a deacon, Fr. Athanasius recalled preaching at least four days a week, performing baptisms and working with the youth group at St. Peter Mission in Bapchule. "I ended up baptizing probably eight or 10 people. That's pretty amazing, especially on a reservation where you see more funerals than baptisms. ... It's given me time to assimilate to being in the sanctuary, assisting at the altar and more actively engaging in the pastoral life of the Church."

Fr. Athanasius will be moving to Detroit this fall to earn a licentiate in sacred theology on pastoral theology in the New Evangelization from Sacred Heart Seminary. He's also taken on an assignment as prefect of studies for the Friars, meaning he will oversee the formation of the Friars' seminarians. Practically, he will be living with his fellow founder, Br. Peter Teresa McConnell, who will be completing his seminary studies in Detroit.

After his ordination, he celebrated his first Mass that evening at St. John. The next day, he celebrated Mass at two other Native American missions: St. Peter and St. Anthony in Sacaton. "I love the small mission churches. They fill up with devout souls on Sunday," he said. "I'm looking forward to consecrating the Eucharist and absolving sins the most."

OUR LADY URGES US TO PRAY THE HOLY ROSARY FOR



PEACE AND OFFER SACRIFICES BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

St. John XXII, Pope-continued

Continuing his theological education, young Roncalli was ordained a priest in August 1904 and assigned as secretary to the new bishop of Bergamo. This appointment proved to be deeply formative for the young priest as the bishop was a spiritual visionary deeply concerned about the poor and about generating social reforms to improve their condition. When World War I erupted, Father Roncalli enlisted in the Italian army and served in both the medical corps and as a chaplain.

Because of Balkan tensions, Pope Pius XI established Vatican diplomatic relations with Bulgaria and asked Father Roncalli to be his apostolic delegate to Bulgaria. To emphasize the importance of his appointment, the pope made Roncalli a bishop in 1925. Surprised, the young priest wrote in his journal, "I have not sought or desired this new ministry. The Lord has chosen me. . . so it will be for him to cover up my failings and supply my insufficiencies. This comforts me and gives me tranquility and confidence."

Though he was now becoming an ecclesiastical official of considerable importance, Roncalli expressed his desire to remain spiritually focused and grounded. Shortly after accepting the appointment, he wrote in his journal, "I want to be all and wholly for God, penetrated with his light, shining with love for God and the souls of men. . . . In my new stage of life, prayer must take on a new aspect."

This diplomatic assignment was the first of several that would last three decades for Roncalli. After nine years in Bulgaria, he was appointed apostolic delegate to Turkey and Greece (1935). In his role as apostolic delegate to Turkey and Greece, Roncalli was also instrumental in saving thousands of Jewish lives by launching "Operation Baptism." In early 1944, American Jewish leader Ira Hirschmann requested an interview with Bishop Roncalli in Turkey. Hirschmann came prepared with statistics and eye-witness accounts of the Jewish plight in Hungary, pleading with Roncalli to assist Jews in that country.

After listening carefully, Roncalli proposed Operation Baptism, explaining that he knew that some nuns in Budapest had given baptismal certificates to Jews and that the Nazis recognized those and left the holders alone. Roncalli told Hirschmann he was prepared to make available as many baptismal certificates as were necessary, adding he had no vested interest in whether any Jews actually attended Mass or, when the war ended, remained in the Church. His only concern was with saving lives.

An exuberant and joyful Hirschmann returned to Washington. He wrote, "The Catholic hierarchy, which enjoys a large influence in Hungary, took unusual spontaneous measures to rescue Jewish citizens wherever possible. . . . [I refer] to the baptism of thousands of Hungarian Jews in air raid shelters." Of course, Hirschmann was discreet and never revealed Bishop Roncalli as the source of those baptismal certificates.

Following the liberation of France in 1944, Roncalli was named Vatican representative to that country and, in 1953, Pope Pius XII made him a Cardinal and Patriarch of Venice. It was an appropriate appointment for a priest who had served arduously and loyally for many decades. Then in his 72nd year, Roncalli noted in his journal, "I am beginning my direct ministry at an age — seventy-two years — when others end theirs. . . . In the few years I have still to live, I want to be a holy pastor. . . . Sometimes the thought of the short time left to me tempts me to slacken my efforts. But with God's help I will not give in. I neither fear to die nor refuse to live." Believing that the position as Cardinal of Venice would be his final service to the church, no one was more surprised than Roncalli when, five years later in October 1958, he was elected pope. In fact, he even arrived at the Vatican for the consistory having purchased a return train ticket to Venice. From the first moment of his papacy, Pope John continued in his determination to be a truly spiritual leader. A month after his election, he wrote, "Nothing has value for history and human life, nothing has any value for the Church and for souls, unless the pontiff is holy in deed as well as in title."

Though his election was also a surprise to Catholics around the world, his warm pastoral style immediately began to attract attention and admiration. As he began his papacy, he not only maintained but heightened his pastoral concern — especially for the poor, some of whom worked directly for the Vatican. This reality came to his attention one day in 1959 when he saw an electrician doing some work on the Vatican grounds. Approaching the man, the pontiff inquired about the man and his family. The electrician poured out the frustration of his struggle with poverty. Shortly after that conversation, Pope John raised the pay of Vatican employees from 25 percent to 40 percent. The employees who were being paid the least received the largest increase in wages. Explaining this change to Vatican administrators, the pope said, "We cannot always require others to observe the Church's teaching on social justice if we do not apply it in our own domain. The church must take the lead in social justice by its own good example."

On Dec. 25, 1958, a mere 10 weeks after he came to the papal throne, John became the first pope since 1870 to make a pastoral visit in his diocese of Rome. He went to visit prisoners at the ironically named "Queen of Heaven Prison" in Rome. Parts of the Queen of Heaven prison buildings dated back to 1654. It was the oldest, largest and most notorious prison in Rome. Addressing the large group of inmates who gathered to see him, John explained, "You could not come to me, so I came to you."

Though prison officials received little advance warning, they managed to map out a course for the papal visit by putting down a red carpet. Almost immediately, Pope John veered off the runway and ventured down gloomy and musty corridors. He arrived at one cellblock where the most violent were confined. Upon noticing that prisoners were still locked behind bars, he said in his loudest voice, "Open the gates. Do not bar them from me. They are all children of our Lord." (continued next Sunday)

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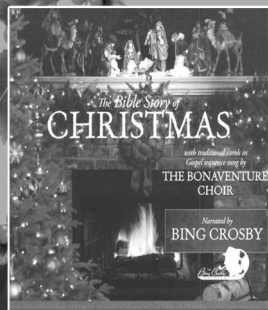
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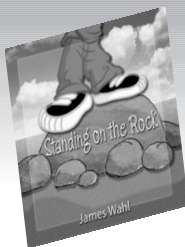
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