

# SAINTLY profiles

As Pope, John Paul II was a model for all people of the forgiveness and mercy God offers us and of dignity in time of illness and suffering.

## *Pope Saint John Paul II* 1920–2005

Pope Saint John Paul II was born Karol Wojtyła (voy-TIH-wah) in the small Polish town of Wadowice. During World War II, when the Nazis invaded Poland, Karol secretly studied for the priesthood in an underground seminary established by the archbishop of Krakow. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1946. In 1964, Father Karol was appointed archbishop of Krakow; just three years later he was made a cardinal. In 1978, Cardinal Wojtyła was elected Pope, the 264th in the Church's history. He took the name John Paul II.

From the start of his papacy, Pope John Paul II made evangelization a key part of his mission, and made pastoral visits to all parts of the world.

In 1981, a Turk named Mehmet Ali Agca shot the Pope twice in an assassination attempt and wounded him. Following Jesus' example of forgiveness and compassion for the sinner, Pope John Paul II later met with Agca in his prison cell and, gently speaking to him of the forgiveness of Christ, forgave him for what he had done.

Throughout his life, Pope John Paul II was an avid sportsman, hiking and skiing even in his sixties. In 1992, however, his health began to decline. It was later revealed that he suffered from Parkinson's disease, a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system. Near the end of his papacy, it became difficult for him to speak, and his poor health and physical suffering made public appearances difficult. Still, he bore his suffering patiently, and continued his pastoral work despite his physical pain. He entrusted his health to God, and joined his suffering with that of Christ.



### ALL ABOUT POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II

- ✿ First journey as Pope was to his homeland of Poland
- ✿ Established World Youth Day in 1984
- ✿ The only Polish Pope in the Church's history
- ✿ Named *Time* magazine's Person of the Year in 1994
- ✿ Died on April 2, 2005
- ✿ When he died, more than three million pilgrims came to Rome to pay their respects
- ✿ Funeral attended by presidents, prime ministers, and kings from around the world, as well as nearly two million pilgrims
- ✿ Process of making John Paul II a saint began soon after his death. He was canonized in 2014.

# MAKE IT HAPPEN

What does Pope Saint John Paul II's example of forgiveness teach you about Christ's mercy? How might his endurance of his physical suffering help you turn to God when you or someone you love is seriously ill?

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## KNOW IT!

### LET US PRAY

#### *Act of Hope*

*O my God,  
relying on your infinite goodness and promises,  
I hope to obtain pardon of my sins,  
the help of your grace,  
and life everlasting,  
through the merits of Jesus Christ,  
my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.*



#### **Ashes**

Ashes are placed on our foreheads during the Ash Wednesday liturgy to remind us of our sins and of our need of the salvation Christ won for us. The ashes are made from burnt palm branches from the preceding year's Palm Sunday.

# YOUR TURN



A. **Match** Column A with Column B by writing the correct letter in the space provided.

## A

- a. conscience
- b. Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation
- c. Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick
- d. mortal sin
- e. venial sin
- f. Sacraments of Healing

## B

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a conscious and free choice to do something grave against God's law, resulting in complete separation from God and his grace
2. \_\_\_\_\_ an internal sense that enables us to judge what is morally right or wrong
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the sacrament in which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven, resulting in reconciliation with God and the Church
4. \_\_\_\_\_ a less serious offense against God's will that weakens our relationship with God
5. \_\_\_\_\_ the sacraments in which we receive God's grace for the healing of our mind, body, and spirit
6. \_\_\_\_\_ the sacrament administered to the gravely ill, aging, or dying to strengthen them to bear their suffering

B. **Respond** to the following.

How is Pope Saint John Paul II a model of God's forgiveness?

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Describe ways you can be more forgiving in your own life.

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# CATECHISM Q&A

**Q. Why do we have a desire for God?**

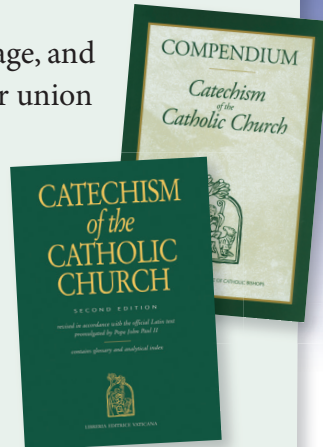
**A.** God created people in his own image, and imprinted on their heart the desire for union with him. Even if we ignore this desire, God never ceases to draw us to himself. (See *Compendium*, Question 2; CCC, 44–45.)

**Q. Where does the soul come from?**

**A.** The spiritual soul is created by God at the moment of our conception. It does not perish when it is separated from the body in death and it will once again be reunited with the body at the final resurrection. (See *Compendium*, Question 70; CCC, 382.)

**Q. What relationship has God established between man and woman?**

**A.** God created man and woman with equal dignity. At the same time, they are created to complement, or balance, one another. God created them for one another to form a communion and to transmit human life. (See *Compendium*, Question 71; CCC, 383.)



## Calendar Connection *Humanae Vitae*

**WHO** Pope Paul VI

**WHAT** *Humanae Vitae* ("Of Human Life")

**WHERE** From the Vatican

**WHEN** 1968

**WHY** To reaffirm the Church's prohibition on artificial contraception and its stance against abortion, and address other issues pertaining to human life. The teachings in Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* have been clearly reaffirmed by Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis.

## KNOW and BELIEVE

God created each of us in his own image; therefore, our value as individuals goes far beyond what is physical and visible to ourselves and others. How can knowing this help you when you are feeling dissatisfied with something about yourself?

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## KNOW it!

### soul

the invisible or spiritual part of a person that is immortal and will live on after death in Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory

### stewardship

the responsibility to care for and protect the gifts of creation that God has given us



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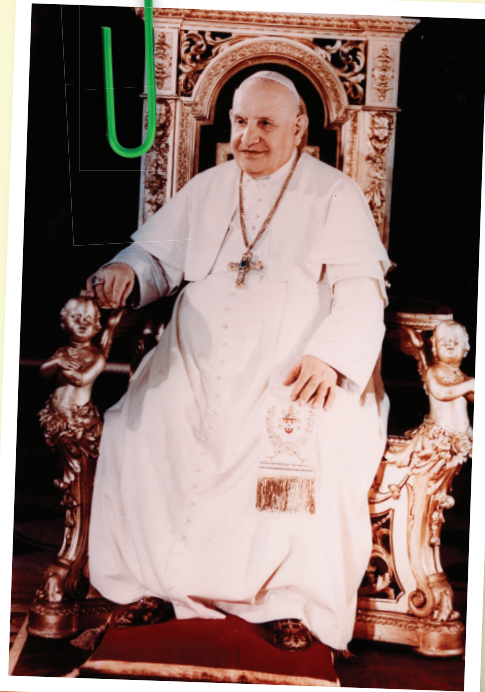
Pope Saint John XXIII believed that the Church needed renewal to enable it to minister more effectively to the modern world. He brought about this renewal by calling for the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The Council had a profound effect on the Church and its interaction with contemporary society, and its view of its place in the modern world.

## *Pope Saint John XXIII* 1881–1963

Pope Saint John XXIII was born Angelo Guiseppe Roncalli to a peasant family in northern Italy. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1904. He served as a stretcher-bearer and chaplain in the Italian army during World War I. He later held a number of important positions in the Church, including that of bishop. In 1953 he was raised to the rank of cardinal by Pope Pius XII. Upon the death of Pius XII in 1958, Cardinal Roncalli was elected Pope, taking the name John XXIII.

Because of his advanced age, many thought John XXIII's papacy would be short and would bring about few, if any, important changes. Although his papacy was short, only five years, it led to some of the greatest changes the Church had seen for centuries. Within just three months of becoming Pope, John XXIII had called for a worldwide **ecumenical council**, a gathering of bishops from around the world called together by the Pope or approved by him. This ecumenical council became known as Vatican Council II. Among his goals for the Council were to discover more effective ways to teach the Faith, to deepen the understanding of the Church's doctrine, and to seek unity within the Church and with Christians separated from Catholicism. The Second Vatican Council is often noted as the start of a new era in the life of the Church. Pope John XXIII died less than a year after the start of Vatican II, but his vision set the tone for the whole Council.

Pope John XXIII's contributions to the Church also include a number of encyclicals, or letters to the whole Church, that reflected his view of the Church's place in the modern world. Among these was *Pacem in terris* ("Peace on Earth"), which was addressed to the whole world, rather than just to Catholics. In it Pope John XXIII stated that conflict among nations should be resolved through negotiation and mutual understanding, not through warfare.



### ALL ABOUT POPE SAINT JOHN XXIII

- ☼ Nearly 80 years old when elected Pope
- ☼ Called for Vatican Council II to bring about renewal in the Church
- ☼ Posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian award, by President Lyndon B. Johnson
- ☼ Canonized: April 27, 2014

**FEAST DAY:** October 11, the date of the opening of the Second Vatican Council

# MAKE IT HAPPEN

One way Pope Saint John XXIII strengthened the Church was by reaching out to all Catholics as well as to those who had separated from the Church.

**How can you work to strengthen the Church among people you know?**

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**In *Pacem in terris*, John XXIII said that conflict should be resolved through peaceful means, not war. How can you apply that message to your own life?**

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## KNOW IT!

### IHS

This monogram consists of the Greek letters *iota* (I), *eta* (H), and *sigma* (S), the first three letters of Jesus' name in Greek. The letters are also used to spell out the Latin phrase "*Iesus Hominum Salvator*" ("Jesus, Savior of man").



## LET US PRAY

### *A Prayer of Consecration*

*May the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ our Lord, furnish us with all that is good, that we may do his will. May he carry out in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

*—Based on Hebrews 13:20–21*



# Vatican II

Throughout the history of the Church, popes have called general *councils*—also called ecumenical councils, from the Greek word *oikoumene*, meaning

“the whole world”—gatherings of all of the Church’s bishops for the purpose of discussing a specific problem or situation and then determining how best to address it.

There have been twenty-one such general councils in the history of the Church, but few have been as far-reaching, and as misunderstood, as the twenty-first and most recent, commonly known as *Vatican Council II*, which was held in several sessions, from 1962 to 1965.

At the council, bishops from all over the world, aided by a wide of variety of experts in various areas of Church life, worked to fulfill the hopes of Pope Saint John XXIII to bring renewal to the Church and to help Catholics to proclaim the timeless truths of the Gospel in ways that would be most meaningful to the modern world.

The initial fruit of Vatican II was in the sixteen documents approved by the bishops. Of these, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*, or *CSL*, has probably had the most far-reaching impact of any of the council’s documents. The overriding aim of the *CSL* was to foster the “full and active participation by all the people” in the Church’s liturgy. It reaffirmed that while the mysteries of the liturgy remain ageless and unchanging, they must still be offered in ways that are most understood by today’s people. For example, the *CSL* paved the way for the Mass to be celebrated in local languages, or the vernacular.

The council used the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* to remind Catholics that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ and has a hierarchical structure (with the Holy Father as the head). The *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* describes how the Church’s teachings relate to “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age.” [GS, 1] The “griefs and the anxieties” included the challenges of war and peace in the nuclear era.

Universal religious rights also found expression in the *Declaration on Religious Freedom (Dignitatis Humanae)*. Written with the encouragement especially of the American bishops, it affirmed the rights of each person to have freedom to believe in God and to worship according to his or her conscience.

Christ’s expressed wish “that all may be one” resulted in the “Decree on Ecumenism” (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) that showed how Catholics can engage in outreach with separated Christian churches and communities, including joint charitable work and common prayer. Similarly, the *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate)* provided Catholics with principles for prudent dialogue with other religions in the world, such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

It is fair to say that in the time right after the council, these documents were sometimes misapplied or misunderstood. Pope Saint John Paul II (1978–2005) made implementing the council in continuity



with the other twenty general councils one of the greatest priorities of his papacy, and this purpose has been continued by Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. Now, nearly fifty years after the council, we are beginning to appreciate fully its monumental impact on the life of the Church.

## *The Key Documents of Vatican II*

The Second Vatican Council issued a total of sixteen documents: four *constitutions*, nine *decrees*, and three *declarations*. These teachings touch upon nearly every area of the Church's life, including the liturgy (the Church's worship); the relationship of the Church to other faith communities and the world at large; the life and ministry of priests, the renewal of the religious communities of men and women, and the role of the laity, to name a few. The following are some of the key documents:

**Dogmatic Constitution on the Church** (*Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964) spoke about the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation and her clear hierarchical structure; it also emphasized the role of Mary in the life of the Church.

**Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation** (*Dei Verbum*, Nov. 18, 1965) offered the Church's teachings on Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

**Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy** (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Dec. 4, 1963) hoped to bring an authentic renewal of the Church's worship.

**Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World** (*Gaudium et Spes*, Dec. 7, 1965) taught about "the more urgent problems of the day" and the answers that only the Church can provide.

**Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication** (*Inter Mirifica*, Dec. 4, 1963) endorsed the use of communication (such as radio, video, and, in more recent years, the Internet) ethically and as a means to help spread the Gospel.

**Decree on Ecumenism** (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, Nov. 21, 1964) addressed the Church's commitment to dialogue with separated Christian churches and communities.

**Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity** (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Nov. 18, 1965) encouraged lay people in the Church to take an even more active part in the Church's mission.

**Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests** (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Dec. 7, 1965) focused on the role of priests in the Church, reaffirmed priestly celibacy, and stressed the need for all priests to be men of prayer.

**Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions** (*Nostra Aetate*, Oct. 28, 1965) provided Catholics with guidelines for dialogue with non-Christian religions.

**Declaration on Religious Freedom** (*Dignitatis Humanae*, Dec. 7, 1965) affirmed the rights of each person to worship according to one's conscience.