

No one loved and respected human life more than Jesus. How do we know? As a divine person, he humbled himself, assumed a human nature, and thus became fully human. Furthermore, as an expression of love and mercy, he gave His life as a living sacrifice to save humanity. He gave until it hurt.

Mother Theresa of Calcutta was asked to speak at a National Prayer Breakfast, during the presidency of Bill Clinton. Just a few paces away from President Clinton she gave a speech without any notes, straight from her heart, with a peaceful and humble spirit. She spoke like a Saint. Here are some excerpts:

“Jesus died on the Cross because that is what it took for Him to do good to us--to save us from our selfishness in sin. He gave up everything to do the Father’s will--to show us that we too must be willing to give up everything to do God’s will--to love one another as He loves each of us. If we are not willing to give whatever it takes to do good to one another, sin is still in us. That is why we too must give to each other until it hurts.”

“But I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another? How do we persuade a woman not to have abortion? As always, we must persuade her with love and we remind ourselves that love means to be willing to give until it hurts. Jesus gave even His life for us. So, the mother who is thinking of abortion, should be helped to love, that is, to give until it hurts her plans, or her free time, to respect the life of her child. The father of the child, whoever he is, must also give until it hurts.”

“By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And by abortion, the father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world... Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion”

“I also know there are great problems in the world--that many spouses do not love each other enough to practice natural family planning. We cannot solve all the problems in the world but let us never bring in the worst problem of all, and that is to destroy love. And this is what happens when we tell people to practice contraception [and abortion].”

“When I pick up a person from the street, hungry, I give him a plate of rice, a piece of bread. But...Abortion/Contraception brings people to be spiritually poor, and that is the worst poverty and the most difficult to overcome.”

“The poor are very great people. They can teach us so many beautiful things. Once one of them came to thank us for teaching her natural family planning and said: ‘You people who have practiced chastity, you are the best people to teach us natural family planning because it is nothing more than self-control out of love for each other.’ And what this poor person said is very true. These poor people maybe have nothing to eat, maybe they have not a home to live in, but they can still be great people when they are spiritually rich.”

Needless to say, President Clinton, being pro-abortion, did not have much to applaud! Thank God for SAINT Mother Teresa! What she said is true. True love is not easy. It was not easy for Jesus. It demands everything. It also promises everything! Oh, if only every Catholic would take to heart the words of our modern-day Saint about the sanctity of life and sexuality, we would wonderfully enrich our spiritually impoverished world!

Your Servant in Christ,
Fr. Terry Staples





Saint John XXIII

Feast Day: October 11

Born: November 25, 1881

Died: June 3, 1963

Pope: October 28, 1958 – June 3, 1963

Canonized: April 27, 2014 by Pope Francis

The twentieth century was an amazing century. Life changed dramatically with diseases like polio and smallpox being conquered; people able to travel across the world in a day on airplanes and communicate with each other in seconds on the Internet and the telephone. It was also a century filled with horrible wars that killed millions. Technology brought us wonderful inventions that made life easier and more fun, but it also brought us weapons that could wipe out half the earth, if they were ever used. With so much possibility for good and evil, the twentieth century was a time that needed good leaders who could look at the past, present, and future and make good, prudent decisions. Even the church needed leaders like that. Just when we needed it most, God gave us a gift: Pope John XXIII who had an amazing impact on the church and the entire world. Although few people had as great an impact on the 20th century as Pope John XXIII, he avoided the limelight as much as possible. Indeed, one writer has noted that his “ordinariness” seems one of his most remarkable qualities.

Born Angelo Roncalli in the northern part of Italy, his family farmed for a living. He entered the seminary at a young age, joined the Secular Franciscan Order, and was ordained as a priest in 1904. His service as a stretcher-bearer for the Italian army during World War I gave him a firsthand knowledge of war. In 1921, Fr. Roncalli was made national director in Italy of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In 1925, he became a papal diplomat. During World War II, he became well acquainted with Orthodox Church leaders. With the help of Germany’s ambassador to Turkey, Archbishop Roncalli helped save an estimated 24,000 Jewish people. Named a cardinal and appointed patriarch of Venice in 1953, he was finally a residential bishop. A month short of entering his 78th year, Cardinal Roncalli was elected pope. Pope John took his work very seriously but not himself. His wit soon became proverbial, and he began meeting with political and religious leaders from around the world. In 1962, he was deeply involved in efforts to resolve the Cuban missile crisis. His most famous encyclicals were *Mother and Teacher* (1961) and *Peace on Earth* (1963). Pope John XXIII enlarged the membership in the College of Cardinals and made it more international. At his address at the opening of the Second Vatican Council, he criticized those who consistently predicted disaster and viewed the modern world as deteriorating compared to past ages. Pope John XXIII set a tone for the Council when he said, “The Church has always opposed... errors. Nowadays, however, the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity.”

On his deathbed, Pope John said: “It is not that the gospel has changed; it is that we have begun to understand it better. Those who have lived as long as I have...were enabled to compare different cultures and traditions, and know that the moment has come to discern the signs of the times, to seize the opportunity and to look far ahead.”

Reflection: Throughout his life, Angelo Roncalli cooperated with God’s grace, believing that the job at hand was worthy of his best efforts. His sense of God’s providence made him the ideal person to promote a new dialogue with Protestant and Orthodox Christians, as well as with Jews and Muslims.