

# John XXIII

Born: 1881

Died: 1963

Feast Day:

11 October



**DERRY DIOCESAN  
CATECHETICAL  
CENTRE**

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was born in the village of Sotto il Monte, near Bergamo. He was one of thirteen children born to a family of sharecroppers.

He was ordained to the priesthood in 1904 and served in a number of posts, as nuncio in France and a delegate to Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. In 1953 he was made a Cardinal.

Roncalli was unexpectedly elected pope on 28 October 1958 at age 76 after 11 ballots. Pope John XXIII surprised those who expected him to be a caretaker pope by calling the historic Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the first session opening on 11 October 1962.

His views on equality were summed up in his statement, "*We were all made in God's image, and thus, we are all Godly alike.*"

He made a major impact on the Catholic Church. In Italian politics, he banned bishops from interfering with local elections. In international affairs, he engaged in dialogue with the communist countries of Eastern Europe. He especially reached out to the Eastern Orthodox churches.

His overall goal was to modernise the Church by emphasizing its pastoral role, and its necessary involvement with affairs of state. He dropped the traditional rule of 70 cardinals, increasing the size to 85. He used the opportunity to name the first cardinals from Africa, Japan, and the Philippines. He died while the Council was still in session, on the evening of 3 June 1963. He is patron of Papal delegates, Patriarchy of Venice, Second Vatican Council, Christianity, Diocese of Bergamo, Sotto il Monte, Valsamoggia, Italian Army.