the divine essence face to face and clearly, as much as the state and condition of the separated soul can bear.” The last statement was an important restriction: the theological question remained open on the difference between the state of a separated soul and that of a soul reunited with its body. The next morning, the nonagenarian pope passed away. He was buried at Avignon, in his former cathedral of Notre-Dame-des-Doms.

Louis Duval-Arnould

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Baldassarre Cossa, son of Giovanni, lord of the isle of Procida near Naples, was born into a family that drew more resources from the sea than from the land. Despite their reputation as pirates, the Cossa married in high society. Baldassarre’s mother and his brother Marino’s wife were Barri les, and his other two brothers found wives in the Brancacci and Caraccioli families. By temperament, Baldassarre Cossa was not suited to be a cleric. His weaknesses were emphasized by his adversaries, more of whom left behind records than did his supporters: one must use their witness with caution. They said, wrongly, that he had two natural children, but his liaison with his sister-in-law, on the other hand, was genuine. Because he was more suited to business than to the life of the spirit, his rise in the clerical ranks seemed suspicious. His father’s money was probably responsible for his promotion to the rank of doctor of canon law that the University of Bologna granted him a little before 1389. He owed his career to the Neapolitan popes who took over the Roman see during the GREAT SCHISM. Already a canon of Bologna in 1386, he was admitted as a simple “regular” to the entourage of BONIFACE IX, and then became CHAMBERLAIN in 1392. In 1396, the post of archdeacon of Bologna opened greater possibilities. With this title, he had the right to oversee the affairs of the university; even more, he could hope to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors, all promoted to cardinal. Boniface IX gave him the purple, with the title of San Eustachio, in 1402.

In the months that followed, the pope made Baldassare Cossa his legate to Bologna, with the mission of recovering the city, then under Visconti domination. The cardinal took control of an army and in September 1403, became master of the city. INNOCENT VII and then GREGORY XII confirmed his legation. In 1409, the humanist and curialist Antonio Loschi described Cossa’s government in glowing terms, but the Council of Constance accused him of behaving as a tyrant. Modern historians note that his personal account with the Medicis of Florence grew at a regular pace, unlike the apostolic treasury.
Having quickly joined his unionist colleagues who broke with Gregory XII in May of 1408, Cardinal Cossa joined his voice to theirs to call all Christians to unite in a council at Pisa. The choice of this city, then dominated by Florence, had been delicate, and his intervention with the city’s leaders eased the undertaking. To go to Pisa, he went to his bank and withdrew almost all his money; probably he contributed heavily to the financing of the assembly. After having deposed the two rival popes, the Pisan cardinals chose the cardinal of Milan over Cossa to preside over the destinies of the Pisan alliance.

The new pope, Alexander V, was followed by everyone who had participated in the Pisan Council, but he could not go to Rome, which was controlled by Ladislas of Durazzo, who had sided with Gregory XII. To oppose Ladislas, the Pisans had chosen to support the pretensions of Louis II of Anjou to the throne of Naples. Cardinal Cossa again became a leader in battle; despite his family ties on Ladislas’s side, he immersed himself totally in the war and was first to enter Rome, in October 1409. Then the energetic legate went back to his home in Bologna, where Alexander V joined him. The pontiff died there—a natural death, no matter what rumor imputed to Cardinal Cossa.

On 17 May 1410, after three days of conclave, Baldassarre Cossa was elected. He was ordained a priest before being crowned. He suspended the bulls of Alexander V in favor of the mendicants, but he continued his policy of benefices, and he tried to raise a tithe to pay for the Italian war. Meanwhile, Ladislas of Durazzo had re-taken Rome, and Louis II of Anjou was in great need of support. The pontiff assumed direction of military operations and, after his entry into Rome on 12 April 1411, a victory at Roccasecca seemed to consolidate his position. The prince of Anjou, however, went back to France with no intention to return.

In order to remain in Rome, John XXIII chose to make peace with Ladislas (June 1412). The time had come to keep the promise made in Pisa to call a council again for the reform of the Church. Recent promotions of cardinals seemed a good omen, for men like Pierre d’Ailly and Francesco Zabarella, known for their openmindedness, had been chosen. But the Council of Rome drew few participants; in March 1413, the pope decided to end it, without making any other commitment. In June Ladislas entered Rome again, sacking it and driving the pope north. In his retreat, the pope found himself confronted with pressing demands from Sigismund, king of Hungary, who had just been elected king of the Romans thanks to his clever religious politics. Confronted by the partisans of Gregory XII, this candidate for the imperial throne promised to guarantee the unity of the Church rather than to uphold the Pisan legitimacy, and he proposed to recall the council to deal with all schismatics. This brought him the sympathy of the reformers. John XXIII was in no position to negotiate; he resigned himself to accepting imperial hospitality and, even before he had released a bull of convocation, Sigismund issued an edict announcing the opening of the next council at Constance on 1 November 1414.

John XXIII arrived promptly for the meeting. By the first session he realized that even the most unionist prelates were ready to sacrifice him to achieve their own goals. In view of the experience of Gregory XII and Benedict XIII, he was urged to set an example and resign rather than be deposed. The partisans of this idea urged him, with the support of Sigismund, and the atmosphere grew tense. To avoid the trap closing around him, John XXIII left Constance in disguise during the night of 20–21 March 1415 and fled to Schaffousen to stay with the duke of Austria. Some cardinals tried to intervene between the two camps, but with Sigismund threatening him, John chose to take flight and tried to cross the Rhine. This succeeded in discrediting him in the eyes of the council: having proclaimed the supremacy of the council over the pope, they sent out a summons for John to appear before them, which caught up with the fugitive at Freiburg. Sigismund induced the duke of Austria to turn the city over to him, and he captured the pope.

At that, Baldassare Cossa ceased all resistance. The council fathers held his trial and issued accusations of ambition, simony, bad conduct, and tyranny. He was deposed on 29 May. Imprisoned in the castle of Radolfzell on Lake Constance, he received his sentence humbly. His imprisonment did not end until June 1419. He soon made an act of submission before Martin V, who gave him the title of cardinal of Frascati. Six months later, he died. He was buried in the baptistry of Florence, where his tomb is ornamented with the work of Donatello and Michelozzo.

Hélène Millet

**Bibliography**


If no pope was elected very young, it was also rare to be elected to the pontificate at such an advanced age as Cardinal Roncalli. He was almost 77 years old. This seems to support the thesis that the members of the conclave, after eleven ballots, made a prudent choice in order to assure the Church a pontificate of transition.

The life of Cardinal Roncalli up to that point seemed to guarantee this. Born at Sotto il Monte (near Bergamo) in a large, poor family (ten children), Angelo Roncalli stayed faithful to his origins, as seen in his ideal of priesthood: “I became a priest . . . only to do good in as many ways as possible for the poor” (Lettere ai familiari, I, 9).

A seminarian at age 12, he followed a traditional ecclesiastical itinerary—marked however, in October 1902 by his meeting an exceptional spiritual director, the Redemptorist Francesco Pittochi. It was the latter who led him to adopt a motto as simple as it was radical: “God is all, I am nothing” (Journal of a Soul, 16 December 1902).

After studies in theology in Rome, where his friends included future representatives of Italian modernism, he was ordained as a priest in 1904. He was soon named secretary to the new bishop of Bergamo, G. Radini-Tedeschi, with whom he stayed until the latter’s death in 1914. During the years spent in daily contact with this prelate, the young priest broadened his horizons and acquired his great pastoral sensitivity. It was also during this period that he made contact with liturgical and ecumenical movements little known then in Italy and tackled the growing problems of social justice in his region with a spirit of open dialogue.

After the death of Monsignor Radini, Fr. Roncalli was a soldier from May 1915 until September 1918, first in the health service and then as a military chaplain. At the end of the war, he founded a student house and was spiritual director of the seminary for two years. In early 1921 he began his Roman career. Called to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, he was in charge of raising the funds necessary for the missions. He held this post until 1925, thus beginning directly to serve the Holy See, which for many years kept him away from the pastoral duties he desired deeply. From 1925 to 1934, Pius XI, who had named him bishop, sent him to Orthodox Bulgaria, first as an apostolic visitor and then as an apostolic delegate. During the next ten years (1935–1944), he was the apostolic delegate in Istanbul for Greece and Turkey. These were long, lonely years spent in lands that were hardly welcoming to a Catholic prelate; there were tensions with Rome over different views of the proper attitude toward Christians of other creeds, and over ties between the Vatican and the Fascist Italian government. But they were years when contact with the Orthodox churches gave him a growing sense of unity of the Church; he also experienced a Muslim universe undergoing a radical secularization, and was becoming aware of the limits of the Eurocentrism of ecclesiastical circles. In 1938–1939, war broke out. Roncalli found himself in a privileged but uncomfortable position. His behavior remained inspired by pastoral demands which took the shape of saving Nazi victims in occupied Greece, and in particular, Jews who were trying to escape deportation.

As papal nuncio to Paris beginning 1 January 1945, Bishop Roncalli took over from Bishop Valerio Valeri, whose removal General de Gaulle had requested because of his compromises with the collaborationist Vichy government. Roncalli had to manage, with an amiability that was sometimes taken for naiveté, the difficult transition from a diffuse collaborationist attitude, widespread among the French episcopate, to loyal relations with the new government. Paris complemented his previous experiences: relationships with Marxists were tense; a dying colonialism was unleashing war in Algeria; and the dechristianization taking place in one of the most ancient of Christian nations was forcing a radical pastoral renewal. The ten years spent in France therefore enriched Roncalli’s personality by helping him become aware, in an intense way, of some of the most significant upheavals in contemporary Catholicism. In 1953, named patriarch of Venice, he ended his long diplomatic career and began his pastoral ministry. At age 72, he saw Venice as a long-desired haven: “It is interesting that Providence brought me back where my priestly vocation began, that is, to pastoral service . . . At present, I am placed in front of the true interests of the souls of the Church . . . It fulfills me, and I thank the Lord” (Journal of a Soul, 1953). However, he remained only about five years in Venice, during the end of the pontificate of Pius XII, which was marked by the cold war and an immobility in ecclesiastical structures. Still, it was a precious experience, that the future pope would remember vividly because of his direct contact with the demands and problems of Christian life.

The conclave that opened on 25 October 1958, after the death of Pius XII, took place in a difficult climate. Within the Church, the preceding very lengthy pontificate had established an increasingly personal and centralized way of government, which had created tensions and a certain amount of resistance to change during the last few years. The Catholic movements for renewal (biblical, liturgical, and ecumenical), active at the fringes of the Church, were considered with suspicion, and feelings of unrest were suppressed rather than confronted. The cold war dominated the political scene, while the process of decolonization in Asia and in Africa created serious questions for the future. Over all hung the terrible possibility of nuclear war.
Nevertheless, the conclave was short, lasting only three days. The natural candidate for the succession was the archbishop of Milan, Giovanni Battista Montini. But Pius XII had never made him a cardinal, even though the see of Milan was traditionally held by a cardinal. Choosing him would have made the election a rupture with the tradition that a pope was chosen from among the cardinals. The majority of the electors then sought a candidate who would bring a brief period of détente, a moment of reflection and pause. They wished to avoid continuity with Pius XII, yet also to avoid taking a totally different direction. Cardinal Roncalli appeared to solve this problem. He was a very different prelate and, on certain issues, opposed to Pius XII. A peasant from the north of Italy would be taking over from a Roman noble; a bishop who had felt fully at ease only in his Venetian bishopric and who, once he had undertaken diplomatic functions, had always tried to keep some pastoral activities, would succeed a diplomat without pastoral experience; a man who appeared naturally accommodating would follow a strong and authoritarian personality. On the other hand, Cardinal Roncalli’s obedience to the Holy See and his natural sense of moderation had always kept him from exceeding the responsibilities he was assigned, which had added to his image as a gentle prelate, reassuring to all. Finally, his advanced age guaranteed a short pontificate. During the novendials he had probably noticed a growing sympathy toward himself, and he was not completely surprised when a majority of the cardinals supported his nomination (the other candidate was Cardinal Agagianian, of Armenian origin).

From the beginning, the new pope gave the impression of having a very precise concept of the pontificate and of not resigning himself to a simple role of transition, but rather of wanting fully to exercise his duties as pope, as he saw them. First, he chose an unexpected name, John. This had not been used since 1415, when a certain John XXIII, now considered an antipope, had been deposed. By this choice, as a good historian, John XXIII showed an objective and serene detachment from past events, even if they were disastrous. In his coronation speech (4 November 1958), he stated that one should not look to the pope as a head of state, a diplomat or, even less, a scholar or an organizer of collective life. To introduce himself, he used an image that was dear to him: the one in which the son of Jacob says to his brothers, “I am Joseph, your brother,” showing thus his desire to share in the human condition. This did not stop John, however, from feeling deeply his role as a father and pastor. Given the solemnity of the moment, public opinion saw in these words the dawning of a new conception of the papacy.

The first innovations took place in two directions. First, the pope normalized the life of the Roman Curia by nominating as secretary of state, a position vacant since 1944, a Domenico Tardini, his former superior and critic. He also reestablished work audiences for the officials of different sectors of the Roman Curia, thus facilitating simple and habitual relations between the pope and his co-workers. Quickly, he named several new cardinals, who renewed and rejuvenated the Sacred College. Next, he reaffirmed his role as bishop of Rome by solemnly taking possession of the Basilica of the Lateran, the cathedral church of Rome, and then by beginning a pastoral ministry, visiting places of suffering in the city (prisons and hospitals) and Roman parishes. It should be emphasized that, for centuries before this, the popes had completely ignored the fact that they were also bishops in the Church of God, even though with a primordial role. This implied a real consideration of bishops and a reevaluation of their role and that of the local churches, which were to become major participants once again in ecclesiastic life and not just the recipients of Roman decisions. John XXIII was always sensitive to everything in the Church that was an expression of communion and brotherhood, vitality, and youth. From this viewpoint, he pressed each church, ancient or new, to bring its special contributions or charisms into the universal Church.

The Italian church was the first to feel these new orientations. Having always been protected and guided by the Roman see, it was now forced to act autonomously, which did not instill a welcoming climate of understanding with the new pontiff. Basically, the positions of the Italian episcopate, very often conservative, became the result of free choice. Moreover, the pope pulled the Church and the papacy out of Italian politics, especially regarding the existing parallelism that had led to a fundamental identity between the Catholics and the Christian Democratic party. Two deep convictions guided the pope in these actions. First, history was a process of continual transformation that, in order to be understood, required a real openness and not an unchangeable a priori judgment. Second, there was a clear distinction between the political milieu and that of the faith. This is why he considered it a real temptation for bishops to “declare themselves for one fraction, or faction, over another” (13 August 1961).

From the beginning of his pontificate, John XXIII noticed the timid signs of thawing coming from the East, and he abandoned the rigid choice of the Church that had made the West, especially the United States, the defender or even incarnation of Christian civilization. To open dialogue with everyone, John XXIII wanted a Church “endeavoring to serve man as such, and not just the Catholics” (25 June 1962), and whose goal was to place the Gospel “above all opinions and parties that agitate and upset society” (13 August 1961). It was not a question of changing sides or blessing what had been previously condemned, but rather of refusing to take sides and of seeking any encounter with a sincere will.
for peace that would appear credible to all people. In the second half of October 1962, the Cuban crisis between the United States and the Soviet Union gave the pope a chance, in his message on 25 October, to speak to all heads of state without distinction. He thus helped to avert an imminent war, and he definitively confirmed the beginning of an era of openness for the Church of Rome. This was the dawn of Ostpolitik. The presence of two representatives of the patriarch of Moscow among the observers from other Christian churches during the sessions of Vatican II, the exchange of messages between Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev and the pope on Christmas 1962, and, for the first time, the publication in Pravda of portions of the pope's Christmas speech were also signs of détente. This finally manifested itself as concrete action in early February 1963, with the release of 70-year-old Bishop Slipyj of Ukraine, whose long imprisonment represented one of the main points of friction between the Vatican and Moscow. But the most remarkable event was the visit of Khrushchev's daughter and son-in-law to John XXIII on 5 March 1963. This was a moment of great tension between the pope and the Curia, who—especially Cardinal Ottaviani, then secretary of the Holy Office—opposed this meeting with all the means at its disposal. This opposition was finally expressed through a vehement campaign of criticism, with absolute silence of the Civiltà Cattolica on this subject, and by the refusal of the Secretariat of State to publish—as the pope expressly desired, in response to all the accusations that were being brought—the notes on the audience written by the only witness, the interpreter F. Koulich. The events of these final years showed the effectiveness of this embryonic Ostpolitik. The keenness of his perception of the signs of the times and historical changes remains one of the most surprising aspects of John XXIII’s personality.

Because of his diverse experience, John XXIII had a very vivid perception not only of the evils of his time, but also of the ferment of renewal active in the church. This is why he decided that the scope, seriousness, and novelty of the problems could not be handled by just one man, but instead required the attention of all the bishops of all the churches worldwide, and, through them, of all the faithful. Less than three months after his election, on 25 January 1959, the pope announced the convocation of a new general council, an initiative that he always claimed was his own personal idea and responsibility. Simultaneously, he opened a diocesan synod for Rome and began the revision of the canonical code published in 1917.

The announcement of a new council almost a century after Vatican I raised a storm of emotion and great hopes for renewal, but also opposition and resistance. First, John XXIII had to confront the widespread opinion that, after the proclamation of papal infallibility at the council of 1870, there was no reason to hold such assemblies. Moreover, many feared that the council would bring out problems and difficulties that it was preferable to ignore or to resolve in an authoritarian fashion. This pontificate was in a sense dominated by the preparation and opening of the council, which John XXIII called the “Second Vatican Council” to show that it was a “new” council and not a codicil to the preceding one. The pope intended not simply to hold an assembly similar to a modern parliament, but rather to apply an ancient form of exercise of the Church’s authority. When he perceived a need in the Church for innovation, he responded by going back to the most ancient tradition, thus linking the present with the past.

Preparations for the council were entrusted to the secretary of state, Cardinal Domenico Tardini, on the express condition that he call bishops and theologians from all over the world and from all orientations. More than 2,000 bishops sent propositions and advice. To facilitate relations with non-Christian churches, John XXIII created, in the spring of 1960, the Secretariat for Christian Unity, directed by a Jesuit, Cardinal Agostino Bea; it was to play a decisive role in promoting the ecumenical spirit. The first positive result was the active presence of about a hundred observers from non-Christian churches at the meetings of the conciliar assembly. On 11 September 1962, the night before the opening of the ecumenical meeting, John XXIII taped a radio message of great theological and historical significance. In it, the public above all heard that, in developing countries, the Church should be “a Church for all, particularly the poor.” This statement had far-reaching echoes, principally in the Latin American churches.

The most important act of John XXIII’s pontificate, one that was the most absorbing for the Catholic Church at the time, was the speech he gave at the opening of Vatican II Council. Historic research confirms that it was personally written by the pope, as shown in the manuscript of the text. It did not set a program for the council, which should be—according to the pontiff—up to the assembly to establish; rather he defined Christian behavior for the contemporary era, Christian behavior that should be governed by the needs of the aggiornamento, by the choice of an attitude of mercy and not of condemnation, and by the rejection of “prophets of doom . . . who see our time as only corruption and ruin,” from whom the pope announced he was officially disassociating himself. Moreover, the pontiff rejected a pessimistic spiritual behavior that had taken shape in vast areas of Catholicism since the French Revolution and that stopped people from seeing “the new order of human relationships” toward which the world seemed to him to be headed.

John XXIII treated the council fathers with the greatest discretion, but he followed the council’s activities on an hourly basis. He intervened directly only twice, in
order to guarantee the freedom of the fathers and respect for the will of the majority. The first time was in mid-October 1962, when he agreed to put off election of members of the conciliary COMMISSIONS so that the fathers could exchange opinions and so the elections could be held using lists prepared by the episcopates themselves and not from the alphabetical list of the 2,000 participants in the council, which would have led to domination by the Curia’s candidates. The second intervention took place after the vote of 21 November. In that vote, a majority—but not the two-thirds required by the formal rules—voted against going ahead with a discussion of a very delicate preparatory plan concerning the relationship between the Scriptures and tradition. The pope intervened because he felt that the majority view expressed was sufficient to represent truly the will of the council; and, understanding the difficulties that existed, he decided that the text should be reviewed by a mixed commission including both the members of the Commission on Doctrine and the members of the Secretariat for Unity. By acting in this way, he proved wrong those who believed that the council was only a simple formal act of solemn approval for texts drawn up by the preparatory committees dominated by the Roman Curia. He chose the longest route for the council, but the most productive. At the end of the first session (8 December 1962) one preoccupation was dominant: the future of the council. In September the pope’s physicians had diagnosed an irreversible, fast-acting cancer, and the his activities had been cut back. People wondered if it would be possible to continue in further sessions. To achieve this goal, the pope had created a commission of coordination and formulated norms for the intersession period, even setting the date for reconvening. A letter on the feast of the Epiphany 1963 to all the bishops of the world was John XXIII’s last direct intervention regarding Vatican II Council. Feeling that death was near, he entrusted to the bishops the smooth running of the council he had conceived and launched, which would remain the great work of his pontificate.

On 11 April 1963, John XXIII still had enough strength to put out the last, and also the most important, of his eight ENCYCLICALS: Paeam in terris, addressed not just to Catholics but to all people of good will. (The encyclical Mater et Magistra (5 May 1961) also was of particular importance because it approved the use of the inductive method in elaborating the social doctrine of the Church.) In Pacem in terris, two fundamental principles were proclaimed. First, it was impossible to think that “in the atomic age war may be used as an instrument of justice,” and, consequently, that there was such a thing as a just war. This was the conclusion of a theological debate that had lasted for centuries and which until now had always admitted that a just war was possible. The condemnation of any type of warfare obviously asked for the simultaneous and reciprocal reduction of existing arms and, as a result, the refusal of a peace based “upon a balance of terror.” Then, opening the theme of collaboration between peoples—and therefore also of Christians with non-Christians—he admitted that the time was ripe for “reconciliations and meetings of a practical order that yesterday were deemed inconvenient or not productive.” According to him, it was a question of distinguishing between error and the person making the error, and of not identifying false philosophical doctrines with historical, political movements generated by them. Indeed, while ideologues stick to unchangeable formulas, movements evolve. This meant the rejection of ideological barriers and the transcending of the resulting culture of the adversary.

On 22 May 1963, the pope greeted and blessed the crowd in the courtyard of St. Peter’s for the last time. On 3 June, Pentecost, the entire world followed with emotion the final agony of the octogenarian pope, who shared even his final hours fraternally with all. He had truly been a pope of transition, in the stronger sense of the word, for he had ended the Constantinian era of the Church and begun a new historical period. His pontificate, which lasted less than five years, led the Catholic church in a profound and complex renovation that saw it abandon its concept of a defended fortress in order to assume a more open and welcoming stance towards humanity on the eve of a new millennium. The task that John XXIII attempted to accomplish could not, in all likelihood, have been accomplished in one pontificate. It seems that he foresaw and prepared for, rather than accomplished, a change of direction. That is what springs forth from the pages of the extraordinary spiritual journal that John XXIII kept from 1895 until his death, which was edited after his death under the title Journal of a Soul.

Giuseppe Alberigo

See also JUDAISM; WORLD WAR II.

Bibliography

Albino Luciani was the third patriarch of Venice, from a modest, rural background, to be elected pope in a century that saw six northern Italians rise to the see of St. Peter. He was born in Canale d’Agordo in the province of Belluno. His father, a migrant laborer with socialist leanings, worked mostly in France, until he found a job as a glassmaker in Murano. His mother, a fervent Catholic, encouraged the early vocation of the young Albino, a gifted student who attended the minor seminary of Feltre, the major seminary of Belluno, and the Gregorian University in Rome, where he received a doctorate in theology with a thesis on “The origin of the soul in the thought of Rosmini.”

Ordained a priest on 7 July 1935, Luciani served as a curate in Canale d’Agordo and taught at the Technical Mining Institute. He was professor of dogmatic theology and vice rector of the seminary at Belluno in 1937. He was interested in many subjects—Scripture, patristics, morals, CANON LAW, art history—which he taught occasionally. From 1947 on, he worked in the administration of his diocese as secretary of the interdiocesan SYNOD of Feltre and Belluno in 1947, prochancellor, provicar, and finally vicar-general of Belluno. As director of the Catechetical Bureau of Belluno, he planned the year’s activities and the Eucharistic Congress held there in 1949; he collected the talks from it in a book, Catechesi in briccirole (“Catechesis, Bit by Bit”), which went into six editions in Italy and was translated into Spanish.

Fr. Luciani was made bishop of Vittorio Veneto on 15 December 1958, and JOHN XXIII ordained him in St. Peter’s on 27 December 1958. Named archbishop patriarch of Venice on 15 December 1969, he took possession of St. Mark’s cathedral on 3 February 1970, received the arch of Venice on 15 December 1969, he took possession of St. Mark’s cathedral on 3 February 1970, received Pope Paul VI there in September 1972, and was made a cardinal on 3 February 1970.

This churchman was a well-educated writer who used simple language to spread the evangelical message to the people and knew how to use anecdotes to great effect. In his Messenger of Saint Anthony, he writes letters to famous people of the past: to Jesus, of course, but also to Dickens, Dante, Péguy, Chesterton, and to a few imaginary characters like Figaro or Pinocchio. Very close to his clergy, Cardinal Luciani meditated on identity and asked the servants of Christ to imitate their Master in every way. He showed great concern for the poor, the sick, and children, and was particularly interested in his countrymen who emigrated, whom he visited in France, Germany, Portugal, Burundi, and Brazil. He gave the island of San Giorgio in Alga to the city of Venice so a center for study, research, and experimentation to safeguard the city could be founded there.

Cardinal Luciani, as vice president of the Italian Episcopal Conference from 1972 on, fought against the introduction of divorce into Italian law, dissolved the Catholic youth organizations that accepted this “reverse