

EUCHARISTIC CONCELEBRATION COMMEMORATING
POPE JOHN XXIII ON HIS MEMORIAL

HOMILY OF CARD. TARCISIO BERTONE

Altar of St Jerome, Vatican Basilica Wednesday, 11 October 2006

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/card-bertone/2006/documents/rc_seg-st_20061011_john-xxiii_en.html

Pope John XXIII's message is still extraordinarily timely today. His life, his Discourses and his actions bring us to the heart of the faith and the heart of Christian commitment.

As we know, one of Pope John's most important decisions was to convoke the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which was inaugurated on 11 October 1962 here in St Peter's Basilica.

I was present (indeed, by a fortunate circumstance, it was I who organized the distribution of the first Council Documents "sub peculiari secreto" to the Council Fathers!), and I remember how the day unfolded to its extraordinary conclusion in St Peter's Square by moonlight.

We could recall a wealth of Pope John's teachings and episodes concerning him, but today I intend to focus on several thoughts which might be useful in our personal life and spiritual renewal.

The Church, in his view, has a motherly face: her task is to keep "her arms open to receive everyone". She is a "home for one and all" that "desires to belong to everyone, and in particular she is the Church of the poor, like the village fountain", with no distinctions of race or religion.

The Church's holiness and human wisdom are expressed very clearly in what is called "The daily decalogue of Pope John XXIII":

1) Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once.

2) Only for today, I will take the greatest care of my appearance: I will dress modestly; I will not raise my voice; I will be courteous in my behaviour; I will not criticize anyone; I will not claim to improve or to discipline anyone except myself.

3) Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one.

4) Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all circumstances to be adapted to my own wishes.

5) Only for today, I will devote 10 minutes of my time to some good reading, remembering that just as food is necessary to the life of the body, so good reading is necessary to the life of the soul.

6) Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it.

7) Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.

8) Only for today, I will make a plan for myself: I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it. And I will be on guard against two evils: hastiness and indecision.

9) Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good Providence of God cares for me as no one else who exists in this world.

10) Only for today, I will have no fears. In particular, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness. Indeed, for 12 hours I can certainly do what might cause me consternation were I to believe I had to do it all my life.

To conclude: here is an all-embracing resolution: "*I want to be kind, today and always, to everyone*". In this way, we can put Pope John's hope for every Christian into practice: "Every believer in this world must be a spark of light, a core of love, life-giving leaven in the mass: and the more he is so, the more he will live, in his innermost depths, in communion with God".

