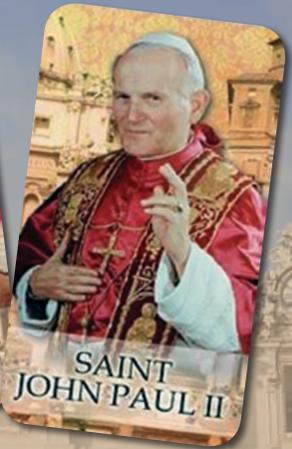
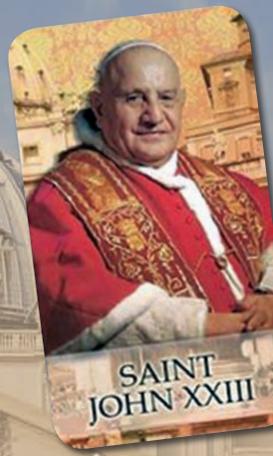


THE TWO GREAT MESSENGERS OF LOVE, PEACE AND HOPE



27 April 2014 has seen the canonization of two great Popes: John XXIII and John Paul II. It is now time to briefly reflect on the impact that these two “Messengers of Love, Peace and Hope” have for all Catholics and, indeed, for the whole world.

These Popes lived in very different times and were very different in many ways, but they were also similar in their being indefatigable promoters of love, peace and hope.

John XXIII exercised his pastoral ministry during the “Cold War” between the Soviet Bloc and the Western countries – a time characterized by the constant danger that the “Cold War” might become “hot” to the point of leading to a nuclear conflagration that would have wiped out the entire mankind. In a world gripped by fear, prejudices, and pessimism, John XXIII sowed the seeds of mutual trust and respect, cooperation, optimism and hope in better days.

John XXIII also took the bold step of convoking the Second Vatican Council, which was meant to bring about a “New Springtime” in the life of the Church.

Pope John Paul II was, likewise, a great “Messenger of Hope, Trust and Love” to the Church and the entire world. He made Vatican II bear immense fruit in so many areas, promoting openness, dialogue, cooperation, care for the poor and the weak. He galvanized the young people through the World Youth Days, and injected in the Church a “global dynamism” in preparation for and the holding of the “Great Jubilee” of the Year 2000, which ushered in the Third Millennium.

He was instrumental in the crumbling of the Soviet Bloc, and engaged in a brave and sincere dialogue not only with the other Christian denom-

inations, but also with all other faiths and even with non-believers. “A Pilgrim Pope” and “Ambassador of Peace and Goodwill” to all nations, John Paul II made the world his immense flock for which he cared with boundless generosity and fearless creativity.

Both Popes lived and witnessed to the faith they proclaimed. They were both great “dreamers,” but also great “doers” – promoters of optimism, dialogue, humility and unity. They preached unity and promoted it by focusing not on what divides, but on what unites all Christians and all decent human beings. They emphasized what brings people together, rather than what keeps them apart. In a world torn apart by selfishness, greed, pride, prejudice, vengefulness and hatred, John XXIII and John Paul II were builders of bridges – bridges of generosity, trust, appreciation, solidarity, compassion, forgiveness, faith and love. To a world often lost in the quagmire of materialism and hedonism, the two great popes were constant reminders of the truth that “not on bread alone does man live, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (*Mt 4:4*). Hence their constant encouragement to pursue higher values – the values worthy of God’s children and of the unique dignity and destiny that sets human beings above all other creatures.

And finally, what makes the two newly proclaimed saints so similar is their love for the Church – a Church that they wanted both faithful and renewed; rooted in the apostolic tradition but also open to new ideas and sensitivities; loyal to God and true to man. Two wonderful models for us to admire and imitate.

— *The MDL Editorial Team*