

# Father Martin's Pen

February 24, 2019

## Pope Paul VI

Pope Pius XII died in 1958. He was succeeded by Pope John XXIII. Cardinal Giovanni Batista Montini was raised to the level of Cardinal soon afterwards.

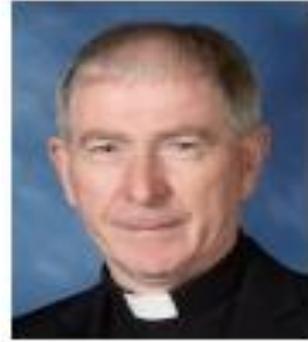
Pope John died June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1963. On June 30<sup>th</sup> Montini entered the Conclave for the election of the new Pope and he himself was chosen taking the name of Paul VI.

He took over guidance of Vatican II until it closed in 1965. He came under pressure not to reconvene the Council by conservative Cardinals, but insisted on doing so.

In the implementation of the Council, an assistant of Paul VI had his tires slashed showing signs of severe resistance to the changes. Some accused him of being too cautious, indeed a comparison with Hamlet was made. (Hamlet was famous for his irresolution "to be or not to be that is the question.") Pope Paul redesigned papal dress, moving from heavy fabric to simpler and lighter materials. Can you recall the white flat brimmed hat he used to wear?

He was born in Brescia Italy on September 26<sup>th</sup> 1897. Early in life he was plagued by poor health even studying for the priesthood at home. After ordination in 1920 he joined the Vatican Secretariat of State and became a Diplomat.

In 1952 he was offered the red hat of a Cardinal but declined it. Following that it seemed as if he was exiled to Milan as Archbishop there in 1954. As Pope he gave the introduction to the Vatican II documents and Breviary/ Divine Office for Clergy and Religious.



In his writings his themes were atheism, isolation of youth, globalization, the dignity of the human person, the need to evangelize, love for the Eucharist and to beware of the dangers of the age. He worried about the church "the smoke of Satan entering the temple of God".

His most famous document was Humanae Vitae (Of Human Life) 1967 on the topic of contraception. He was widely criticized for his stance, but in the years since, I suggest that he has been vindicated.

In 1964 he made a trip to the Holy Land and met Athenagoras Patriarch of Constantinople thereby bridging a gap of separation of 500 years. In the following years he visited India, Fatima, Turkey, Columbia, Africa, the Philippines and Australia. 1965 was the year he came to the US and spoke to the United Nations in New York.

He died on August 6<sup>th</sup> 1978, was beatified in 2014 and declared a Saint on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2018 which is 40 years since his death.

Saint Paul VI pray for us.

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