

The Decalogue of Pope St. John XXIII: Daily resolutions for your kids (and you!)

Among the many legacies of [Pope St. John XXIII](#) is a joy-filled, practical spirituality. A lifelong diarist, he often used his personal writings (collected in [Journey of a Soul](#)) to reflect on his progress in the spiritual life, and to set goals for himself.

One of those writings has come to be known as “The Daily Decalogue of Pope John XXIII.” The Decalogue lists ten spiritual goals “only for today,” and it’s just as suitable for kids (and parents!) today as it was for the pope. If you want to try working it into your morning family prayer routine, here it is:

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.

In a [2006 homily](#), Cardinal Bertone beautifully summed up his reflection on the Daily Decalogue in this way:

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."

Keep in mind that "Good Pope John" developed these goals in response to his deep reflection on his own life and spiritual needs. If you pray the Daily Examen with your kids, you might challenge them to develop their own "Daily Decalogue."

Pope St. John XXIII fast facts

Name: Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli

Date of birth: Nov. 25, 1881

Birthplace: Sotto il Monte, a tiny village in Bergamo, Italy
Parents: Giovanni Battista Roncalli and Marianna Giulia Mazzolla, tenant farmers
Died: June 3, 1963
Feast Day: October 11

Fun facts

- Smiling came naturally to him
- By all accounts he was a happy baby and a sweet-tempered child
- Fourth of 13 children
 Joined seminary at age 12
- Served as ordinary soldier 1901-02
- First pope to take name "John" in more than 500 years
- Called "Good Pope John"
- Known for calling together [Vatican II](#)
- Raised pay for Vatican employees
- First pope since 1870 to make pastoral visit to Rome diocese
- U.S. President John F. Kennedy said *Pacem in Terris* made him proud to be Catholic
- Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize
- Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson attended his funeral
- Declared blessed by Pope John Paul II on Sept. 3, 2000.
- Declared a saint with Pope John Paul II on April 27, 2014.