



# **Greatest Catholics of the 20th Century: The Lives and Legacies of Blessed Pope John Paul II, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Padre Pio**

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures of John Paul II, Mother Teresa, Padre Pio, and important people, places and events in their lives.

\*Includes Bibliographies of each for further reading.

\*Discusses their lives, legacies, and controversial criticisms.

The 20th century had no shortage of influential leaders, both good and bad. But while dictators, generals, and presidents came and went, the last quarter of the 20th century could rely on one thing: the papacy of Blessed Pope John Paul II.

In becoming one of Catholicism's most popular leaders, and one shortly destined for sainthood, John Paul II indeed became one of the most famous and influential men of the 20th century. The first pope in centuries to not hail from Italy, John Paul II was responsible for a global outreach of epic proportions that brought him to over 100 countries, helped end communism in Europe, and brought people of different faiths closer together than ever before. It's often said that nobody in history has been seen and viewed in person by more people, an amazing feat for a man of humble origins born in Poland before World War II, a place that continues to especially venerate him today.

For the last few decades of the 20th century, the Catholic Church was blessed to have two of its most influential leaders guiding the Church and spreading its faith and message at the same time. Pope John Paul II made history by becoming the first non-Italian pope in several centuries, guiding the church for over 25 years. But while he led the Church, a remarkable woman born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu (1910-1997) became one of the Church's greatest missionaries and humanitarians. She would come to be known to the world as Mother Teresa.

It would be nearly impossible to overstate the impact Mother Teresa had on the Catholic Church and the world during her life. In addition to founding the Missionaries of Charity, a sisterhood of Roman Catholics that now operates in over 125 countries and has over 4,500 sisters, Mother Teresa spent nearly half a century spreading her religious congregation across the world, while using it to help the sick and poor. Through her direct participation and planning, she opened hundreds of missions, providing essential services that ranged from hospices to schools, and from orphanages to soup kitchens. Her work won her a Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, and Mother Teresa was consistently ranked among the world's most admired people for the last 20 years of her life. Shortly after her death in 1997, the beatification process for Mother Teresa was begun, and in 2003 she was beatified as Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Francesco Forgione might be a name lost to history, but over the course of his life, he became one of Catholicism's most well known figures during the 20th century as Padre Pio. It was a remarkable path for a man who was legendarily afflicted by a series of illnesses and most famously bore the stigmata, very noticeably bearing what appeared to be the crucifixion wounds Jesus's hands suffered. Padre Pio was also known for his eccentricities, including unique forms of deep meditation and experiencing visions. Not surprisingly, despite all the spiritual work Padre Pio did, he was the subject of substantial controversy during his own life. And though he has been venerated as Saint Pio of Pietrelcina by the Catholic Church, critics have all but called him a fraud.

Greatest Catholics of the 20th Century details the remarkable lives and legacies of these great Catholics,

while also humanizing their struggles and discussing the controversies and criticisms that they were subjected to. Along with pictures of John Paul II, Mother Teresa, Padre Pio, and other important people, places and events in their lives, you will learn about these great Catholics like you never have before, in no time at all.

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