

Pope John XXIII

The statue of Blessed Pope John XXIII stands in the west niche of the church. How appropriate that this particular Pope was chosen as the subject of this statue.

Pope John XXIII had the vision to call the Second Vatican Council in 1962, calling the church to renewal, to consider its role in the modern world. When asked why, the story goes, Pope John moved to the window, opened the sash and said “I want to throw open the windows of the Church, so that we can see out and the people can see in.”

“Aggiornamento”, Italian for “updating”, was the rallying cry of the Council, which produced 16 documents. The first document was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, known by its Latin title “Sacrosanctum Concilium”, which comes from the first words of the document - “this sacred Council.” On the statue, you’ll see a book with this inscription in Pope John’s left hand.

Pope John XXIII had the foresight to see the Liturgy as “the source and summit” of our faith, so it was fitting that this was the first document to spring from the Council. One of the hallmarks of that document was that we are all called to full, conscious and active participation in the Liturgy. May the statue serve as a reminder of our role in the liturgy every time we come to mass.

He was known affectionately as “Good Pope John”, and is remembered for his personal warmth, good humor and welcoming spirit. The statue captures this in the right hand, extended in welcome. May we follow his example and offer a warm welcome to everyone who comes to celebrate with us at St. Thomas More.

John was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2000, which gives him the title “Blessed”. Beatification is a step toward sainthood. The feast day for Blessed Pope John XXIII is October 11, the day he opened the Council.

The light colored wood of the statue is the same as that used for the corpus that appears to be rising up from our cross. It was designed and carved by the same team who worked on that piece and on the statue of the Holy Family in the east niche.

We thank designing artist Roger Hogan and wood carver Tim Bergen for this latest “Aggiornamento” of our worship space.

Steve Raml
Director of Liturgy & Music

