

Two beloved modern popes — John Paul II and John XXIII — are to be [canonized at the Vatican next Sunday](#)

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April) by Pope Francis.

John XXIII was elected Pope on 28 October 1958 following the death of Pope Pius XII. His pontificate lasted five years and is remembered as gentle yet enterprising and courageous. His tenure was characterised by visits to the imprisoned and the sick. During his term he brought together the Roman Synod, established the Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law and summoned the Second Vatican Council. Pope Francis bypassed the second miracle typically required for canonization for John XXIII, declaring that he deserved the honour for having convened the Second Vatican Council.

Pope Francis, recalled his predecessor as being holy, patient and a man of courage, especially by calling the Second Vatican Council.

"He was a man who let himself be guided by the Lord," Pope Francis has said.

But the Italian Pope John was also guided by his cheerful disposition, his simple, peasant background and tongue-in-cheek, wisecracking Italian culture.

[Click here for some of his quips and quotes](#)

John Paul II was elected Pope on 16 October 1978. Many remember this Pope as a warm and charismatic personality who brought positive changes to the Catholic Church. During his term he made over 100 pastoral visits outside Italy and numerous ones within Italy. He held more meetings with leaders of nations and members of other churches than any of his predecessors.

John Paul II is remembered for helping to bring down communism and for inspiring a generation of Catholics. Many now call him "The Great," only the fourth pope to have earned the moniker.

And while much of the crowd's focus will be on the Polish pope's remarkable achievements, Pope John XXIII — known as the "Good Pope" for his kind-hearted nature — was no less

revolutionary.

Nineteen heads of state and 24 prime ministers are expected to attend the canonization ceremony in St. Peter's Square.

In line with Pope Francis' no-frills papacy, organizers said the canonizations would be a much more sober affair than the three-day extravaganza that marked John Paul's beatification, the last step before sainthood, in 2011.

In his 2005 testimony to officials responsible for the sainthood cause, Francis, then Jorge Mario Bergoglio, archbishop of Buenos Aires, praised John Paul's approach to death as "heroic": John Paul considered stepping down as pope but chose to serve until his death.

"John Paul II taught us, by hiding nothing from others, to suffer and to die, and that, in my opinion, is heroic," said Bergoglio at the time.

Retired Pope Benedict XVI is expected to attend the canonization of Blesseds John XXIII and John Paul II April 27, said Msgr. Liberio Andreatta, head of the Vatican-related pilgrim agency, Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi.

"Never before have there been two popes canonized and two popes living," he said at a news conference in Rome April 23 to discuss final plans and preparations for pilgrims. "You can imagine their emotions!"

However, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, continued to caution journalists, saying that while the retired pope certainly had been invited to the Mass, "we'll have to wait and see" if, at 87 years old, he feels up to attending.