

**Movimiento internacional
Somos-Iglesia**

**Movimento Internacional
Nós somos Igreja**

**Movimento Internazionale
Noi siamo Chiesa**

**Mouvement international
Nous sommes Eglise**

**Internationale Bewegung
Wir sind Kirche**

International Movement We are Church

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Press release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

We are Church recalls Pope John XXIII 50 years after his election

Today marks the fiftieth anniversary of the election of Card. Angelo Roncalli as Bishop of Rome. For the whole of Christendom, and especially for Catholics around the world, that day was the work of the Holy Spirit and marked a new course in the history of Christianity.

The *International Movement We Are Church*, joins with other reform movements within the Catholic Church in participating with particular joy on this significant anniversary and recalls the major points of the pontificate of John XXIII:

- The event of Vatican II Council allowed the views and hopes of the grassroots membership of the Church to be heard. These points of view played a hidden leadership role in the renewal of the Church, an experience unique in church history.
- The Church was asked to change its traditional viewpoint, especially in underdeveloped countries, and to become the Church of all and particularly of the poor. "It is the miseries of society that cry vengeance before God... and it is the duty of every Christian person to consider the needs of others "(11 September 1962 Radio Broadcast). These words put the question of misery and injustice to the whole world and at the same time stressed the independence and liberation of all persons.
- Christians were invited to look with hope to the great problems of humanity: exchanging a culture of suspicion with the expectation of a "new order of human relations". No longer would there be a Church of condemnation but a Church that would meet the needs of today, showing the validity of its doctrine, using "the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity". (Opening speech to the Council 1962, October 11). This Church would serve all, looking as it did so for the "signs of the times ". It was to follow closely the substance of the Gospel, changing where necessary the style of its wording, to bring out the oldest spiritual meanings as intended by the earliest Fathers of the Church.
- The authority in the Church should be as in the Gospel: not through power but by service. There would be a model of true brotherhood by the papacy, enhancing the role of local churches, giving new vigour to the clergy and those in consecrated life. No longer would all mission be centralized in the Vatican.
- It was necessary to open the Catholic Church to other Christian Churches. These Churches were invited to the Council where Pope John XXIII presented himself as simple *episcopus ecclesiae dei*, suggesting the search for what unites Christians rather than what divides and thus initiating the basis for an ecumenical engagement of the People of God, that still

continues, in spite of difficulty, today.

In this anniversary, members and sympathizers of *We Are Church* gather in prayer in memory of the great Pope. They hope, they even expect, a burst of the Spirit at this time....another "little Springtime". Could it be possible that the Church will really allow itself to be guided by the proposals of the Council, abandoning fears and pettiness, setting its spirit free once again ?

Hope does spring eternal. Our Catholic Church can be once more renewed in harmony and unity in diversity among all other Christian Churches, proclaiming the Gospel for our world today.

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