

From Fr. Bob Grattaroti – July 22, 2018

Dear Parishioners and Friends:

I am deeply grateful for the overwhelming kindness, love and generosity poured out upon me as you helped me celebrate my 82 years of life. Thank you ever so much. It's so interesting and wonderful to think that the more birthdays one has, the longer one lives! Praise God for His many gifts and blessings. I was so inspired by what I read recently on the life of Pope St. John XXIII which I shared at my birthday gathering that I want to share it again here. Pope St. John was the Pope of my years of priestly formation in the seminary. Consider the following message which is from his Biography: *The Heart and Mind of John XXIII* by his secretary Loris Capovilla as he was to become the Archbishop of Venice, before being elected Pope:

I want to talk to you with the greatest frankness. You have waited for me impatiently. Things have been said and written about me that greatly exaggerate my merits. I humbly introduce myself. As does any other man on earth, I come from a family and from a particular place. I have been blessed with good physical health, with sufficient good sense to see into things quickly and clearly and with an inclination to love people, which keeps me faithful to the law of the Gospel and respectful of my own rights and those of others; it prevents me from doing evil to anybody; it encourages me to do good to all. I come from a modest family and was educated in a happy and blessed poverty which has few demands, a poverty which fosters the truest and highest virtues and prepares one for the great adventure of life. Providence took me away from my native village and lead me down the roads of East and West; it permitted me to approach people of different religions and ideologies, to observe grave and menacing social problems. Yet Providence allowed me to maintain a calm and balanced judgment. I have always been more concerned with what unites than with what separates and causes differences keeping firm my belief in the principles of the Catholic Credo and of natural law.

I have sought to make these sentiments mine in the course of the years and can only hope that my presence here has been of benefit to some, if not all.

Again, my deepest thanks for your love as manifested in so many ways. -Fr. Bob Grattaroti