



- 0. Turkey - Story Preface
- 1. Early Life
- 2. School
- 3. The Seminary
- 4. The War
- 5. Diplomat and Peacemaker

**6. Turkey**

- 7. France
- 8. Venice
- 9. The Vote
- 10. Pope John XXIII

Archbishop Roncalli had done so well in Bulgaria, he was given an even more important task in the non-Catholic countries of Turkey and Greece. He set up a new residence in Istanbul, Turkey, a country whose leader was against any religion at all. He chose not to wear religious dress in public there because he wanted government officials to feel he respected them and was willing to cooperate with their authority.

He wanted the small community of Catholics in Turkey to know that they were important to the Catholic church. He studied their culture and then ordered that all Masses in Turkey be celebrated in Turkish rather than Latin that most people did not understand. He gave gala dinners for Turkish officials and made personal friends of political enemies. He refused to discuss politics or religion at any of these dinners.

However, he did speak out strongly against the brutal Nazi government and its leader, Adolf Hitler. Turkey had remained a neutral country until almost the end of the war. But then, a shipload of thousands of Jewish children fleeing the prison camps in Germany arrived in Turkey, the government refused to accept them for fear of antagonizing Germany. Archbishop Roncalli hurriedly met with Turkish officials and persuaded them to send the boat to Palestine (now Israel) where the children would be safe, rather than returning them to Germany where only death awaited them.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Turkey-Pope-John-XXIII-The-Man-Who-Loved-All-People>

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**Media Stream**



Legacy of a Visionary

Thoughts from a Catholic,

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