

Card. Eduardo Pironio was declared by Pope Francis venerable

18.2.2022

Reflection by Rafael Corso

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Dear brothers and sisters,

The Argentine Catholic Action (ACA) and the International Forum of Catholic Action (IFCA), received with deep joy the declaration of Venerable of the beloved Cardinal Eduardo Francisco Pironio, which Pope Francis made on 18 February.

Just 24 years after his departure to the Father's house, the cause for the canonisation of Cardinal Pironio has taken a new step forward with the recognition of his heroic virtues. This recognition awakens gratitude, happiness and thanksgiving for a Pastor who deeply loved his faithful people.

Eduardo Francisco was born on 3/12/1920 in the town of 9 de Julio, Province of Buenos Aires. He was the twenty-second child of an Italian immigrant couple in Argentina, ordained priest on 5/12/1943, consecrated bishop on 31/05/1964 and made cardinal on 24/5/1976. Vicar of the diocese of Mercedes, Rector of the Seminary of Villa Devoto, Auxiliary Bishop of La Plata, General Assistant of the ACA and Bishop of Mar del Plata. He was secretary general and president of CELAM and in Rome he was Prefect of the Congregation for Consecrated Life (1974 - 1984) and President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity (1984 -1996). He lived through the Second Vatican Council and the conclaves from 1978. He deeply loved young people and was the driving force behind World Youth Day.

As President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, he was a precursor of the creation of the FIAC and his deepest inspirer, supporting the commitment of numerous members of the body in the creation of an international space for meeting, accompaniment, reflection and promotion of Catholic Action to which he loved so much and to which he devoted so much effort in his pastoral life.

In November 2021, on the 30th anniversary of the creation of the FIAC, Pope Francis told us "Pironio was a man of deep roots, of memory anchored in the dynamism of history as a Kairos, a strong time of salvation, a time of work, trial, purification and hope. He loved Catholic Action and believed in its lay missionary vocation. The Church can bear witness that Catholic Action opened new perspectives in the field of the responsibility of the laity in Evangelization. Many, evangelized and formed by Catholic Action, were living witnesses to truth, profoundness and to the Gospel in civil areas, very often hostile to faith. Catholic Action lay saints and blessed are a wealth for the Church. Those were "the saints next door" in so many communities."

His deep gaze, his smiling and serene face, his hopeful words, his life witness, his evangelical joy, his young spirit and his permanent call to live the Church as a mystery of missionary communion clinging to the love of Mary, were and are an impulse for all the members of Catholic Action in the world to live with renewed enthusiasm our fraternal service and to proclaim as he did: Fiat and Magnificat, for the greater glory of God and the good of all men and women.

United in heart and soul, we pray to the Father for the speedy beatification of our faithful friend, the Venerable Cardinal Eduardo Francisco Pironio.