

Reflection Saturday Week 20 St Pius X 2021

Pope St Pius X (1835 – 1914) was born in Riese, near Venice, one of ten children of a very poor family. He was ordained priest aged 23. He was successively bishop of Mantua and of Venice, and was elected Pope, against his wishes, in 1903. As Pope he sought to *“restore all things in Christ.”* He insisted on the separation of Church and State, and banned the formation of political associations that claimed exclusive religious sanction for their political programme, whether of the Left or Right. He revised the code of Canon Law, founded an institute for scriptural studies, and initiated the revision of the Latin translation of the Bible (the Vulgate) and the reform of the liturgy. He lived in great poverty even when he was Pope, and preached sermons every Sunday in the courtyards of the Vatican, to any who would listen. In his simplicity and goodness of heart, he performed miracles even during his life, and the call for his canonization started immediately after his death, on 20th August 1914, broken-hearted at the outbreak of the First World War.

Pope Francis is seen as a pioneer in term of his service of the Church, of us. Not everyone is happy with his decisions and proposals and actively oppose him. St Pius X was certainly a pioneer in his day as the brief outline of his life suggests. He, too, would have faced opposition in his day but we are truly grateful today for the reforms he implemented. He lived, as St Paul says in his letter to the Thessalonians, in total service of his people and as Jesus asked, out of love and a desire to feed us, the people, with the grace, goodness and power of the word of God, of Jesus Christ. Let us pray that St Pius X will support Pope Francis in his desire to serve us with the love and joy of Jesus Christ.