

Reflection Monday Week 20 St Pius X 2023

Pope St Pius X (1835) was born in Riese, near Venice, one of ten children of a very poor family. He was ordained a 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 campaigned for the freedom of the Church from state control, notably in Poland where Russian Orthodox authorities were oppressing Catholics. He barred the clergy from the temporal administration of social organizations, often a cause of grave difficulties, and banned the formation of political associations claiming 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 as the Pope and preached sermons every Sunday to any who would listen. In his simplicity and goodness of heart, he performed miracles even when he was alive, and the clamour for his canonization started immediately after his death, on 20th August 1914, broken-hearted at the outbreak of the First World War.

Be encouraged by his words:

- *Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to Heaven. There are others: innocence, but that is for little children; penance, but we are afraid of it; generous endurance of trials of life, but, when they come, we weep and ask to be freed from them. The surest, easiest, shortest way is the Eucharist.*
- *Let the storm rage and the sky darken - not for that shall we be dismayed. If we trust as we should in Mary, we shall recognize in her, the Virgin Most Powerful "who with her virginal foot crushed the head of the serpent.*