

in Rome in 1905, became an important means of spreading the new Eucharistic piety.

Pius X devoted considerable energy to the reform of the liturgy. He had a lifelong interest in sacred music and encouraged the use of Gregorian Chant in every parish. However, he made it clear that he thought the attempt to replace all other forms of Church music with Gregorian Chant was not practical or even desirable. He encouraged the use of modern compositions in the liturgy, as long as the latter lived up to the standards of dignity, beauty, and universal appeal. Pope Pius also revised the Divine Office, the daily prayer of the Church.

Perhaps the most famous crisis of the papacy of Pius X was that of Modernism. Pius X defined this term as a very insidious heresy or set of heresies that denied the supernatural origin of the Christian religion, placing the origin of all religious concepts in a purely subjective experience. As a consequence, the modernists questioned the possibility that immutable truths can be found in either the Scriptures or Church dogma... In his great encyclical *Pascendi Domini Gregis*, Pius X characterizes the attitude of the Modernists as follows: "For in the same way as the Church is a vital emanation of the collectivity of consciences, so too authority emanates vitally from the Church itself. Authority, therefore, like the Church, has its origins in the religious conscience, and that being so, is subject to it. Should it disown this dependence it becomes tyranny."

Pius X was deeply distressed by the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914. About a month after the war started the Pope came down with influenza. Unable to fight the infection, he died peacefully in August 20, 1914. In his will he wrote: "I was born poor, I lived poor, I die poor." He was beatified on June 3, 1951, and canonized on May 29, 1954. *(excerpted from: www.consideringpiusx.com)



Incorrupt body of Saint Pius X located at side altar in the Vatican.

Saint Pius X

Feast Day: September 3



QUOTE:

Describing Pius X, a historian wrote that he was

"a man of God who knew the unhappiness of the world and the hardships of life, and in the greatness of his heart wanted to comfort everyone."

Pope Pius X

*Pope Pius X was born Giuseppe Sarto in the village of Riese in the province of Treviso near Venice, one of eight children in a poor family. His father was a cobbler by trade, and also served as the village postmaster. Giuseppe attended parochial school in Riese, and his pastor obtained for him a scholarship to a high school in the larger town of Castelfranco, two miles away. While in high school, Giuseppe became convinced that he had a vocation to the priesthood, but because of his family's poverty he saw little hope of realizing it. Again his parish priest came to the rescue, arranging a scholarship for Giuseppe at the seminary in Padua. He was ordained a priest at the cathedral in Castelfranco in 1858.

As a young priest, Father Sarto devoted his energies to the poor in a number of small parishes. In Italy at that time many people participated in Catholic devotions without a clear understanding of the teaching behind them. Both as a parish priest, and later as Pope, Father Sarto set about trying to remedy this situation. He started night schools to increase literacy among adults, and he sponsored the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) to teach the catechism to the young. He had a great love of Gregorian Chant, and he found it possible to train choirs of uneducated villagers to reach a high degree of proficiency in this sacred music.

In 1884, Father Sarto was appointed bishop of Mantua by Pope Leo XIII. He found the diocese in a deplorable state. The hostility of the secularist Italian government imposed heavy financial and administrative burdens on the Church. The response on the part of many of the clergy and faithful was an increase in laxity and indifference. Seminarians were few, and a number of seminary professors and other priests in the diocese were spreading unorthodox teachings.

Bishop Sarto set about renewing the diocese of Mantua, starting first with the seminary. Involving himself personally in the training of seminarians, he rooted out false teaching and moral laxity. In order to nourish the people of the diocese with authentic Catholic teaching he worked to establish the CCD in every parish; and the

bishop himself often taught catechism classes on his pastoral visits.

In 1893, Giuseppe Sarto was appointed a Cardinal and Patriarch of Venice, where he continued the same reforms as at Mantua. When Pope Leo XIII died in 1903, Cardinal Sarto was elected Pope and chose the name Pius X. In his short reign as pope (1903-1914), Pius X had an impact on the lives of ordinary Catholics which was greater than that of almost all of his predecessors. For Pius X instigated a revolution in the practice of Catholics with regard to the central act of Christian worship, the Eucharist.

For many centuries, starting in medieval times, the average Catholic had received communion once a year at Easter time, and occasionally at a few major feasts. This practice of infrequent communion by the laity, which perhaps had its origin in an exaggerated sense of unworthiness, had a number of distressing consequences. For one thing, all too many people in Catholic countries came to believe that they were free to commit mortal sins at will, with no consequences, as long as they confessed and received communion at Easter each year - and (with luck) were able to receive a visit from a priest shortly before dying. The Council of Trent in the 16th Century tried to change things by urging more frequent communion; but old habits were entrenched, and by and large the Council's exhortation fell on deaf ears.

Pius X has been called the Pope of the Eucharist, and he more than any other person was responsible for changing the Eucharistic practices of Catholics. By lowering the age of First Communion to seven years, instead of 12 - 14 as had been the previous custom, Pius X sought to inculcate a devotion to the Eucharist and foster the practice of frequent communion. He urged frequent communion for all the faithful, and due to his influence Eucharistic practices changed dramatically over the first half of the 20th Century; as a result practicing Catholics began to receive the Eucharist weekly or even daily. Eucharistic congresses, starting with the one held