



# Pope Pius X

[Saints:](#) Pius X

Pius X (1835–1914), [pope](#). Born at [Riese](#) (Venetia) of a poor family, he was ordained priest in 1858 and became archpriest of [Salzano](#) in 1867. In 1875 he became a [canon](#) of [Treviso](#), chancellor of the diocese, and spiritual director of the seminary; in 1884 bishop of [Mantua](#), and in 1893 patriarch of [Venice](#) and cardinal. At the [conclave](#) of 1903 he was elected pope in succession to Leo XIII: he took as his motto 'To restore all things in Christ' (Eph. 1: 10). In contrast to some of his predecessors, he was both a peasant and a pastoral pope.

Many of his important and far-reaching achievements realized this ideal: the encouragement of frequent communion and the admission to it of children from the age of about seven, the reform of Church music with the encouragement of [Gregorian chant](#) and (to a lesser degree) classical polyphony, the reform of Canon Law (promulgated by his successor [Benedict XV](#)), and the reorganization of the Roman Congregations. In a wider field he redirected and reinspired Catholic Action, giving it a deeper base than a merely socio-political one. In the field of Christian doctrine he condemned the error of Modernism in the [encyclical](#) *Pascendi* and the decree *Lamentabili*: regrettably this was the occasion for reactionary zealots to [impugn](#) the orthodoxy of a number of eminent Catholic scholars; it took years to recover from this crisis. In the field of Church-State relations in France, Pius sacrificed ecclesiastical property for the sake of independence from state control, asking the clergy and faithful for considerable material sacrifices for this purpose. Also in France he condemned the extremes of the 'liberal' movement called the *Sillon* and the extremes of right-wing political thought in the *Action Française* organization. It was perhaps unfortunate that the latter condemnation was not made public until some years after Pius' death.

He lived long enough to see his tireless efforts to avert a World War frustrated and he died on 20 August 1914 with a reputation for miracles, simplicity, and poverty, having written in his will 'I was born poor, I have lived poor, and I wish to die poor'. Certain aspects of wealth and ceremony in the [Vatican](#) were profoundly distasteful to him. There was a popular outcry in [favour](#) of his [canonization](#) immediately he died; but he was in fact canonized by Pius XII in 1954. Feast: formerly 3 September, now 21 August.

## Bibliography

Click [here](#) for a list of abbreviations used in this bibliography.

- R. Merry del Val, *Memories of Pope Pius X* (1939); R. Bazin, *Pie X* (1928; Eng. tr. also 1928); H. Dal-Gal, *St. Pius the Tenth* (1954); O.D.P., pp. 313–14. Lives by D. Agasso (1985) and G. Romanto (1992). E. Duffy, *Saints and Sinners* (1997), pp. 245–53

[Biography:](#) Pius X

[Top](#)

*Pius X (1835-1914) was pope from 1903 to 1914. He is best remembered for his liturgical and canonical reforms rather than for any contribution to world peace or Church unity.*

Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto, who became Pius X, was born at Riese, Trieste Province, Italy, on June 2, 1835. His parents were poor. He was trained for the [priesthood](#) at

[Padua](#) and became a parish priest in Venice, where he stayed until 1875, when he became canon at Treviso Cathedral and superior of Treviso Seminary. Becoming bishop of Mantua in 1884, he was made a cardinal by Leo XIII in 1893. Three days later Leo made him patriarch of Venice. He was elected pope on Aug. 4, 1903.

In his policies Pius X reverted to the main lines of Pius IX, forgoing the social reforms and political intent which had characterized Leo's [pontificate](#). Pius X set out to develop the spiritual qualities of priests and people and to ensure that modern scientific theories and methodology made no inroads into the faith of his Church. Here he showed a complete and [dogmatic](#) intransigence. He seized the occasion for action when a group of Catholic Bible scholars applied the latest scientific data to the Bible and produced certain conclusions. Pius X took action chiefly in the form of an [encyclical](#) letter, *Pascendi*, and in a decree, *Lamentabili* (both issued in September 1907).

In the letter Pius X attacked what has been called modernism, condemning 65 propositions which according to Pius undermined the traditional [dogma](#) of Christianity. Modernism, in essence, tended to [renounce](#) certain traditional dogmas for the sake of accommodating certain modern scientific theories. It represented a "modernizing" attempt, and hence its name. The letter of Pius had [untold](#) effects on both the faith of individuals and the intellectual life of the Church as well as on the whole approach of the Church to modern man. Many left the Church or were excommunicated. Research and intellectual inquiry were stifled for well over 40 years until the reign of Pius XII.

The attitude of Pius X made the Church unattractive to many outside it, and it cut off Church institutions from any active participation in the intellectual life of biblical scholars. Pius imposed the annual renewal of an oath by all Roman Catholic seminary professors and academicians that they reject the 65 propositions, or formulations, of modernism, thus effectively hampering the inner development of Roman Catholic philosophy and theology. Pius X backed up this decree and letter by relegating a whole series of books to the Index of Forbidden Books and by imposing a rigorous control over the Pontifical Biblical Commission, so that all professors and students of Bible matters were under surveillance and control.

Pius X instituted a reaction against the Christian Democrats, the Catholic party in Italy. He objected to any Catholic in Italy or elsewhere conducting a social or political life independently of the Church hierarchy. He condemned popular Catholic parties in Italy and France, including Charles Maurras's Action Française. In this matter Pius carried Leo XIII's political [paternalism](#) to an extreme and rejected democratic ideals. In pursuance of this policy a break with the French government was inevitable because of the secularizing philosophy of that government and the law of 1905 separating Church and state in France. Tension between Russia and the Vatican grew over Poland. Pius had [uneasy](#) relations with Germany, Austria, and the United States for the same reasons.

As a Church reformer, Pius X was more successful. He reformed the teaching of [catechism](#) and the education and preaching of priests. He promoted [reverence](#) for the Eucharist and various other liturgical reforms. He initiated a rewriting of the Church Code of Canon Law, and he modernized the Curia, or central administration of the Roman Church.

Perhaps one of Pius's greatest achievements was the improved condition of Vatican relations with the Italian state. Pius ceased labeling the state as a [usurper](#) of papal possessions, and by [abstention](#) from polemics he reached a [modus vivendi](#) with the state in which neither side admitted wrong or accused the other of doing wrong. A more realistic view of the facts came to be held on both sides. The fear of socialism also seemed to draw liberals and conservatives together on the political scene, and gradually Italian Catholics were allowed to participate in political life. Pius laid down seven conditions under which a Catholic might vote for political candidates. These

were summarized in the so-called Gentilioni Pact of 1913. Pius X's moral attitude was again clearly manifested in his refusal to approve of the Austrian and German cause at the outbreak of World War I and in his [denunciation](#) of all [recourse](#) to violence as a means of settling disputes. Pius, who died on Aug. 20, 1914, was declared a saint by Pius XII in 1954.

#### Further Reading

Biographical works on Pius X include Katherine Burton, *The Great Mantle* (1950); M.G. Dal-Gal, *Pius X: Life Story of the Beatus* (1954); Francis A. Forbes, *Pope St. Pius X* (1954); and V.A. Yzermans, *All Things in Christ* (1954). For background see A.R. Vidler, *The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church* (1934).

#### Additional Sources

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#### [Britannica Concise Encyclopedia](#): Saint Pius X

[Top](#)

(born June 2, 1835, Riese, Venetia, Austrian Empire — died Aug. 20, 1914, Rome, Italy; canonized May 29, 1954; feast day August 21) Pope (1903 – 14). Born in the Italian region of Venetia, he became bishop of Mantua in 1884 and patriarch of Venice in 1893. He was elected pope in 1903 and soon became known both for his piety and for his staunch religious and political conservatism. Pius suppressed the Catholic intellectual movement known as Modernism and opposed the political movement for social reform known as [Christian Democracy](#). He worked to organize the laity for collaboration in the church's apostolic work, and he reformed the Catholic liturgy. His decision to systematize canon law led to the publication of the new code in 1917, which became effective in 1918.

For more information on [Saint Pius X](#), visit [Britannica.com](#).

#### [Columbia Encyclopedia](#): Saint Pius X

Pius X, Saint, 1835–1914, pope (1903–14), an Italian named Giuseppe Sarto, b. [near Treviso](#); successor of Leo XIII and predecessor of Benedict XV. Ordained in 1858, he became bishop of Mantua (1884), a cardinal (1893), and patriarch of Venice (1893). Soon after his accession to the Holy See he found himself in major conflict with the French government over the latter's regulation of church affairs. The government finally decreed (1905) the separation of church and state and sequestered church property. Pius was more conciliatory toward the Italian government, relaxing the church's strictures on participation by Roman Catholics in political life. In the decree *Lamentabili* (1907) and the encyclical *Pascendi* (1907), Pius condemned religious [modernism](#), and disciplinary measures were taken to stamp out what he called the "synthesis of all heresies." The pope set up a commission to recodify the canon law; he encouraged the use of plainsong; he set up the new Roman breviary as the norm for the whole church; he made the Roman congregations more efficient; he set up a commission to translate the Bible anew; and he regularized the position of the hierarchies in many countries. Known for his interest in the poor, he was widely venerated during his lifetime. He was canonized (1954) by Pius XII. Feast: Sept. 3.

#### Bibliography

See *All Things in Christ: Encyclicals and Selected Documents of Saint Pius X* (ed. by V. A. Yzermans, 1954); biographies by M. G. Dal-Gal (tr. 1954), L. von Matt and N. Vian (tr. 1955, repr. 1963), and J. O. Smit (tr. 1965).

[Wikipedia: Pope Pius X](#)

## Saint Pius X

[Top](#)



**Papacy began** [August 4, 1903](#)

**Papacy ended** [August 20, 1914](#)

**Predecessor** [Leo XIII](#)

**Successor** [Benedict XV](#)

**Birth name** Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto

**Born** June 2, 1835

[Riese, Italy](#)

August 20, 1914 (aged 79)

**Died** [Apostolic Palace, Rome, Italy](#)

**Signature**  [Pope Pius X's](#)

[Other popes named Pius](#)

**Saint Pius X** ([Latin](#): *Pius PP. X*) ([June 2, 1835](#)–[August 20, 1914](#)), born **Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto**, was the 257th [Pope](#) of the [Roman Catholic Church](#), serving from 1903 to 1914, succeeding [Pope Leo XIII](#) (1878–1903). He was the first pope since [Pope Pius V](#) (1566–72) to be [canonized](#). Pius X codified Catholic doctrines to inspire conformity in the church and rejected modern values. His most important reform codified Church law in a central fashion. He was a pastoral pope, encouraging personal piety and a life-style reflecting Christian values. He was born in the pastoral town of Riese.

Pope Pius was a [Marian](#) Pope, whose encyclical [Ad Diem Illum](#) expresses his desire through Mary to *renew all things in Christ*, which he had defined as his motto in his first encyclical. Pius believed that there is no surer or more direct road than by Mary to achieve this goal.<sup>[1]</sup> Pius X was the only Pope in the 20th century with extensive pastoral experience at the [parish](#) level, and pastoral concerns permeated his papacy;

he favoured the use of the vernacular in [catechesis](#). Frequent communion was a lasting innovation of his papacy. Pius X had similar problems as did [Pope Pius IX](#), in that he is not considered to have been a great diplomat. His direct style and condemnations did not gain him much support in the aristocratic societies of pre-[World War I](#) in Europe.

Him immediate predecessor had actively promoted a synthesis between the Catholic Church and secular culture; faith and science; and divine revelation and reason.<sup>[2]</sup> Pius X defended the Catholic faith against popular 19th century views such as indifferentism and relativism which his predecessors had warned against as well.<sup>[3]</sup> He followed the example of Leo XIII by promoting [Thomas Aquinas](#) and [Thomism](#) as the only theology to be taught in Catholic institutions. Pius opposed [modernism](#), a theological school of thought, which claimed that [Catholic dogma](#) itself should be modernized and blended with nineteenth century philosophies. He viewed modernism as a import of secular errors affecting three areas of Roman Catholic belief: [theology](#), [philosophy](#) and dogma.<sup>[4]</sup>

Personally, Pius combined within himself a strong sense of [compassion](#), [benevolence](#), [poverty](#), but also [stubbornness](#), and a certain stiffness.<sup>[5]</sup> He wanted to be pastor and was the only pope in the 20th century who gave Sunday sermons every week. His charity was extraordinary, filling the [Vatican](#) with refugees from the 1908 Messina quake, long before the Italian government began to act on its own.<sup>[6]</sup> He rejected any kind of favours for his family, his brother remained a postal clerk, his favourite nephew stayed on as village priest, and his three sisters lived together close to poverty in Rome.<sup>[7]</sup> He often referred to his own humble origins, taking up the causes of poor people. *I was born poor, I have lived poor, and I wish to die poor.*<sup>[8]</sup> Considered a holy person by many, public veneration of Pope Pius began soon after his death. Numerous petitions resulted in an early process of [beatification](#).<sup>[9]</sup>

## Contents

[\[hide\]](#) [\[hide\]](#)

- [1 Early life and ministry](#)
  - [1.1 Cardinal and Patriarch](#)
- [2 Papal election](#)
- [3 Pius X's pontificate](#)
  - [3.1 Church reforms and theology](#)
    - [3.1.1 Restoration in Christ and mariology](#)
    - [3.1.2 Tra le sollecitudini and Gregorian chant](#)
    - [3.1.3 Liturgical changes](#)
    - [3.1.4 Anti-modernism](#)
    - [3.1.5 Catechism of Saint Pius X](#)
    - [3.1.6 Reform of Canon Law](#)
    - [3.1.7 Reform of Church administration](#)
  - [3.2 Church policies towards secular governments](#)
    - [3.2.1 Relations with the Kingdom of Italy](#)
    - [3.2.2 Relations with Russia](#)
  - [3.3 Other activities](#)
- [4 Death and burial](#)
- [5 Canonization](#)
- [6 Papal coat of arms](#)
  - [6.1 Sources](#)
- [7 References](#)
- [8 See also](#)
- [9 Bibliography](#)
- [10 External links](#)

## Early life and ministry



 Kitchen of the Sarto family in Riese

**Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto** was born in [Riese, province of Treviso \(Veneto\), Italy](#). He was the second born of ten children of Giovanni Battista Sarto (1792–1852) and Margarita Sanson (1813–1894). He was baptized [June 3, 1835](#). Giuseppe's childhood was one of poverty, being the son of the village [postman](#). Though poor, his parents valued education, and Giuseppe walked 6 kilometers to school each day.

At a young age, Giuseppe studied [Latin](#) with his village priest, and went on to study at the [gymnasium](#) of [Castelfranco Veneto](#). "In 1850 he received the [tonsure](#) from the [Bishop of Treviso](#), and was given a scholarship [from] the Diocese of Treviso" to attend the Seminary of [Padua](#), "where he finished his classical, philosophical, and theological studies with distinction". [\[10\]](#)



 A young Giuseppe Sarto

On September 18, 1858, Giuseppe Sarto was ordained a priest, and became chaplain at [Tombolo](#). While there, Father Sarto expanded his knowledge of [theology](#), studying both [Saint Thomas Aquinas](#) and [Canon law](#), while carrying out most of the functions of the [parish](#) pastor, who was quite ill. In 1867, he was named Arch-Priest of [Salzano](#). Here he restored the Church and expanded the hospital, the funds coming from his own begging, wealth and labor. He became popular with the people when he worked to assist the sick during the [cholera](#) plague that swept into northern Italy in the early 1870s. He was made [Canon](#) (or Chancellor) of the Cathedral and Diocese of Treviso, holding offices such as spiritual director, [rector](#) of the Treviso seminary, and examiner of the clergy. As Chancellor he made it possible for [public school](#) students to receive religious instruction.

In 1878 Bishop Zanelli died, leaving the Bishopric of [Treviso](#) vacant. Following Zanelli's death, the canons of cathedral chapters (of which Monsignor Sarto was one) inherited the episcopal jurisdiction as corporate body, and were chiefly responsible for the election of a Vicar-Capitular who would take over the responsibilities of Treviso until a new [bishop](#) was named. In 1879, Sarto was elected to the position, which he served in from December of that year to June 1880.

After 1880, Sarto taught [dogmatic theology](#) and [moral theology](#) at the [seminary](#) in Treviso.

## Cardinal and Patriarch



 Cardinal Sarto

Pope Leo XIII made him a [cardinal](#) in a secret [consistory](#) on [June 12, 1893](#). He was named Cardinal-Priest of Saint Bernardo alle Terme. Three days after this, Cardinal Sarto was publicly named [Patriarch of Venice](#). This caused difficulty, however, as the government of the reunified [Italy](#) claimed the right to nominate the Patriarch based on its previous alleged exercise by the [Emperor of Austria](#). The poor relations between the Roman [Curia](#) and the Italian civil government since the annexation of the [Papal States](#) in 1870 placed additional strain on the appointment. The number of vacant [sees](#) soon grew to thirty. Sarto was finally permitted to assume the position of Patriarch in 1894.

As Cardinal and Patriarch, Sarto steered clear of political involvement, allocating his time for social works and strengthening parochial banks. However, in his first [pastoral letter](#) to the Venetians, Cardinal Sarto argued that in matters pertaining to the Pope, "There should be no questions, no subtleties, no opposing of personal rights to his rights, but only obedience."

## Papal election

*Main article: [Papal conclave, 1903](#)*



Pope Pius X after his election

On [July 20, 1903](#), Leo XIII died, and at the end of that month the [conclave](#) convened to elect his successor. According to historians, the favorite was the late Pope's secretary of state, [Cardinal Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro](#). On the first ballot, Cardinal Rampolla received 24 votes, Cardinal Gotti had 17 votes, and Cardinal Sarto 5 votes. On the second ballot, Rampolla had gained 5 votes, as did Sarto. The next day, it seemed that Rampolla would be elected. However, the [veto \(jus exclusivae\)](#) against Rampolla's nomination, by Polish Cardinal [Jan Puzyna](#) from Cracow in the name of Emperor [Franz Joseph](#) (1848–1916) of Austria-Hungary, was proclaimed. Many among the conclave, including Rampolla, protested the veto, and it was even suggested that he be elected pope despite the veto.

However, the third vote had already begun, and thus the conclave had to continue with the voting, which resulted in no clear winner, though it did indicate that many of the cardinals wished to turn their support to Sarto, who had 21 votes upon counting. The fourth vote showed Rampolla with 30 votes and Sarto with 24. It seemed clear that the cardinals were moving toward Cardinal Sarto.

On the following morning, the fifth vote of the conclave was taken, and the count had Rampolla with 10 votes, Gotti with 2 votes, and Sarto with 50 votes [[citation needed](#)]. Thus, on 4 August 1903, Cardinal Sarto was elected to the 257th pontificate. This marked the last time a [veto](#) would be exercised by a Catholic monarch in the proceedings of the conclave.

At first, it is reported, Sarto declined the nomination, feeling unworthy. Additionally, he had been deeply saddened by the use of the Austro-Hungarian [veto](#) and vowed to rescind these powers and [excommunicate](#) anyone who leaked information during a conclave. With the cardinals asking him to reconsider, it is further reported, he went into solitude, and took the position after deep prayer and the urging of his fellow cardinals.

In accepting the papacy, Sarto took as his papal name Pius X, out of respect for his recent predecessors of the same name, particularly [Pope Pius IX](#) (1846–78), who had fought against theological liberals and for papal supremacy. Pius X's traditional [coronation](#) took place on the following Sunday, [9 August 1903](#).

## Pius X's pontificate



Pope Pius X in the Vatican Gardens

The pontificate of Pius X was noted for its conservative theology and reforms in liturgy and church law. In what became his motto, the Pope stated in 1903 that his papacy will undertake *Instaurare Omnia in Christo*, or "to restore all things in [Christ](#)."  
In his first encyclical ([E Supremi Apostolatus](#), October 4, 1903), he stated that his overriding policy as follows: "We champion the authority of [God](#). His authority and Commandments should be recognized, deferred to, and respected."

## Church reforms and theology

### Restoration in Christ and mariology

Pius X promoted daily communion. In his 1904 encyclical [Ad Diem Illum](#), he views Mary in context of "restoring everything in Christ". Spiritually we all are her children and she is the mother of us, therefore, she is to be adored like a mother.<sup>[11]</sup> Christ is the Word made Flesh and the Savior of mankind. He had a physical body like every other man: and as Savior of the human family, he had a spiritual and mystical body, the Church. This, the Pope argues has consequences for our view of the Blessed Virgin.

She did not conceive the Eternal Son of God merely that He might be made man taking His human nature from her, but also, by giving him her human nature, that He might be the Redeemer of men. Mary, carrying the Savior within her, also carried all those whose life was contained in the life of the Savior. Therefore all the faithful united to Christ, are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones<sup>[12]</sup> from the womb of Mary like a body united to its head. Though a spiritual and mystical fashion, all are children of Mary, and she is their Mother. Mother, spiritually, but truly Mother of the members of Christ.(S. Aug. L. de S. Virginitate, c. 6).<sup>[13]</sup>

### **Tra le sollecitudini and Gregorian chant**

Within three months of his coronation, Pius X published his [motu proprio](#) *Tra le sollecitudini* (possibly co-written by his friend [Lorenzo Perosi](#)). [Classical](#) and [Baroque](#) compositions had long been favoured over [Gregorian chant](#) in ecclesiastical music. The Pope announced a return to earlier musical styles, championed by [Don Perosi](#). Since 1898, Perosi had been Director of the [Sistine Chapel Choir](#), a title which Pius X upgraded to "Perpetual Director." The Pope's choice of [Dom Joseph Pothier](#) to supervise the new editions of chant led to the official adoption of the Solesmes edition of Gregorian chant.

### Liturgical changes

In his papacy, Pius X worked to increase devotion in the lives of the [clergy](#) and [laity](#), particularly in the [Liturgy of the Hours](#) (which he reformed considerably - see [Reform of the Roman Breviary by Pope Pius X](#)) and the [Holy Mass](#).

In addition to restoring to prominence the Gregorian Chant, he placed a renewed [liturgical](#) emphasis on the [Eucharist](#), saying, "Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to Heaven." To this end, he encouraged frequent reception of Holy Communion. This extended to children, who had reached the "age of discretion" (about seven years old), as well, though he did not permit a return to the older practice of [infant communion](#). In conjunction, he also emphasized frequent recourse to the [Sacrament of Penance](#) in order that Holy Communion would be received worthily. Pius X's devotion to the Eucharist would eventually earn him the honorific of "Pope of the Blessed Sacrament," by which he is still known among his devotees.

## Anti-modernism

Pius X's papacy featured vigorous condemnation of what he termed '[modernists](#)' and '[relativists](#)' who endangered the [Catholic faith](#) (see for example his [Oath Against Modernism](#)). This is perhaps the most controversial aspect of his papacy.

Modernism and relativism, in terms of their presence in the Church, were theological trends that tried to assimilate modern philosophers like [Kant](#) into church theology, in much the same way [Aristotelian philosophy](#) was united with theology by the [scholastics](#). Modernists justified this change with the idea that beliefs of the Church have evolved throughout its history and continue to evolve. Anti-modernists viewed these notions as contrary to the dogmas and traditions of the Catholic Church.

In a decree, entitled *Lamentabili sane exitu*<sup>[14]</sup> (or "A Lamentable Departure Indeed"), issued [3 July 1907](#), Pius X formally condemned sixty-five modernist or relativist propositions concerning the nature of the Church, [revelation](#), [biblical exegesis](#), the [sacraments](#), and the divinity of [Christ](#). This was followed by the encyclical [Pascendi Dominici Gregis](#) (or "Feeding the Lord's Flock"), which characterized Modernism as the "synthesis of all [heresies](#)." Following these, Pius X ordered that all clerics take the [Sacrorum antistitum](#), an oath against Modernism. He also encouraged the formation and efforts of *Sodalitium Pianum* (or League of Pius V), an anti-Modernist network of informants.

Pius X's aggressive stance against modernism caused some disruption within the Church. Although only about forty clerics refused to take the oath, Catholic scholarship with modernistic tendencies was substantially discouraged. [Theologians](#) who wished to pursue lines of inquiry in line with secularism, modernism, or relativism had to stop, or face conflict with the papacy, and possibly even [excommunication](#).

## Catechism of Saint Pius X



Pius X in his study

The Catechism of Pope St. Pius X is his realization of a simple, plain, brief, popular [Catechism](#) for uniform use throughout the whole world; it was used in the ecclesiastical province of Rome and for some years in other parts of Italy; it was not, however, prescribed for use throughout the universal church.<sup>[15]</sup> The characteristics of Pius X were "simplicity of exposition and depth of content. Also because of this, St. Pius X's catechism might have friends in the future."<sup>[16]</sup>

The Catechism of Saint Pius X , issued first in 1908, i.e. at the beginning of the twentieth century, in Italian (*Catechismo della dottrina Cristiana, Pubblicato per Ordine del Sommo Pontifice San Pio X*), dealt in less than 50 pages with all relevant [\[citation needed\]](#) questions of faith and morality in a simple but comprehensive form, which is one reason for its continued popularity,[\[citation needed\]](#) according to [Joseph Ratzinger](#).[\[citation needed\]](#) An English translation runs to more than 115 pages.<sup>[17]</sup>

Asked in 2003, whether the almost 100-year-old Catechism of Saint Pius X was still valid, [Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger](#) said: "The faith as such is always the same. Hence the Catechism of Saint Pius X always preserves its value. Whereas ways of transmitting the contents of the faith can change instead. And hence one may wonder whether the Catechism of Saint Pius X can in that sense still be considered valid today."<sup>[18]</sup>

## Reform of Canon Law

The [Canon Laws](#) of the Catholic Church varied from region to region with no overall prescriptions. On March 19, 1904, Pope Pius X named a commission of Cardinals to draft a universal set of laws to be the Canon law for the twentieth century. Two of his successors worked in the commission, G. della Chiesa, to become [Pope Benedict XV](#) and [Eugenio Pacelli](#), to become [Pope Pius XII](#). The new [Canon Law](#) was decreed after the death of Pius X, by Benedict XV in 1917.

## Reform of Church administration

Pius X reformed the [Roman curia](#) with the constitution *Sapienti Consilio*, and specified new rules enforcing a bishop's oversight of seminaries in the encyclical *Pieni L'Animo*. He established regional seminaries (closing some smaller ones), and promulgated a new plan of seminary study. He also barred clergy from administering social organizations.

## Church policies towards secular governments



*Cardinal Secretary Merry del Val and Monsignore Eugenio Pacelli at the signing ceremony of the Serbian concordat underneath the picture of Pius X*

Pius X reversed the accommodating approach of Leo XIII towards secular governments, appointing [Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val](#) as Secretary of State. When the President of [France Émile Loubet](#) visited Italian monarch [Victor Emmanuel III](#) (1900–46), Pius X, still refusing to accept the annexation of the Papal territories by Italy, reproached the French president for this visit and refused to meet him. This led to a diplomatic break with France, and in 1905 France issued a [Law of Separation](#), which [separated church and state](#), and which the Pope denounced. The effect of this separation was the Church's loss of its government funding in France. Eventually, France expelled the [Jesuits](#) and broke off diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

The Pope adopted a similar position toward secular governments in other parts of the world: in [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), [Poland](#), [Ethiopia](#), and a number of other states with large Catholic populations. His actions and statements against international relations with Italy angered the secular powers of these countries, as well as a few others, like [England](#) and [Russia](#).

In 1908 the papal decree [Ne Temere](#) came into effect which complicated mixed marriages. Marriages not performed by a Roman Catholic priest were declared legal but religiously invalid, worrying some Protestants that the Church would counsel separation for couples married in a Protestant church or by civil service.<sup>[19]</sup> Priests were given discretion to refuse to perform mixed marriages or lay conditions upon them, commonly including a requirement that the children be raised Roman Catholic. The decree proved particularly divisive in [Ireland](#), which has a large [Protestant](#) minority, and contributed indirectly to the subsequent political conflict there.

As secular authority challenged that of the papacy, Pius X became more aggressive. He suspended the [Opera dei Congressi](#), which coordinated the work of Catholic associations in Italy, as well as condemned *Le Sillon*, a French social movement that tried to reconcile the Church with [liberal](#) political views. He also opposed [trade unions](#) that were not exclusively Catholic.

Pius X partially lifted decrees forbidding Italian Catholics from voting; however, he never recognized Italy.

## Relations with the [Kingdom of Italy](#)

Initially Pius maintained his [prisoner in the Vatican](#) stance but with the rise of [socialism](#) he began to allow the *non expedit* to be relaxed. In 1905 in his [encyclical](#) *I*/ *Fermo Proposito* he allowed Catholics to vote when they were '*help[ing] the maintenance of social order*' by voting for deputies who were not socialist.

## Relations with Russia

Main article: [Tribus Circiter](#)

Under **Pope Pius X** (1903–1914), the traditionally difficult situation of Polish Catholics in Russia did not improve. Although Tsar Nicolas issued a decree February 22, 1903, promising religious freedom for the Catholic Church, and, in 1905, promulgated a constitution, which included religious freedom, [20] the Russian Orthodox Church felt threatened and insisted on stiff interpretations. [Papal](#) degrees were not permitted and contacts with the Vatican remained outlawed. A religious movement the *Mariavites*, supported and financed by Russia, began to gain ground among the Polish faithful, although the Pope had condemned it in 1907. [21] In his [encyclical](#) *Tribus Circiter* Pope Pius wrote to the episcopate, warning against national [radicals](#) and asks for peace and order. [22] In 1907 he signed an agreement, which prescribes mandatory Russian history and literature courses in Catholic seminaries in Polish Russia, in exchange for greater rights for the faithful. [23]

Afterwards, he felt betrayed by the Russians who did not ease the conditions of Polish faithful: At his last public reception of the Diplomatic Corps, Pope Pius X publicly told the Russian ambassador Neliloff,

- We will not accept greetings or congratulations from Russia, which did not keep a single promise to us and or to the Catholics in Russia.

As a surprised Neliloff disagreed, the Pope rose from his throne and asked the ambassador to leave the room. [24]

## Other activities



Pius X consecrates Giacomo Paolo Giovanni Battista della Chiesa, the future [Pope Benedict XV](#), in the Vatican in 1907

In addition to the political defense of the Church, liturgical changes, anti-modernism, and the beginning of the codification of [Canon law](#), the papacy of Pius X saw the reorganization of the [Roman Curia](#). Also, to update the education of priests, seminaries and their curricula were reformed.

Pius X [beatified](#) ten individuals and [canonized](#) four. Those beatified during his pontificate, were Marie Genevieve Meunier (1906), Rose Chretien (1906), Valentin Faustino Berri Ochoa (1906), Saint Clarus (1907), [Zdislava Berka](#) (1907), [John Bosco](#) (1907), John van Ruysbroeck (1908), Andrew Nam Thung (1909), Agatha Lin (1909), Agnes De (1909), [Joan of Arc](#) (1909), and [John Eudes](#) (1909). Those canonized by him were [Alexander Sauli](#) (1904), [Gerard Majella](#) (1904), [Clement Mary Hofbauer](#) (1909), and [Joseph Oriol](#) (1909).

Pius X published sixteen encyclicals; among them was [Vehementer nos](#) on [February 11, 1906](#), which condemned the [1905 French law on the separation of the State and the Church](#). Pius X also confirmed the existence of [Limbo](#) in Roman Catholic theology in his 1905 [Catechism](#), saying that the unbaptized "do not have the joy of God but neither do they suffer... they do not deserve Paradise, but neither do they deserve Hell or [Purgatory](#)."<sup>[25]</sup> On November 23, 1903, Pius X issued a papal directive, a [motu proprio](#), that banned women from singing in church choirs.

In the [Prophecy of St. Malachy](#), the collection of 112 prophecies about the Popes, Pius X appears as *Ignis Ardens* or "Burning Fire."

## Death and burial



Pope Pius X died on August 20, 1914

In 1913 Pius X suffered a heart attack, and subsequently lived in the shadow of poor health. In 1914, the Pope fell ill on the Feast of the [Assumption of Mary](#) (15 August), an illness from which he would not recover. His condition was worsened by the events leading to the outbreak of [World War I](#) (1914–18), which reportedly sent the 79 year-old Pope into a state of horror and melancholy. He died on [20 August 1914](#) of a [heart attack](#), only a few hours after the death of [Jesuit leader Franz Xavier Wernz](#).

Following his death, Pius X was buried in a simple and unadorned tomb in the crypt below [St. Peter's Basilica](#). Papal physicians had been in the habit of removing organs to aid the embalming process. Pius X expressly prohibited this, however, and none of his successors have allowed the practice to be reinstated.

## Canonization

Although Pius X's canonization took place in 1954, the events leading up to it began immediately with his death. A letter of [24 September 1916](#) by Monsignor Leo, [Bishop of Nicotera and Tropea](#), referred to Pius X as "a great Saint and a great Pope." To accommodate the large number of pilgrims seeking access to his tomb, in excess of what the crypt would hold, "a small metal cross was set into the floor of the basilica," which read *Pius Papa X*, "so that the faithful might kneel down directly above the tomb".<sup>[26]</sup> Masses were held near his tomb until 1930.

Devotion to Pius X between the two [world wars](#) remained high. On [14 February 1923](#), in honor of the 20th anniversary of his accession to the papacy, the first moves toward his [canonization](#) began with the formal appointment of those who would carry out his cause. The event was marked by the erecting of a monument in his memory in [St. Peter's Basilica](#). On [19 August 1939](#), Pope Pius XII (1939–58) delivered a tribute to Pius X at [Castel Gandolfo](#). On [12 February 1943](#), a further development of Pius X's cause was achieved, when he was declared to have displayed [heroic virtues](#), gaining therefore the title "Venerable".

On [19 May 1944](#), Pius X's coffin was exhumed and was taken to the Chapel of the Holy Crucifix in St. Peter's Basilica for the canonical examination. Upon opening the coffin, the examiners found the body of Pius X remarkably well preserved, despite the fact that he had died 30 years before and had made wishes not to be embalmed. According to Jerome Dai-Gal, "all of the body" of Pius X "was in an excellent state of conservation".<sup>[27]</sup> After the examination and the end of the apostolic process towards

Pius X's cause, Pius XII bestowed the title of [Venerable](#) Servant of God upon Pius X. His body was exposed for 45 days, before being placed back in his tomb.



☞  
Pius X during his lying in state, August 21-22, 1914

Following this, the process towards [beatification](#) began, and thus investigations by the [Sacred Congregation of Rites](#) (S.C.R.) into [miracles](#) performed by intercessory work of Pius X subsequently took place. The S.C.R. would eventually recognize two miracles. The first involved Sr. Marie-Françoise Deperras, a nun who had [bone cancer](#) and was cured on [7 December 1928](#) during a [novena](#) in which a relic of Pius X was placed on her chest. The second involved Sr. Benedetta De Maria, who had [cancer](#), and in a novena started in 1938, she eventually touched a relic statue of Pius X and was cured.



☞  
The statue of Pope St. Pius X in St. Peter's Basilica

[Pope Pius XII](#) officially approved the two miracles on [11 February 1951](#); and on [4 March](#), Pius XII, in his *De Tuto*, declared that the Church could proceed in the beatification of the Venerable Pope Pius X. His beatification took place on [3 June 1951](#) at St. Peter's before 23 cardinals, hundreds of bishops and archbishops, and a crowd of 100,000 faithful. During his beatification decree, Pius XII referred to Pius X as "Pope of the Eucharist", in honor of Pius X's expansion of the rite to children.

Following his beatification, on [17 February 1952](#), Pius X's body was transferred from its tomb to the Vatican basilica and placed under the altar of the chapel of the Presentation. The pontiff's body lies within a glass and bronze-work sarcophagus for the faithful to see.

On [29 May 1954](#), less than three years after his beatification, Pius X was canonized, following the S.C.R.'s recognition of two more miracles. The first involved Francesco Belsami, an attorney from [Naples](#) who had a fatal [pulmonary abscess](#), who was cured upon placing a picture of the Blessed Pope Pius X upon his chest. The second miracle

involved Sr. Maria Ludovica Scorcia, a nun who was afflicted with a serious [neurotropic virus](#), and who, upon several novenas, was entirely cured. The Canonization mass was presided over by Pius XII at Saint Peter's Basilica before a crowd of about 800,000<sup>[28]</sup> of the faithful and church officials at St. Peter's Basilica. Pius X became the first Pope to be canonized since the 17th century.



The tomb of Pope Pius X

Prayer cards often depict the sanctified Pontiff with instruments of [Holy Communion](#). In addition to being celebrated as the "Pope of the Blessed Sacrament," St. Pius X is also the patron saint of emigrants from Treviso. He is honored in numerous parishes in Italy, Germany, Belgium, Canada, and the United States.

Pius X's feast day was assigned in 1955 to [3 September](#), to be celebrated as a Double. It remained thus for 15 years. In the 1960 calendar (incorporated in the 1962 [Roman Missal](#) of Pope John XXIII, whose continued use as an [extraordinary form of the Roman Rite](#) is authorized under the conditions indicated in the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*) the rank was changed to Third-Class Feast. The rank in the General Roman Calendar since 1969 is that of Memorial and the feast day is obligatorily celebrated on [21 August](#), closer to the day of his death ([20 August](#), impeded by the feast day of St Bernard).<sup>[29]</sup>

## Papal coat of arms

The [papal arms](#) of Pius X are composed of the traditional elements of all papal heraldry prior to [Pope Benedict XVI](#): the [shield](#), the [papal tiara](#), and the [keys](#). The tiara and keys are typical symbols used in the [coats of arms](#) of pontiffs, which symbolize their authority.



Coat of arms of Pope Pius X

The shield of Pius X's coat of arms is charged in two basic parts, as it is *per fess*. In chief (the top part of the shield) shows the arms of the Patriarch of Venice, which Pius X was from 1893–1903. It consists of the lion of [St. Mark](#) proper and haloed in silver upon a silver-white background, displaying a book with the inscription of PAX TIBI MARCE, which refers to the motto of Venice *Pax tibi Marce, Evangelista meus*, which is Latin for *Peace to you, Mark my evangelist*. This motto refers to Venice as the final resting place of Saint Mark. Renditions of this part of Pius X's arms depict the lion either with or without a sword, and sometimes only one side of the book is written on.

The shield displays the arms Pius X took as Bishop of Mantua: an anchor proper cast into a stormy sea (the blue and silver wavy lines), lit up by a single six-pointed star of gold. These were inspired by [Hebrews](#) 6:19, which states that the hope we have is the sure and steadfast anchor of the soul. Pius X, then Bishop Sarto, stated that "hope is the sole companion of my life, the greatest support in uncertainty, the strongest power in situations of weakness."

Although not present upon his arms, the only motto attributed to Pope Pius X is the one for which he is best remembered: *instaurare omnia in Christo* (Latin for "To restore all things in Christ"). These words were the last he spoke before he died.

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### **Saint Pius X**

**Pope, Confessor**

**Venerated** [Roman Catholic Church](#)  
in

**Beatified** [3 June 1951](#) by [Pope Pius XII](#)

**Canonized** [29 May 1954](#) by Pope Pius XII

[21 August](#)

**Feast** [3 September](#) Traditional Catholic  
Calendar

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[diocese of Des Moines, Iowa](#); first  
communicants; [diocese of Great](#)  
[Falls-Billings, Montana](#); archdiocese

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## See also

- [Society of St. Pius X](#)
- [List of Encyclicals of Pope Pius X](#)
- [Reform of the Roman Breviary by Pope Pius X](#)

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