

Did you know . . .

Pope St. Pius X

Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto (Pope St. Pius X) was born on June 2, 1835, the 2nd of 10 children at Riese, Province of Treviso, in Venice. His father was Giovanni Sarto, a cobbler who was also caretaker of the city hall and the town's postmaster; his mother was Margherita Sanso, a seamstress.

In his parish school, he proved to be very intelligent and of high moral character, which attracted the notice of the pastor who arranged a scholarship for him at the high school in Castelfranco. After completing instruction there, he wanted to become a priest, but did not have the means to do so. His parents encouraged him to pursue his calling and the same pastor arranged another scholarship to the seminary at Padua. On September 18, 1858, Father Sarto was ordained at the cathedral in Castelfranco.

"Perhaps nowhere in the history of the Church is there a better example of a man possessed of so many of the saintly virtues—piety, charity, deep humility, pastoral zeal, and simplicity—than in...St. Pius X. Yet the parish priest of Tombolo, who remained a country priest at heart throughout his life, faced the problems and evils of a torn world with the spiritual heart of a crusader." (<http://www.stpiusx.wa.edu.au/history.html>).

At the age of 68, Joseph Sarto became Pope Pius X. Ever mindful of his humble origin, Pope Pius stated, "I was born poor, I lived poor, I will die poor."

Two of his most outstanding accomplishments were the inauguration of the liturgical renewal and the restoration of frequent communion from childhood.

Pope Pius X died on August 20, 1914. The inscription on his tomb in the crypt of the basilica of St. Peter's gives the most eloquent testimony to a life spent in the service of God:

"Born poor and humble of heart, Undaunted champion of the Catholic faith, Zealous to restore all things in Christ, Crowned a holy life with a holy death."

On June 3, 1951, Pius X was declared Blessed, and finally on May 29, 1954, amid the traditional pealing of the bells in the great churches of Rome, Giuseppe Sarto, the humble parish priest of the world, was canonized a saint of God by Pope Pius XII.

(Note: This article was by request of a parishioner at St. Anthony's Church. If anyone has a special request for an article, please contact me at jsprn@twcny.rr.com)

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