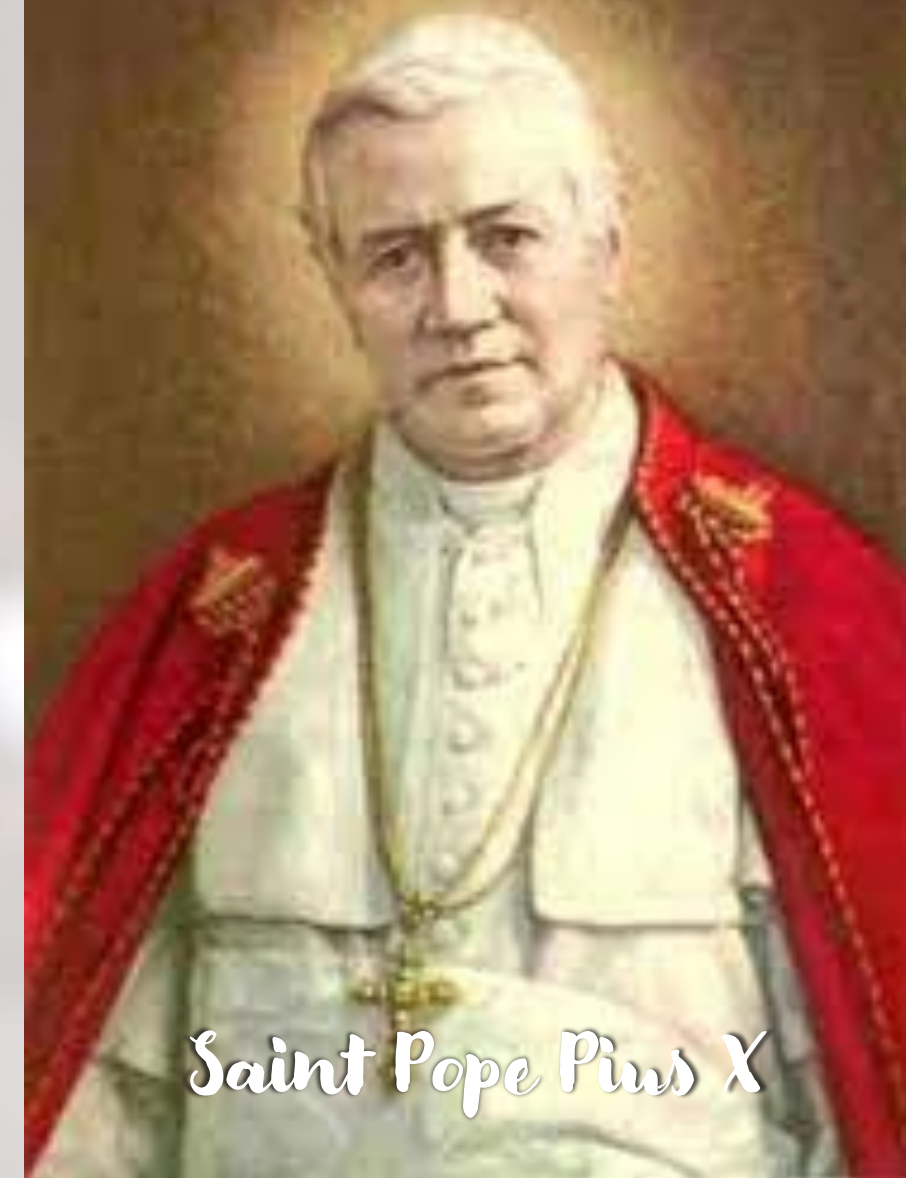




Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 21ST AUGUST

Monday 21st August



Saint Pope Pius X

Pope Pius X is perhaps best remembered for his encouragement of the frequent reception of Holy Communion, especially by children. Interested in politics, Pope Pius encouraged Italian Catholics to become more politically involved. One of his first papal acts was to end the supposed right of governments to interfere by veto in papal elections—a practice that reduced the freedom of the 1903 conclave which had elected him.

In 1905, when France renounced its agreement with the Holy See and threatened confiscation of Church property if governmental control of Church affairs were not granted, Pius X courageously rejected the demand.

While he did not author a famous social encyclical as his predecessor had done, he denounced the ill treatment of indigenous peoples on the plantations of Peru, sent a relief commission to Messina after an earthquake, and sheltered refugees at his own expense.

On the 11th anniversary of his election as pope, Europe was plunged into World War I. Pius had foreseen it, but it killed him. "This is the last affliction the Lord will visit on me. I would gladly give my life to save my poor children from this ghastly scourge." He died a few weeks after the war began, and was canonized in 1954.

Reflection

His humble background was no obstacle in relating to a personal God and to people whom he loved genuinely. Pius X gained his strength, his gentleness and warmth for people from the source of all gifts, the Spirit of Jesus. In contrast, we often feel embarrassed by our backgrounds. Shame makes us prefer to remain aloof from people whom we perceive as superior. If we are in a superior position, on the other hand, we often ignore simpler people. Yet we, too, have to help "restore all things in Christ," especially the wounded people of God.

Our Father ...

Tuesday 22nd August



*Our Lady,
Mother and Queen*

Today we take some time to remember that the Blessed Virgin reigns in heaven together with her Son. She reigns not because she is in any way equal to God but because she is the mother of Christ the King. Her privileges come from her willingly agreeing to become the Mother of God and make our redemption possible.

Prayer

Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Wednesday 23rd
August



St. Rose of Lima

St. Rose was born in Lima, in Peru. She lived a life of selflessness and devotion from an early age. She refused to marry, and became a Dominican tertiary at the age of 20. Her asceticism and her intense spiritual experiences excited the criticism of her friends and family and the suspicion of the Church authorities.

She cared for marginalised, was the first person in the Americas to be canonised, and is a patron saint of South America.

Prayer to St. Rose

God our Father, for love of You, St. Rose gave up everything to devote herself to a life of penance.

By the help of her prayers may we imitate her selfless way of life on earth and enjoy the fullness of Your blessings in heaven.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

Thursday 24th August



St. Bartholomew

St. Bartholomew was born at Cana and brought by the Apostle Philip to meet Jesus. Nothing further is known for certain. Eusebius speaks of him in India, but the Roman Martyrology has him martyred in Armenia, skinned alive according to the Persian custom. Because his relics were enshrined on the island in the Tiber that is principally used as a hospital, he has become a patron saint of the sick.

Prayer to St. Bartholomew

O Jesus, Saint Bartholomew's greatest desire was to know the truth. When first informed about You, his initial reaction was, "How can anything good come from Nazareth?" But as soon as he met You, he wanted to become one of Your disciples. You said of him, "Here is a man in whom there is no deception." I ask him to pray against the deceptions that are influencing me and the people I know. Help us to experience Your affirmation when we are honest, give us courage to resist lying as a means of self-protection, and inspire our minds to recognise the truth when we hear it. Saint Bartholomew, pray for us. Amen.



St. Louis became King of France (as Louis IX) at the age of 12. He was married and had eleven children, to whom he gave an excellent upbringing. He was noted for his spirit of prayer and penitence and for his love for the poor. He ran his kingdom not only to give peace to the people and economic stability but also for their spiritual good. He founded the Sorbonne and was a friend of St Thomas Aquinas. He was a member of the Order of Penitents of St Francis of Assisi, which later became the Franciscan Third Order and is now known as the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS).

Louis was trusted by his fellow-rulers in Europe and often asked to arbitrate in their disputes. He undertook two unsuccessful crusades to liberate Christ's burial-place and on the second of these he died, near Carthage, in the year 1270.

Prayer to St. Louis

St. Louis King of France, your father died when you were only twelve years old, but your holy mother ensured that you were brought up in the Faith and helped you begin on the path of serving God. As you grew to maturity, your Faith and holiness matured as well. You did all you could serve God through your office as King and to lead others to holiness. Pray for me, that I may do all I can to serve God worthily in my life. Pray that I may be as devoted a servant of God as you were.

St. Louis King of France, pray for us!

Amen.