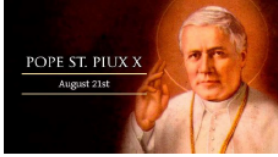


.....*did you know*



**Blessed Among Us:
Pope St. Pius X**

Pope Pius was born Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto on June 2, 1835. He was the 2nd of 10 children in a poor Italian family. Ordained in 1858, he was a priest in Venetia, became a bishop in 1884, a cardinal in 1893 and elected pope in 1903 at the age of 68.

Pope Pius X was interested in politics and encouraged Italian Catholics to become more politically involved. One of his first papal acts was to end the government's interference by veto in papal elections, a practice which reduced the freedom of the 1903 conclave that elected him.

In 1905, France renounced its agreement with the Holy See and threatened confiscation of Church property if the Church did not relinquish control of Church affairs to the government. Pope Pius courageously rejected the demand.

He denounced ill treatment of indigenous peoples in Peru, helped Messina after an earthquake and sheltered refugees at his own expense.

On the 11th anniversary of his election as pope, Europe was into World War I. Pius was broken-hearted, stating, "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, August 20, 1914. His last will and testament contains the sentence, "I was born poor, I have lived in poverty, and I wish to die poor."

Pope Pius X is probably best remembered for his encouragement of the frequent reception of Holy Communion, especially by children. From St. Pius X we learn again that "simplicity of life and humility of heart are still the highest wisdom and the indispensable conditions of a perfect Christian life, for they are the very source of all apostolic fruitfulness."

He was canonized May 29, 1954. He is considered one of the 20th century's greatest popes.

His feast day is this Wednesday, August 21.