

## ST PIUS X

*Instaurare omnia in Christo*<sup>1</sup>

Giuseppe Sarto, Pope Pius X, died this day, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 100 years ago. He succeeded Pope Leo XIII who died on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1903.

Pius X was the only pope of the 20th century with extensive pastoral experience at the parish level, the only pope of that century to deliver a sermon from the pulpit every Sunday. He used the vernacular in catechesis and encouraged frequent communion. He insisted on personal holiness, piety and a daily lifestyle reflecting deep Christian values. He introduced First Communion for children once they had attained the age of reason (about 7 years) in the decree *Quam Singulari* (8<sup>th</sup> August 1910).

He organised the preparation of the first *Code of Canon Law* gathering in one locus all the laws of the Church which was published in the reign of his successor, Benedict XV. Pius X's most important encyclical was that condemning Modernism, the heresy which sought to import secular errors into the fundamentals of Catholic philosophy and theology, *Pascendi Dominice Gregis* (8<sup>th</sup> September, 1907), one of the longest encyclicals ever written. He followed the example of his predecessor in insisting that the philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas provided the mandatory grounding for teaching in Catholic institutions.

Miracles were attributed to his intercession during his lifetime and the cause for his beatification was begun soon after his death. He was canonised on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1954 by Pope Pius XII.

Michael Baker

20<sup>th</sup> August, 2014--*St Bernard, Doctor of the Church*

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<sup>1</sup> 'To restore all things in Christ', the subscription of Pius X's coat of arms.