



This is the Presentation Chapel, within Saint Peter's Basilica, and its altar. It is dedicated to Pope Pius X who is buried under the altar.

From the *Guide to St. Peter's Basilica*, we learn [more](#) about this interesting place:

*Before this altar was dedicated to St. Pius X, it was known as the altar of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple. She is portrayed as a little girl joyfully going up the steps to the temple with her parents Anne and Joachim. This event is magnificently depicted in mosaic by Romanelli to drawings by the painter Carlo Maratta.*

*Below the altar, is a crystal coffin containing the body of St. Pius X (1904-1914), "pauper et dives, mitis et humilis corde" ["poor and rich, meek and lowly of heart"]. The body is dressed in pontifical robes, while the face and hands are covered with silver.*

*The world greatly admired his wisdom and firm government. He helped restore Christian life by issuing wise laws on the religious education of children, youths and adults. His catechism gives clear answers to many religious questions.*

*He allowed young children to take Communion, promoted the practice of daily communion as a source of virtue and holiness, he reformed the liturgy in the Missal and Breviary as well as sacred music and Gregorian chant.*

*He fought against and condemned modernism which is still the cause of many evils. He was, however, unable to convince the reigning monarch and heads of state of his era to avoid the conflict that would shed blood throughout Europe for four long years.*

*His heart could not stand the vision of so many innocent deaths. He died after having offered his life for peace. On the right pillar he is shown with arms and gaze upraised to heaven. The statue was carved by Pietro Astorgi (1923).*

Stepping away from eulogizing words, which honor Pope Pius X, what was he like as a man? Who was he before he became Pope? What did he do to "avoid the conflict that would shed blood throughout Europe for four long years?" And ... why are so many churches and Catholic schools, worldwide, named after this Pope?

To answer these questions, we turn to a [biography](#) at St. Pius X of Loudonville Parish:

*Pope Saint Pius X (2 June 1835 - 20 August 1914), born Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto, was the 257th Pope of the Catholic Church, serving from 1903 to 1914, succeeding Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903). His successor to the papacy was Benedict XV.*



*Pius X was the first pope since Pope Pius V (1566–72) to be canonized.*

*Pius X rejected modernist interpretations of Catholic doctrine, promoting traditional devotional practices and orthodox theology. His most important reform was to publish the first Code of Canon Law, which collected the laws of the Church into one volume for the first time. He was a pastoral pope, encouraging personal piety and a lifestyle reflecting Christian values.*

*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 favored the use of the vernacular in catechesis. He wrote a simple, plain, brief, popular catechism that was used in Italy but not throughout the universal church. Frequent communion was a lasting innovation of his papacy. He lowered the age of reason from 12 to 7 years allowing First Communion to be given at this lower age.*



*Refusing to bless the troops assembled in St. Peter's Square, he said "I bless peace, not war!" He died brokenhearted as World War I engulfed "Christian" Europe despite his peacemaking efforts.*

Pius X died of a heart attack on the 20th of August, 1914. World War I had erupted earlier that month and, on the day of his death, German forces were marching into Brussels. The news must have been more than he

could handle.

Click on the top image for a better view of the alter.

Credits:

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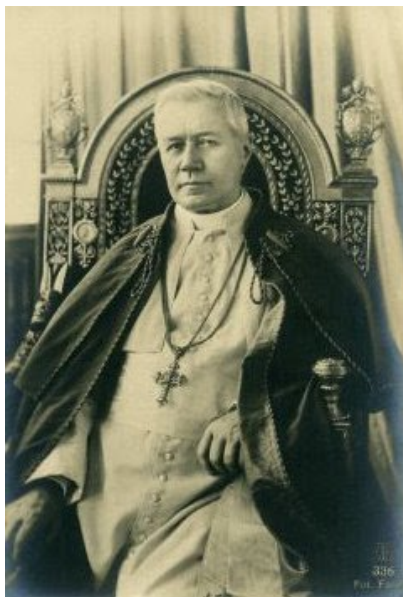
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Pope Pius X as Giuseppe Sarto

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Pope Pius X

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## Pius X Opposed WWI - Buried at St. Peter's Basilica

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