

another. The pope died in 1572, and Venice surrendered Cyprus to the Turks in 1573. Pius V's body is now entombed and visible for veneration in the Roman Basilica of St. Mary Major. He was canonized in 1712.

One interesting legend is that the popes have worn white ever since Pius V, who as a Dominican would have worn a white habit. While the traditional papal garb actually began much earlier than Pius V's reign, the legend demonstrates how highly he was regarded.

Prayer written by St. Pius V

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open Thy ears, and listen to me as Thou didst listen to Thy eternal Father upon Mount Tabor.

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open Thine eyes, and look upon me as Thou didst look from the tree of the Cross upon Thy dear Mother sorrowing and afflicted.

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open Thy blessed mouth, and speak as Thou didst speak to St. John when Thou gavest him for son to Thine own most beloved Mother.

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, open Thine arms, and embrace me as Thou didst open them upon the Cross to embrace the whole human race.

O my Lord Jesus Christ crucified, Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, open Thy Heart, and receive therein my heart, and hear me in all that I ask of Thee, if so be it be agreeable to Thy most holy will.

Socials with the Saints

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Sources include: Butler's *Lives of the Saints* / *CatholicSaints.Info* / *Catholic Encyclopedia* / *Encyclopedia Britannica Online* / *St. Pius V* by Robin Anderson / *The Sword of Saint Michael: Saint Pius V* by Lillian Browne Olf / *Nobility.org*

Pope St. Pius V

Born: 1504 in Bosco, Italy

Died: 1 May 1572

Feast Day: 30 April

The Ghislieri family was of noble origin, but in the 1500s they lived in poverty, precisely because of their loyalty to the papacy. Little did they know that within a few decades, their son would become not only a pope, but a canonized saint.

Political wars between wealthy factions in the Middle Ages created a divide between those loyal to the Empire and those loyal to the papacy. The Ghislieri family sided with the papacy against government, and found themselves expelled from their home and stripped of their property. Thus, when Paolo and Domenica Ghislieri's son, Antonio, desired an education and religious life, they could give him nothing better than the job of shepherding sheep.

Some generous neighbors, however, offered to sponsor Antonio's tutelage under a Dominican friar alongside their son, Francesco. This began humble Antonio's grand adventure. At age fourteen, he entered the Dominicans, and three years later professed religious vows, taking the name Michele (Michael).

After his priestly ordination, he spent sixteen years lecturing in philosophy and theology. Among the Order's monasteries and houses of study, Fr. Michele worked to reform Dominican vocations and lifestyle. He was known to spend much time in prayer, fasting, and penance.

Later in life, he was ordained Bishop of the region of Nepi and Sutri, and the following year was made an Inquisitor General of the Roman Inquisition, an ecclesiastical court which was part of the Church's larger Counter-Reformation movement against Protestantism. When he was named a Cardinal, he joked that this new position was so that iron



shackles would keep him from returning back into the peaceful, cloistered life. Then, he was transferred to the diocese of Mondovì, a region which had suffered dramatically from war.

The Cardinal was called to Rome, where he provided strong opinions on Church matters. This included his opposition to a political issue — whether to make a thirteen year old member of the powerful Medici family, Ferdinand de' Medici, a Cardinal. Because of his opposition, Pope Pius IV dismissed Cardinal Ghislieri from the papal palace and imposed limits on his authority as Inquisitor General.

However, before the Cardinal could return home, Pius IV died! Cardinal Charles Borromeo (now Saint) led a movement to elect the virtuous Ghislieri as the new pope. Helped by a rumor that King Philip II of Spain favored this candidate, the election was confirmed on January 8, 1566. He was installed ten days later, on his birthday.

Usually in that time, when a pope was crowned, gifts were scattered onto the crowd. Pius V decided to instead bestow gifts on hospitals and the very poor. Rather than spending money on a banquet for the cardinals and ambassadors, he had the funds sent to the poorest convents of Rome.

Pius V set out to reform the Vatican, by insisting that priests and bishops must live in their assigned dioceses and be among their people. He created legislation against prostitution and bullfighting. At the time, the pope lived at court like a king. Pius V did away with many luxuries and extravagances, including the court jester. Since that time, no pope has had one! He also purged many Vatican officials.

People began to complain that Pius V was trying to turn the Vatican into a monastery. He said, “I know very well that I am dealing with men, not with angels.” Ever a Dominican, he declared his fellow Dominican, Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Church.

Pius V was known to wear a coarse hair-shirt under his clothes as penance, and was often seen walking barefoot. He continued his practices of prayer, fasting, and penance even in his elder years and in times of illness.

He was also known to care for the poor and disadvantaged. During a famine in Sicily, Pius V used his own funds to import corn into Sicily,

which was then given away or sold at a greatly reduced price. Whenever he visited hospitals, he often cared for the sick himself.

“You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world!” said Pius V. “See to it that the people are edified by your example, by the purity of your lives, by the moderation of your conduct, and the brilliance of your holiness! God does not ask of you mere ordinary virtue. He demands downright perfection!”

Today, historians agree that Pius V’s methodology in enforcing the Church’s teachings were severe even for his time. For example, Protestantism had recently begun to spread in Europe, and Queen Elizabeth famously persecuted her Catholic subjects. Pius V responded by excommunicating not only her, but and all who remained loyal to her as queen. This effectively made life for British Catholics much worse, as Elizabeth enacted her revenge on them.

Perhaps Pius V is most famous for his role in the Battle of Lepanto. At the time, Muslim Turks had captured the island of Cyprus, which was under the jurisdiction of Venice. If their military victories continued, the Turks would have a strategic advantage to send more troops into the Christian states and turn them into Muslim states. Pius V convinced Spain and Venice to form a military alliance that would counter the Turks.

This came to a head amid the Greek isles, in the naval Battle of Lepanto. As the battle raged, Pius V called for Christians to fast and pray, including in Rosary procession. Here we should also note that Pius V himself standardized the fifteen decade form of the Rosary and instituted the Feast of the Holy Rosary.

Although the allies’ number of troops was smaller, historians suggest the Turkish force was less equipped and disciplined than they. The allies won the battle, and liberated about 15,000 Christians who had been enslaved by the Turks. Pius V attributed the victory to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and proclaimed a feast day in her honor; Our Lady of Victory. He also added the supplication, “Help of Christians (pray for us),” to the Marian Litany of Loreto.

Pius V hoped that the allies would continue their successes against the Islamic states’ advances, but the various kingdoms began to fight one