

POPES OF THE NAME OF PIUS

The election of a Pontiff (says a writer in the 'Catholic Standard and Times') is the expression of choice on the part of his brother Cardinals; the selection of his pontifical name is his own choice, however, and is taken to be a significant indication of his policy. Admirations point to ideals, ideals, though ever so distantly followed, are guiding lights. Cardinal Pecci chose to be Leo XIII. because, as he said, he admired the character of Leo XII., the Pontiff of his boyhood. Cardinal Mastai became Pius IX. in respect for his predecessor in the Bishopric of Imola, Pius VII., the storm-tossed Pope of the Napoleonic cataclysm. Cardinal Sarto selected the title of Pius X.

Pius is one of the Greatest Names

in Papal history; its choice is a self-explanatory piece of wisdom.

The pontificate of Pius IX. is within the memory of the elders; the spiritual triumphs and temporal reverses of the longest reign are as familiar as the events of the late Leonine period. The pro-Italian sentimentalists of England have lived to see the cheapening of their heroes and the injustice of their cause. The years of the Savoyard rule have been kind to the memory of the good and gentle Pope-King; time has justified Pio Nono. As another Pius (Pius II.) said: 'The barque of the Church often rocks to and fro, but it does not sink; it is buffeted, but not shattered; it is assailed, but not wrecked; God permits His people to be tried, but He will not suffer them to be overwhelmed.'

The brief reign of Pius VIII. (March 31, 1829, to November 30, 1830) ended when our late lamented Pope was a young man of 20. Pius VIII. was a Pope of what F. Marion Crawford condescendingly terms the 'charitable class'; he was especially active in alleviating the conditions of the poor. He secured repatriation for the Catholics of Armenia, and his appeal to Dom Pedro accomplished the abolition of slavery in Brazil. His brief against mixed marriages was one of

The Most Important Utterances

of an all too short Pontificate. Pius VII. reigned in turbulent times; his career is world-history. In view of the Venetian nativity of our present Holy Father, it is interesting to recall that the Conclave of 1799 assembled in Venice, whither 35 Cardinals hastened from their places of exile to elect Barnabas Chiaromonte, Cardinal-Bishop of Imola, to the throne of St. Peter. The story of Pius VII. is the story of the Napoleonic era. The world-conqueror strove to subordinate the Pope, failing that, he attempted to annihilate the Holy See, and even threatened violence to the sacred person of the Pontiff. 'I shall lay these threats at the foot of the crucifix,' said Pius VII. with sublime gentleness and firmness undaunted. 'I give my cause, which is His also, into the keeping of God.' The disastrous Russian campaign was the first punishment for the sacrilegious persecution of the Pope, who re-entered Rome in peaceful triumph a month after Waterloo. The birth and death of the poor little impertinently-miscalled 'King of Rome' present the most striking contrasts in history and furnish melancholy proof, if proof were needed, of the instability of merely human power, of the flimsiness of human ambitions.

Pius VI. ascended the throne in an epoch of political confusion. When the Cardinals congratulated him upon his accession, his Holiness answered prophetically 'Your pleasure is my misfortune.' The sixth Pius was a ruler of many and varied activities, Rome owes to his culture and energy the establishment of the pre-Clementine Museum, the herculean labor of draining the Pontine marshes and the restoration of the Appian Way. The French Revolution surged into Rome, the Eternal City was occupied by the undisciplined and ruthless violators of religion. The brave old Pope opposed the ruffianly hordes beyond the limit of his strength, his courage knew no limit. 'What a grand spectacle is Pius VI when, with a firmness that few believed him capable of, he sternly resolves to remain near the tomb of the Apostles and there abide his fate!' wrote Von Muller in 1797. 'Would to God that the noble old man, now above 80 years of age, might be permitted to rest where he had spent a Pontificate of 22 years and borne up under the bitter trials that God had sent upon him.' It was not to be, Pius VI. died in exile.

The Most Illustrious Victim

of the French Revolution. The preceding Pius (Pius V., St. Pius) reigned two centuries earlier, in the days of Elizabeth of England, whom he excommunicated. This Dominican Pope was distinguished by the most edifying personal humility, going so far as to wait upon the sick in the hospitals. His policy was as lordly as his piety was lowly; to him all Christendom is indebted for the final repulse of Mahomedanism in the glorious victory

of Lepanto. Pius V. was beatified by Pope Clement X. in 1673 and canonised by Clement XI.

The Pontifical name of Pius was first borne by the early Pontiff who ruled the Church from 158 to 167 A.D. and who was martyred for the faith. The name was revived 13 centuries later by the celebrated Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, nobleman, traveller, poet-laureate, Crusader, one of the most picturesquely brilliant characters of mediaeval times, and one who, like St. Augustine, left the follies and glories of the world to devote his life and his gifts to the service of the Church. Pius II was 'distinguished by keenness of intellect, varied learning, experience of the world, and diplomatic ability,' a great scholar without a vestige of pedantry, a great churchman, all the greater for the contented simplicity of his priestly life. Like Leo, he slept only five hours nightly, and lived on less than a laborer's child would demand to-day in this land of plenty. He received everybody, making no distinctions. When remonstrated with upon this time-consuming practice, he replied: 'Do you not know that as Pope I have to live not for myself but for others?' With the fame of the late Pontiff-poet still ringing through the world, it is odd to recall a serious objection put forth against the election of the literary Cardinal Piccolomini, in 1458: 'Shall we raise a poet to

The Chair of St. Peter?'

Pope Pius III., a nephew of Pius II., was old and sickly at the time of his election, the excitement of which proved to be too much for the venerable Cardinal, who reigned less than a month as Supreme Pontiff. His accession was due entirely to the esteem in which he was held by the Sacred College. In his own way Pius III. was as remarkable as his famous uncle. 'He left no moment in the day unoccupied,' writes Sigismondi de' Conti 'His time for study was before daybreak; he spent his forenoons in prayer and his mid-day hours in giving audiences, to which the humblest had easy access. He was so temperate in food and drink that he allowed himself an evening meal only every other day.'

Pius IV., the Pope of the Tridentine Creed, was the uncle of St. Charles Borromeo, whom he raised to the dignity of the Cardinalate. Like every bearer of the name, the fourth Pius combined intense self-lowliness with as intense appreciation of the dignity of his holy office. Our Holy Father Pius the Tenth has chosen an auspicious name. May all the graces of all the Pios be his sacred heritage!

The 'Advocate,' writing with reference to the passes obtained at the local examination in theoretical music in connection with the Melbourne University, says: Out of the 111 candidates who passed, 48 were pupils from Catholic convents. In the junior grade, in the elements of music, 49 passed, and 16 of these were convent pupils; in the senior grade of elementary music, 60 passed, of which the pupils from the convent number 31; included in this were nine passes from Tasmania, and six of these were from St. Mary's College, Hobart. Four candidates obtained students' certificates in the junior grade for harmony, and two of these pupils were from the convents. The only candidate who obtained honors was a pupil of the Catholic Ladies' College, East Melbourne. The other young lady who passed was a pupil of the Brigidine Convent, Ararat. The results of this examination must be most gratifying to Catholics. It shows that the sacrifice in connection with Catholic education which they have made has not been made in vain, that the pupils from their educational institutions can bear the test of these examinations, with honor to themselves and credit to the convents, and that comparisons can be invited between them and pupils of the more favored institutions of other religious denominations.

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