# August 21st: Memorial of Saint Pius X, Pope

**Gospel text (*Jn* 21:15-17):** After Jesus and his disciples had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, «Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?». He answered, «Yes, Lord, you know that I love you». And Jesus said, «Feed my lambs». A second time Jesus said to him, «Simon, son of John, do you love me?». And Peter answered, «Yes, Lord, you know that I love you». Jesus said to him, «Look after my sheep». And a third time He said to him, «Simon, son of John, do you love me?». Peter was saddened because Jesus asked him a third time, «Do you love me?», and he said, «Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you». Jesus then said, «Feed my sheep».

***«Feed my lambs»***

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Today we celebrate the figure of Pope St. Pius X. The Gospel reminds us of the pedagogy of Jesus in the call of St. Peter as the first Pope: since he had denied him three times, he took from St. Peter a triple profession of love: « Yes, Lord, you know that I love you» (Jn 21.15). Jesus proposed the same mission three times: "Feed my sheep" (cf. 21,15.16.17).

This is the task of a shepherd, of a Pope, of Pius X. A shepherd has to "herd": feed the sheep in good pastures. And what food and drink are better than the Eucharist? That is why they call Pius X the "Pope of the Eucharist", because he encouraged frequent and daily Communion, something unknown at the beginning of the 20th century, and also encouraged the children to receive the First Communion at the age of six or seven, if they could discern what is in the Eucharist.

Curiously, Pius X has some characteristics similar to Pope Francis, from about a hundred years distance. First, the love to St. Francis of Assisi, as a good Franciscan tertiary he was. Another similarity: Pius X opened the papal dining room to friends and acquaintances to eat with him, with the consequent scandal of many. With Pope Francis, this is now a daily occurrence. Also like Pope Francis, Pius X opened a space in the Vatican for refugees and homeless people to find shelter there during the 1908's earthquake. This space is currently St. Martha's Hospice. Finally, Pius X shares with Pope Francis the love of the poor and of poverty, so he wrote in his will: "I was born poor, I lived in poverty and I want to die poor."