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7 February

Blessed PIUS IX, Pope

Optional Memorial

John Maria Mastai Ferretti (Pius IX) was born at Senigallia on 13 May 1792. Ordained priest in 1819, between 1823 and 1825 for two years he was a missionary in Chile. At just 35 years of age he was appointed Archbishop of Spoleto, and then in 1832 of Imola. In 1840 he was created Cardinal and on 16 June 1846 was elected Supreme Pontiff at only 54 years of age.

Don Bosco had a first audience with Pius IX on 9 March 1858. Both had the impression of meeting a saint. Pius IX supported and guided Don Bosco in the foundation of the Salesian Congregation. He suggested to him to call it a “Society” so as to be in tune with the times, to make simple vows, he advised a simple habit and practices of piety intense but not too complicated.

He persuaded Don Bosco to write his memoirs to be left as a spiritual inheritance to the Salesians. During his pontificate he approved the Constitutions of the Salesian Society, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Pious Union of Salesian Cooperators of which he was the first enrolled member.

Don Bosco loved Pius IX greatly and accepted all his advice even when it cost him great sacrifice: “No effort should be spared,” he used to say, “when the Church and the Papacy are at stake.” The Pontiff too had great esteem for Don Bosco and on different occasions called him to Rome to ask his help with various very delicate issues.

On 8 December 1854 he defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. In 1869 he called the First Vatican Council. On 8 December 1870 he declared Saint Joseph Patron of the Universal Church. On 16 June 1875 he consecrated the Church to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He died on 7 February 1878, after 32 years Pontificate. John Paul II proclaimed him Blessed on 3 September 2000.

From the Common of Pastors: for a Pope.

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

From the «Letters» of Blessed Pius IX, Pope, to his beloved son Father John Bosco

(7 January 1860 and 23 June 1869; *Memorie Biografiche* VI [1907] pp. 472-473 [omitted in *Biographical Memoirs* VI p 270]; IX [1917] pp. 667-668) cf. BM p 314)

*With perseverance bear with tribulations:
our hope rests in God*

Beloved Son, Our greetings and Apostolic Blessing. In the letter which you wrote to Us on 9 November, We find further proof of your singular faith, piety and reverence towards Us and towards Our Supreme dignity. We can easily understand, Beloved Son, your sorrow and that of other ecclesiastics at this great confusion in Italy and the upsetting of public order and the rebellion in some Provinces of our temporal domains [...].

In this fierce storm raised up by Satan, in humility of heart We greatly thank God that with his grace he strengthens and comforts the Bishops of Italy so that each one with his own flock may fearlessly the deposit of faith. Our heart is comforted by the profound harmony of spirit with which the clergy too in these saddest of times labour for the care of souls and the firmness and constancy

of spirit with which for the cause of God and of the Church they bear with and support every adversity.

We cannot put into words the consolation which that part of your letter gives Us from which We know that the present calamities of these days prompted your immediate response, My Beloved Son, and that of other ecclesiastics. Therefore by preaching the word of God, and by distributing good books and other good writings united in spirit and in zeal you do all that is in your power to oppose the machinations of the enemies of the Church.

There is nothing more excellent than doing this, and there is nothing more useful for fostering and enlivening the piety of the people. Nor was your outstanding solicitude without fruit, through which many young people going to the sacred Oratories on feast days and daily to the schools at the appropriate time become ever more fervent through both Christian instruction and the frequentation of the Sacraments.

May the care which you have for the poor young people you have saved day by day obtain more happy success and increase the number of those who can then become in time useful ministers of the Church. Continue, Beloved Son, the way of life which you have taken up to the glory of God and the benefit of the Church. If you should meet with any serious tribulation bear with it, and support with firmness of spirit the tribulations of these times. Our hope is placed in God, who through the protection of the Queen of Heaven and Mistress of the world, the Mother of God, Mary the Immaculate Virgin, will free us from these great evils, and will console his afflicted Church, making her triumph over her enemies.

We have no doubt at all that to this end, and to beg for Our weakness the immediate assistance and the help of God, you will continue O Beloved Son, together with the pupils and the disciples of your hospice, to you and to Ourselves most dear, to beseech the same God with ever greater fervour in all kinds of prayer. We most earnestly pray the same God that he will preserve you and them in his peace, cover you with his right hand and defend you with his holy arm [...].

The many tokens of faith and devotion which you have given Us certainly aimed at acquainting us with your firm attachment to the Apostolic See and to Ourselves. They show too that not only do you diligently strive to arouse in others the love you bear Peter's Chair, but also that many feel as you do.

Another splendid token of this We have received on the occasion of Our golden jubilee of ordination and First Mass in the very affectionate letter you sent Us in your name and in behalf of the oratories and institutes you direct.

We need not tell you how welcome these filial congratulations are to Us. We will appreciate it if you share Our sentiments with your priests and boys. Indeed, you may add that, in response to their wish, We remembered them in Our Holy Mass as We particularly recommended to Our Lord all who pray for Us.

We shall be grateful if they continue to pray, as We hope, for the conversion of souls gone astray, that they may all know and love Our Heavenly Father and Him whom He sent, Jesus Christ. Him albeit unworthy, We represent on earth. Meanwhile, in token of Our particular benevolence and a sign of divine grace, We most affectionately impart Our Apostolic Benediction to you and your beloved sons.

RESPONSORY

Mt. 16,18; Sal 47,9

R/. Jesus said to Simon: You are Peter and it is upon this rock that I will build my Church, * and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

V/. God has built it to endure for all eternity,

R/. and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.

Morning Prayer

SCRIPTURE READING

Heb 13, 7-9a

Remember your leaders, who preached the word of God to you, and as you reflect on the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be for ever. Do not let yourselves be led astray by all sorts of strange doctrines.

SHORT RESPONSORY

R/. I placed watchmen on your towers, * they watch over your Church.

I placed watchmen on your towers, they watch over your Church.

V/. They will never cease to tell of the name of the Lord, by day and by night.,

* they watch over your Church.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit..

I placed watchmen on your towers, they watch over your Church.

Ant. At the Ben. It is not you who speak;
the Spirit of your Father speaks in you.

INTERCESSIONS

To Christ, the Good Shepherd, who gave his life for his sheep, with confidence we pray:

O Lord, guide your people to the pastures of eternal life.

Christ our Lord, in Blessed Pius IX you have given us a living model of your merciful love,

– bless our Pope N.N. and increase in him the gifts of the Spirit to show to the world the sweetness of your love.

Through your sacred ministers you are present in our midst as the shepherd of our souls,

– never cease to guide us through their teaching and encouragement.

In the holy pastors who serve your people you manifest your power of healing souls and bodies,

– remain always with us to renew our lives in holiness.

In Blessed Pius IX, you O Lord gave Don Bosco a support and guide in the founding of the Salesian Society,

– grant that we may be always faithful to our mission of educators and pastors, handed on to us by our holy Founder.

Pius IX was ever trusting and untiring in glorifying Mary Immaculate;

– in Her, sign of sure hope, may the Church always find the strength to be renewed in fidelity.

Our Father

PRAYER

O God, who gave your servant, Blessed Pius IX, Pope,
the spirit of fortitude in adversity,
and enabled him to enter more deeply
into the pure faith of the Church,
grant through his intercession,
that we may be filled with the same spirit

and live with the same devotion.
Through Our Lord.

Evening Prayer II

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Pt 5, 1-4

Now I have something to tell your elders: I am an elder myself, and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and with you I have a share in the glory that is to be revealed. Be the shepherds of the flock of God that is entrusted to you; watch over it, not simply as a duty but gladly, because God wants it; not for sordid money, but because you are eager to do it. Never be a dictator over any group that is put in your charge, but be an example that the whole flock can follow. When the chief shepherd appears, you will be given the crown of unfading glory.

SHORT RESPONSORY

R/. This is a man who loves his brothers, * and intercedes for the people.
This is a man who loves his brothers, and intercedes for the people.

V/. He laid down his life for his brothers,
* and intercedes for the people.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
This is a man who loves his brothers, and intercedes for the people.

Ant. At the Magn. I thank you Christ for honouring me by leading me to this glory, You are the good shepherd; I pray that the sheep which you have placed in my charge will share with me in your glory for ever.

INTERCESSIONS

Glory to Christ, the high priest who was appointed to represent men in their relations with God.
United in evening prayer we invoke his name:
Lord save your people.

You raised up in your church wise and holy leaders,

– grant that the Christians community may always be guided by wise and generous leaders.

In the presence of their brothers and sisters you anointed the leaders of your people and poured on them your Spirit:

– fill with His gifts all those you have called to guide the Holy Church.

In Pius IX you gave us a Pope who loved and defended with zeal the freedom and the rights of the Church;

– grant that through his intercession, she may everywhere carry out her mandate of proclaiming and safeguarding the faith.

To Pope Pius IX Don Bosco expressed his gratitude and his devotion to the Successor of Peter;

– grant to us O Lord, that following the example of our Founder, we may have a great love for the Pope and for the Church, and educate our young people to the same love.

Through the pastors of your Church you assist your faithful so that no one can steal them from your hands,

- grant that the bishops, priests and the faithful departed may all be reunited in the joy of your Kingdom.

Our Father.

PRAYER

O God, who gave your servant, Blessed Pius IX, Pope,
the spirit of fortitude in adversity,
and enabled him to enter more deeply
into the pure faith of the Church,
grant through his intercession,
that we may be filled with the same spirit
and live with the same devotion.
Through Our Lord.

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