

## Popes of the Nineteenth, Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries

Describe the major contribution of each of the following popes.

1. **Pius IX (1846 – 1878)** Had the longest papacy in history. Was pope during the Fall of Rome and the lost of the Papal States. Began a new era of strong moral and spiritual papal leadership. Called for Vatican I which defined the dogma of Papal Infallibility. Defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.
2. **Leo XIII (1878 – 1903)** First pope to be born after the French Revolution. He dealt with the new social problems arising from the Industrial Revolution. Wrote the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* which called for a new world order in which the rights of the urban industrial worker would be respected. Supported the rights of workers to form unions and seek fair wages.
3. **Pius X (1903 – 1914)** The first pope of the 20th century. Called for greater involvement of lay people in the work of the Church. Promoted Catholic Action groups. Encouraged the daily reception of Communion. Lowered the age of when a child could receive their First Communion to age 7.
4. **Benedict XV (1914 – 1922)** Pope during World War I. Condemned World War I as being unjustifiable and caused by a lust for power and extreme nationalism. Spent huge sums of money, nearly bankrupting the Vatican in order to care for the victims of the war, refugees, wounded, homeless. At the end of the war he called on the victors not to blame Germany for the war and to create a just peace. They refused to listen to his advice, thus planting the seed for World War II.
5. **Pius XI (1922 – 1939)** Through his three papal encyclicals he confronted the three major social evils of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; Fascism, Nazism, and Communism. He negotiated the Lateran Agreement of 1929 establishing Vatican City and creating peace with the new Italian kingdom.
6. **Pius XII (1939 – 1958)** Pope during World War II. Worked extensively behind the scenes to protect as many Jews as possible for the horrors of the Holocaust. After World War II he had to deal with the oppression of the Church by Communism throughout Eastern Europe.
7. **John XXIII (1958 – 1963)** Elected to be a transitional, caretaker pope. Shocked the world by calling for Vatican II which would update the Church and help the Church to become an important influence in the world. Wrote a papal encyclical which called for world leaders to work for peace.
8. **Paul VI (1963– 1978)** Brought the Second Vatican Council to a successful conclusion. Spent his years implementing the teachings of Vatican II throughout the Church. Held the Church together and from splitting due to schism.
9. **John Paul I (1978 – 1978)** Had the shortest papacy in modern history. Died in his sleep of a massive heart attack after being pope for 33 days.
10. **John Paul II (1978 – 2005)** Had the second longest papacy in modern history. The first non-Italian pope in 455. The first Polish pope. Very instrumental in the collapse of world-wide Communism in a peaceful manner. Prepared the Church to enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium.

11. **Benedict XVI (2005 – 2013 )** Says the greatest problems facing the Church and society today are relativism and secularism. Relativism says that there is no objective truth; that all truth is subjective. Secularism says that religious values have no place in the public arena or the public forum. Benedict tells us that without objective truth and the freedom to bring our religious values to have an influence in society, society and civilization will undo itself and collapse. Resigned from the papacy in February 2013 stating he did not have the physical strength necessary to guide the Church.
  
12. **Francis (2013 -- )** The first pope to be elected from Argentina, from the Americas, from South America, Latin America. Before his election to the papacy he was Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Before being chosen to become a bishop he spent many years as a Jesuit serving the Society of Jesus in many areas including as Provincial Superior of all Jesuits in Argentina. He is the first Jesuit in history to be elected as a pope. All throughout his life and in all the many roles he has served, his primary concern has been for the poor and neglected in society. By taking the name Francis he recalls to mind St. Francis who embraced a life of poverty in order to serve all and reminds the Church of its primary mission to serve the poor and the needy.