

Pope Leo XIII

1810-1903

In 1878, Joachim Vincent Raphael Louis Pecci was elected Pope of the Catholic Church until his death. He assumed the name of Leo XIII. He distinguished himself in a particular way for his socio-political involvement.

He wrote about 80 encyclicals, among them the *Rerum Novarum* with which he caused an uproar in the Catholic Church. On the 13th of October 1884 Leo XIII had a vision while he was celebrating the Mass. The Pope describing this vision with horror, said that it regarded the future of the Church, a period of about 100 years leading up to a point when Satan will have achieved his objective. Of this episode there are different versions noted; in the one most

Church: “Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do Thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls.”

In testimony of this, Cardinal Nasalli Rocca wrote in his Lenten Pastoral Letter, from Bologna in 1946:



commonly accepted it is said that Leo XIII would have heard two voices: one sweet and gentle, the other rough and bitter. It seemed to him that these voices came from near the tabernacle. He quickly understood that the sweet and gentle voice was that of Our Lord, while the other rough and bitter one was of Satan. In this dialogue Satan affirms with pride of being able to destroy the Church, but to do this he asked for more time and more power. Our Lord consented to the request and asked how much time and how much power were needed. Satan replied that he needed about 75 or 100 years and a greater power over those put under his service. Our Lord gave Satan the time and power he asked, giving him full liberty to do with them as he wished. Leo XIII remained so shaken by this experience that he wrote a prayer in honor of Saint Michael the Archangel for the protection of the

“Leo XIII himself wrote that prayer. *The phrase (the evil spirits) who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls* has an historical explanation, reported to us many times by his personal secretary, Monsignor Rinaldo Angeli. Leo XIII truly had a vision of infernal spirits that descended upon and infiltrated the eternal city (Rome); and from that experience came the prayer that he wanted recited in the whole Church. That same prayer he would recite with a vibrant and powerful voice: we heard it many times in the Basilica in the Vatican. Not only that, but he also wrote with his own hand a special exorcism prayer included in the Roman Ritual (1954 edition, tit. XII, c. III, page 863 and following). These exorcisms he implored to the bishops and to the priests to recite them often in their dioceses and parishes. He would pray it very often throughout the day.”