

January 16, 2023

Good Morning!

School is closed today for Martin Luther King holiday.

1. Today's Readings: [Monday of the Second Week in Ordinary Time | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Some popes reigned as pope for many years while others like John Paul I spent very little time as pope. Today we look at 3 popes who combined led the Church for 5 years.

3. Meditation of the Day: *Antonio Cardinal Bacci*: The Help of God

~ Both in the natural and in the supernatural order, we are in continual need of the help of God. We did not exist, and God in His infinite goodness created us. It is He Who preserves us in existence from day to day and from moment to moment. The act of conservation is like a continuous creation. If God did not sustain us, we should return immediately to the dust from which we came: "Remember, man, that dust you are and unto dust you shall return." (Gen. 3:19).

We are continually dependent on our Lord and Creator for our existence and activity. If we remained always aware of this tremendous fact, we would never offend God. We would show Him a filial gratitude and humbly implore His assistance. We are so poor, and He is so rich. We are so weak and He is so strong. We are blind, and He is the true light which illumines every man who comes into the world. (John 1:9) Ask for God's help with confidence, perseverance, and resignation to His holy will. As St. Augustine says, we are the beggars of God.

~There are several passages in Sacred Scripture which emphasize clearly and effectively our utter weakness and dependence on God. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves," says St. Paul, "to think anything, as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God." (2 Cor., 3:5)

Jesus warns us that without Him we can do nothing: "Without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) He uses the allegory of the vine and the branches as an illustration of this. I am the vine, He says, and you are the branches. So it is necessary for you to remain united to me, and I to you. In the same way as a branch that does not live on in the vine can yield no fruit of itself, so you can do nothing if you do not live on in Me. If anyone does not remain united to Me he will be like a withered branch which is thrown into the fire to be burned. (John 15) We must remain united to Jesus, therefore, if we wish to do anything good and to merit everlasting life. Otherwise the supernatural life of grace will not be transmitted to us. If Jesus is not there, death comes into our souls. Let us remain close to our Divine Redeemer. If we continue to live in Him, He will give us everything we ask as He has promised: "If you abide in me, and if my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done to you." (John 15:7)

Daily Parish Communication

~Do not think, however, that it is sufficient to ask for God's help in order to do good. There is no doubt that His assistance is absolutely essential; but our cooperation with divine grace is equally necessary. The branch on the vine is not inactive. It derives its vitality from the vine and in its turn bears fruit. In the same way we must nurture the supernatural life which God infuses into our souls so that it will mature in good works. The essence of a holy apostolate is cooperation with the grace of God. This spirit of generous cooperation must transform us personally so that we may be able to change others. This is how the Apostles and Saints acted; this is how we must all act. "By the grace of God I am what I am," St. Paul tells us, "and his grace in me has not been fruitless -- in fact, I have laboured more than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." (I Cor. 15:10) Implore God's help with humble perseverance. Be faithful to it in an ardent spirit of sacrifice. This is what it means to be a Christian.

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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Popes of the mid 530's: 3 Popes in 5 years

56. John II (533-35)

Mercurius was born in Rome, son of Praeiectus. He became a priest at St. Clement's Basilica on the Caelian Hill, and even before becoming pope he had commissioned work for the basilica and made generous donations. The basilica still retains memorials of "Johannes surnamed Mercurius"; he donated plutei (carved stone balustrades) and transennae (lattice or screen of stone or metal enclosing and protecting a shrine). A reference to "Presbyter Mercurius" is found on a fragment of an ancient ciborium. Several marble slabs that enclose the schola cantorum bear upon them, in the style of the sixth century, his monogram.

Mercurius was elected pope on 2 January 533, apparently the first pope to adopt a new name upon elevation to the papacy.

The notoriously adulterous behavior of Bishop Contumeliosus of Riez caused John to order the bishops of Gaul to confine him in a monastery. Until a new bishop could be appointed, he bade the clergy of Riez to obey the Bishop of Arles. Stemming from Pope Hormisdas' suppression of the statement "one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh" in Scythian monastic liturgies, the Acoemetae, or Sleepless Monks, began to support Nestorianism, the belief that Jesus is neither human nor divine. Emperor Justinian I and patriarch Epiphanius of Constantinople opposed this ideology and sent a deputation to Rome which prompted John II to assemble a synod, excommunicate the Acoemetae, and to issue statements approving the doctrine of the emperor.

In 535, 217 bishops assembled in a council at Carthage submitted to John II a decision about whether bishops who had lapsed into Arianism should, on repentance, keep their rank or be admitted only to lay communion. The question of re-admittance to the lapsed troubled north Africa for centuries (see Novatianism and Donatism). The answer to their question was given by Agapetus I, as John II died on 8 May 535. He was buried in St Peter's Basilica.

Source: catholic.org

57. St. Agapetus I (535-36) Also called Agapitus I

Agapetus was getting on in years, given that sources say his diaconate ordination came as early as 502. Elected pope on May 13, 535, St. Agapetus I had a busy pontificate, despite only being in office for 11 months.

In confirming the canons of a council at Carthage near his election, Agapetus accepted converted Arians to communion in the Catholic Church, but made them ineligible to be ordained as clergy. He and five other bishops also made an emergency trip to Constantinople in the middle of winter in an effort to dissuade Emperor Justinian (remember: super Catholic, HUGE fan of the pope) from invading Italy.

The primary purpose of the trip failed, but, being an opportunist, Agapetus took advantage of his presence there to depose the heretic Patriarch of Constantinople, Anthimus, personally replacing him with the more orthodox Mennas. This personal installment by a pope was the first such occurrence in Church history (it usually happened through intermediaries or neighboring bishops) and was a major reason Agapetus is venerated as a saint in both the Eastern and Western churches.

He died April 22, 536 in Constantinople, and his feast is celebrated September 20, the date of his burial.

Source: kofc899.org

58. St. Silverius (536-37)

Born in Italy, Silverius was son of Pope Hormisdas, who had been married before becoming one of the higher clergy. He was only a subdeacon, when, upon the death of Pope St. Agapetus in 536, the Ostrogoth King Theodehad of Italy forced him on the Catholic Church.

Soon afterwards, Silverius was formally accepted as pope by the Roman clergy.

Silverius soon incurred the wrath of the Empress Theodora. He refused to accept and recognize the heretical Eutychian patriarchs – Anthimus of Constantinople,

Severus of Antioch, and Theodosius of Alexandria – who had all been excommunicated and deposed from their episcopal sees by the previous pope.

Silverius is said to have remarked that by his signing the letter of refusal to Theodora's imperial request, he was also signing his own death warrant. And so it proved to be.

Theodora had Silverius kidnapped and imprisoned on the island of Ponza, and the empress nominated her supporter, Archdeacon Vigilius, for the papal throne. Vigilius was named pope, but upon taking the position, he ceased to support the Empress' heresy and became a strong defender of orthodoxy.

In 537, after a reign of just a year, Silverius died of neglect during his imprisonment. He is now recognized as the patron saint of the island of Ponza, where he died.

Source: americaneedsfatima.org