

January 19, 2023

Good Morning!

Men's Club meeting tonight in the Parish Hall at 6:30

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

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: We look at two popes today that followed after Vigilius: Pelagius and John III. Pelagius supported Pope Vigilius's opposition to the emperor's condemnation of the authors of the Three Chapters and shared his exile. When Vigilius relented and condemned the Three Chapters with the men who wrote them, he also excommunicated Pelagius, who was Justinian's candidate to succeed Vigilius. Elected to the papacy in 555, Pelagius was not enthroned for a year because no one would consecrate him.

Born to a distinguished Roman family, John III was the second pope in history to have taken a different name than the one he was given at birth. Originally named Catelinus, he opted for the name John upon his election July 17, 561. Though John was pope for well over a decade, surprisingly little is known about his time in office due to it coinciding with the tumultuous Lombard invasion of Italy. He died four days short of his 13th anniversary as pope and was buried in St. Peter's Basilica.

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

~Jesus Christ did not found the Church only as the mystical Body of which He is the Head and we are the members. He also made it a visible and hierarchical society, the supreme authority in doctrine and morals, the distributor of His grace and of the means of Redemption. If He had not done this, it would be impossible to understand how men could have carried on the saving work of the Redeemer throughout the centuries. The Church is Jesus' masterpiece. It is empowered by His grace and authority to enlighten men and guide them safely along the path of sanctity. Jesus said to His Apostles and through them to their successors: "He who hears you, hears me; and he who rejects you, rejects me." (Luke 10:16). He also said: "I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." (Mt. 28:20)

This is why obedience is our first duty to the successors of the Apostles, in other words, to the hierarchical Church. We must obey the Church as we would obey Christ.

Anybody who makes exceptions or compromises in this matter is not a true Christian.

~Besides being our infallible teacher, the Church is also our affectionate Mother. Along with the inexhaustible treasury of His graces, it has inherited from Jesus His infinite love for all mankind. Let us consider what the Church does and has done for us. As soon as we are born into this mortal life, She gives us through the waters of Baptism a second life which is supernatural and everlasting. When we are a little older and exposed to the onslaughts of evil, She strengthens us in grace by means of another Sacrament, and makes us soldiers of Christ. If in spite of this we fall into sin, She is by our side once

Daily Parish Communication

more. She raises us up. In the Sacrament of Penance She gives us God's forgiveness and the spiritual strength to rise again. Moreover, She gives us Jesus Christ Himself in the Blessed Eucharist. By means of another Sacrament She elevates those who receive the power of Orders. In yet another She blesses and consecrates matrimonial love and the pure marriage union. When we are dying, She comes compassionately to our side again and through the final Sacrament gives us strength and purity of purpose for the great journey into eternity. Nor is this enough. She is present with her prayers and blessings even by our coffin and by our graveside.

We owe the Church more than obedience. We owe Her our love. We should love very much this good Mother who accompanies us from the cradle to the grave, from our birth upon earth to our spiritual birth into everlasting happiness.

~But this love should not be so much empty sentiment. Do we see the Church insulted, despised and persecuted? We must defend Her by every means at our disposal. If necessary, we must even die for Her.

Do we hear the Church slandered even as Jesus was slandered? If so we must learn to be on our guard against these calumnies and to contradict them in front of others. If She is suffering we must comfort Her. If She is in need, we must succour Her. If She requires more Apostles who will extend Her sway amongst heretics and pagans, we must be generous in offering our money and our prayers.

Pray very especially and very often for the Church and for Her triumph, which is the triumph of the kingdom of God upon earth.

***St. Joseph, Pray for Us!***

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## Popes of the mid 500's

### 60. Pelagius I (556-61)

Pelagius was born into a noble family from Rome. His father, John, seems to have been vicar of one of the two civil districts into which Italy was then divided.

Pelagius accompanied Pope Agapetus I to Constantinople and was appointed *apocrisarius*. As such, Pelagius acquired great influence with Emperor Justinian I. He returned to Rome in 543. In 545, when Pope Vigilius went to Constantinople on Justinian's orders, Pelagius stayed in Rome as the pope's representative. Totila, king of the Goths, had begun to blockade the city. Pelagius poured out his own fortune for the benefit of the famine-stricken people and tried to induce the king to grant a truce. Though he failed, he afterwards induced Totila to spare the lives of the people when he captured Rome in December 546. Totila sent Pelagius to Constantinople in order to arrange a peace with Justinian I, but the emperor sent him back to say that his general Belisarius was in command in Italy.

### Papacy

Vigilius died on 7 June 555, and Pelagius was elected to succeed him as pope. Pelagius was the emperor's candidate, a designation not well received by the Western clergy and laity. While before his ordination he opposed Justinian's efforts to condemn the "Three Chapters" in order to reconcile theological factions in the Church, afterwards Pelagius adopted Justinian's position.

Pelagius I's pontificate was undermined by rumors that he might have somehow been complicit in the death of Virgilius, and suspicion that his conceding to Justinian indicated a support for Monophysitism. To overcome this, he worked to maintain public order in Rome, and correct abuses among the clergy. He also labored on behalf of the poor and the victims of famine and war. In response to a request from the garrison commander at Civitavecchia, Pelagius directed Bishop Lawrence of that town, to provide chaplains for the army. He is credited with the construction of the Santi Apostoli, Rome, built to celebrate the complete victory of Narses over the Ostrogoths.

Pelagius I served five years, and upon his death on 4 March 561 was buried in Old St. Peter's Basilica.

*Source: catholic.org*

### **61. John III (561-74)**

A Roman surnamed Catelinus, d. 13 July, 574. He was of a distinguished family, being the son of one Anastasius who bore the title of illustris. The year of his birth is not recorded, but he was consecrated pope seemingly on 17 July, 561. Owing to the necessity of waiting for imperial confirmation of his election, an interval of five months elapsed between the death of Pelagius I and the consecration just noted.

Although John reigned nearly thirteen years very little is known of his pontificate. It fell during the stormy times of the Lombard invasion, and practically all the records of his reign have perished. He would seem, however, to have been a magnanimous pontiff, zealous for the welfare of the people. An inscription still to be seen in the fifteenth century testified that "in the midst of straits he knew how to be bountiful and feared not to be crushed amidst a crumbling world". Two most unworthy bishops, Salonius of Embrun and Sagittarius of Gap, had been condemned in a synod at Lyons (c. 567). They succeeded, however, in persuading Guntram, King of Burgundy, that they had been condemned unjustly, and appealed to the pope. Influenced by the king's letters, John decided that they must be restored to their sees. It is to be regretted that the papal mandate was put into effect. The most important of the acts of this pope were those connected with the great general, Narses. Unfortunately, the "*Liber Pontificalis*" is enigmatic regarding them. By intrigue at the court of Constantinople, a charge of treason was trumped up against the general, and, in consequence, the only man capable of resisting the barbarians was recalled. It is quite possible that Narses may then have invited the Lombards to fall upon Italy ; but it is perhaps more probable that, hearing of his recall, they invaded the country. Knowing that Narses was the hope of Italy, John followed him to Naples, and implored him not to go to Constantinople. The general hearkened to the voice of the pope and returned with him to Rome (571). But seemingly the court party in the city was too strong for Narses and the pope. John retired to the catacomb of Prætextatus, where he remained for many months. He even held ordinations there. On the death of Narses (c.

572), John returned to the Lateran Palace. His sojourn in the catacombs gave him a great interest in them. He put them in repair and ordered that the necessaries for Mass should be sent to them from the Lateran. John died 13 July, 574, and was buried in St. Peter's.

*Source: catholic.org*