

March 14, 2023

Good Morning!

VBS Planning Meeting, Office 10:00
Rosary Guild, Office 12:30

1. Today's Readings: [Tuesday of the Third Week of Lent | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: As we move forward with the popes, we see how much they were involved with the politics and secular alliances of their day. Today we cover 2 (almost 3) popes: Zachary, Stephen II and Stephen III. Almost? Pope Stephen II died before he was consecrated pope so is not always counted in the list of popes.

3. Quotes of the Day: Contemplations for you to meditate on

~"Be one of the small number who find the way to life, and enter by the narrow gate into Heaven. Take care not to follow the majority and the common herd, so many of whom are lost. Do not be deceived; there are only two roads: one that leads to life and is narrow; the other that leads to death and is wide. There is no middle way." *St. Louis de Montfort*

~"Realize it, my brethren; —everyone who breathes, high and low, educated and ignorant, young and old, man and woman, has a mission, has a work. We are not sent into this world for nothing; we are not born at random; . . . God sees every one of us; He creates every soul, He lodges it in the body, one by one, for a purpose. He needs, He deigns to need, every one of us. He has an end for each of us; we are all equal in His sight, and we are placed in our different ranks and stations, not to get what we can out of them for ourselves, but to labor in them for Him. As Christ has His work, we too have ours; as He rejoiced to do His work, we must rejoice in ours also." *St. John Henry Newman*

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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Popes of the mid 700s

91. St. Zachary (741-52)

Pope St. Zachary succeeded Gregory III in 741, and was a man of singular meekness and goodness; and so far from any thought of revenge, that he heaped benefits on those who had persecuted him before his promotion to the pontificate. He loved the clergy and people of Rome to that degree, that he hazarded his life for them on occasion of the troubles which Italy fell into by the rebellion of the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento against king Luitprand. Out of respect to his sanctity and dignity, that king restored to the church of Rome all the places which belonged to it: Ameria, Horta, Narni, Ossimo, Ancona, and the whole territory of Sabina, and sent back the captives without ransom. The Lombards were moved to tears at the devotion with which they heard him perform the divine service. By a journey to Pavia, he obtained also of Luitprand, though with some difficulty, peace for the territory of Ravenna, and the restitution of the places which he had taken from the exarchate.

The zeal and prudence of this holy pope appeared in many wholesome regulations, which he had made to reform or settle the discipline and peace of several churches. St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, wrote to him against a certain priest, named Virgilius; that he labored to sow the seeds of discord between him and Odilo, duke of Bavaria, and taught, besides other errors, that there were other men under the earth, another sun and moon, and another world. Pope Zachary answered, that if he taught such an error he ought to be deposed. This cannot be understood as a condemnation of the doctrine of Antipodes, or the spherical figure of the earth, as some writers have imagined by mistake. The error here spoken of is that of certain heretics, who maintained that there was another race of men, who did not descend from Adam, and were not redeemed by Christ. Nor did Zachary pronounce any sentence in the case: for in the same letter he ordered that Virgilius should be sent to Rome, that this doctrine might be examined. It seems that he cleared himself: for we find this same Virgilius soon after made bishop of Saltzburgh. Certain Venetian merchants having bought at Rome many slaves to sell to the Moors in Africa, St. Zachary forbade such an iniquitous traffic, and, paying the merchants their price, gave the slaves their liberty. He adorned Rome with sacred buildings, and with great foundations in favor of the poor and pilgrims, and gave every year a considerable sum to furnish oil for the lamps in St. Peter's church. He died in 752, in the month of March, and is honored in the Roman Martyrology on this day.

92. Stephen II (752) Because he died before being consecrated, many authoritative lists omit him

93. Stephen III (752-57)

Stephen (II) III was unanimously elected in St. Mary Major's, and consecrated on March 26 (or April 3), 752. He had at once to face the Lombards who were resolved to bring all Italy under their sway. With the capture of Ravenna (751), they had put an end to the power of the Byzantine exarchs and were preparing to seize the Duchy of Rome. In vain did Stephen apply for help to Constantinople and freely spent his money to induce them to keep the peace they had made with him, and to refrain from hostilities. He accordingly devoted himself to prayer and endeavored to obtain assistance from Pepin and the Franks. As a last resource he went himself to Gaul to plead his cause before the Frankish king. Receiving a most favorable reception, he crowned Pepin as King of the Franks, and at Kiersey was solemnly assured by him that he would defend him, and would restore the exarchate to St. Peter. Failing to make any impression on Aistulf, the Lombard king, by repeated embassies, Pepin forced the passes of the Alps, and compelled him to swear to restore Ravenna and the other cities he had taken (754). But no sooner had Pepin withdrawn from Lombardy than Aistulf roused the whole Lombard nation, appeared in arms before the walls of Rome (January, 756), ravaged the neighborhood, and made a desperate attempt to capture the city. After receiving one appeal for help after another from the pope, Pepin crossed the Alps a second time (756), and again forced Aistulf to submission. This time Stephen was put in possession of the cities of the exarchate and of the Pentapolis, and became practically the first pope-king. Towards the close of this same year Aistulf died amid preparations for once more violating his engagements. On his death two rivals claimed the Lombard throne, Desiderius, Duke of Istria and Ratchis, brother of Aistulf, who in 749 had resigned the Lombard crown, and had taken the monastic habit in Monte Cassino. Desiderius at once invoked the assistance of the pope, and, on condition of his help, promised to restore to Rome certain cities in the exarchate and the Pentapolis which still remained in the hands of the Lombards, and to give the pope a large sum of money. Stephen at once sent envoys to both the rivals, and, impressing on Ratchis the duty of being true to his monastic vows, succeeded in bringing about peace, and preventing civil war. Ratchis returned to his monastery and Desiderius was recognized as king (about March, 757). The latter, however, did not fulfill his promise to the pope in its entirety. He gave up Faenza, Ferrara, and two small towns, but retained Bologna, Imola, and other towns in the Pentapolis till his overthrow by Charlemagne. Stephen had scarcely established a system of

government in the exarchate when he had to quell the rebellion of Sergius, Archbishop of Ravenna, whom he had made its governor. He, however, caused the rebel to be brought to Rome, and kept him there while he lived. Stephen corresponded with the Emperor Constantine on the subject of the restoration of the sacred images, and himself restored many of the ancient churches of the city. Remarkable for his love of the poor, Stephen built hospitals for them near St. Peter's, in which church he was buried.

Source: catholic.com