

March 15, 2023

Good Morning!

Adoration following the morning Mass till 4:00 PM  
First Communion Parent's Make-up Class (Portable) 6:30 PM

1. Today's Readings: [Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent | USCCB](#)
2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Our next pope, Adrian I, had a long and active papacy. Pope for almost 24 years, he was good friends with Charlemagne. This friendship played an important role in our history. "Rarely have the priesthood and the empire worked together so harmoniously, and with such beneficent results to the Church and to humanity, as during the lifetime of these two great rulers." (Catholic Encyclopedia)
3. Quote of the Day: On an Adoration Day....

"When our Lord bade us "to pray always" He did not mean to ask us to be constantly in the act of prayer but only to live in the state of prayer. Let us note the difference: to be constantly in the act of prayer would be to fill our life's course with religious exercises alone!...Even in the most contemplative lives, this is never done. There is always a place for certain activities that are more or less secular: meals, recreations, sleep, and the like. Living in a state of prayer does not aim at an impossible existence. The part of our lives devoted to religious exercises will mean that in all things, although it might be a question of a secular action, we will have no other purpose than to give glory to God...always to have an intention directed as much as possible toward God."

—Raoul Lus, S. J.

***Pope Adrian I, Pray for Us!  
St. Joseph, Pray for Us!***

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## Pope of the late 700s

### 96. Adrian I (772-95)

Adrian's pontificate of twenty-three years, ten months, and twenty-four days was unequalled in length by that of any successor of St. Peter until a thousand years later, when Pius VI, deposed and imprisoned by the same Frankish arms which had enthroned the first Pope-King, surpassed Adrian by a pontificate six months longer. At a critical period in the history of the Papacy, Adrian possessed all the qualities essential in the founder of a new dynasty. He was a Roman of noble extraction and majestic stature. By a life of singular piety, by accomplishments deemed extraordinary in that iron age, and by valuable services rendered during the pontificate of Paul I and Stephen III, he had so gained the esteem of his unruly countrymen that the powerful chamberlain, Paul Afiarta, who represented in Rome the interests of Desiderius, the Lombard king, was powerless to resist the unanimous voice of the clergy and people demanding for Adrian the papal chair.

The new pontiff's temporal policy was, from the first, sharply defined and tenaciously adhered to; the keynote was a steadfast resistance to Lombard aggression. He released from prison or recalled from exile the numerous victims of the chamberlain's violence; and, upon discovering that Afiarta had caused Sergius, a high official of the papal court, to be assassinated in prison, ordered his arrest in Rimini, just as Afiarta was returning from an embassy to Desiderius with the avowed intention of bringing the Pope to the Lombard court, "were it even in chains." The time seemed propitious for subjecting all Italy to the Lombard rule; and with less able antagonists than Adrian and Charles (to be famous in later ages as Charlemagne), most probably the ambition of Desiderius would have been gratified. There seemed little prospect of Frankish intervention. The Lombards held the passes of the Alps, and Charles was engrossed by the difficulties of the Saxon war; moreover, the presence in Pavia of Gerberga and her two sons, the widow and orphans of Carloman, whose territories, on his brother's death, Charles had annexed, seemed to offer an excellent opportunity of stirring up discord among the Franks, if only the Pope could be persuaded, or coerced, to anoint the children as heirs to their father's throne. Instead of complying, Adrian valiantly determined upon resistance. He strengthened the fortifications of Rome, called to the aid of the militia the inhabitants of the surrounding territory, and, as the Lombard host advanced, ravaging and plundering, summoned Charles to hasten to the defense of their common interests. An opportune lull in the Saxon war left the great

commander free to act. Unable to bring the deceitful Lombard to terms by peaceful overtures, he scaled the Alps in the autumn of 773, seized Verona, where Gerberga and her sons had sought refuge, and besieged Desiderius in his capital. The following spring, leaving his army to prosecute the siege of Pavia, he proceeded with a strong detachment to Rome, in order to celebrate the festival of Easter at the tomb of the Apostles. Arriving on Holy Saturday, he was received by Adrian and the Romans with the utmost solemnity. The next three days were devoted to religious rites; the following Wednesday to affairs of state. The enduring outcome of their momentous meeting was the famous "Donation of Charlemagne", for eleven centuries the Magna Charta of the temporal power of the Popes. Duchesne's thorough and impartial investigation of its authenticity in his edition of the "Liber Pontificalis" would seem to have dissipated any reasonable doubt. Two months later Pavia fell into the hands of Charles; the kingdom of the Lombards was extinguished, and the Papacy was forever delivered from its persistent and hereditary foe. Nominally, Adrian was now monarch of above two-thirds of the Italian peninsula; but his sway was little more than nominal. Over a great portion of the district mentioned in the Donation, the papal claims were permitted to lapse. To gain and regain the rest, Charles was forced to make repeated expeditions across the Alps. We may well doubt whether the great King of the Franks would have suffered the difficulties of the Pope to interfere with his more immediate cares, were it not for his extreme personal veneration of Adrian, whom in life and death he never ceased to proclaim his father and best friend. It was in no slight degree owing to Adrian's political sagacity, vigilance, and activity, that the temporal power of the Papacy did not remain a fiction of the imagination.

His merits were equally great in the more spiritual concerns of the Church. In cooperation with the orthodox Empress Irene, he labored to repair the damages wrought by the Iconoclastic storms. In the year 787 he presided, through his legates, over the Seventh General Council, held at Nicaea, in which the Catholic doctrine regarding the use and veneration of images was definitely expounded. The importance of the temporary opposition to the decrees of the Council throughout the West, caused mainly by a defective translation, aggravated by political motives, has been greatly exaggerated in modern times. The controversy elicited a strong refutation of the so-called "Libri Carolini" from Pope Adrian and occasioned no diminution of friendship between him and Charles. He opposed most vigorously, by synods and writings, the nascent heresy of Adoptionism, one of the few Christological errors originated by the West. The "Liber Pontificalis" enlarges upon his merits in embellishing the city of Rome, upon

which he is said to have expended fabulous sums. He died universally regretted and was buried in St. Peter's. His epitaph, ascribed to his lifelong friend, Charlemagne, is still extant. Rarely have the priesthood and the empire worked together so harmoniously, and with such beneficent results to the Church and to humanity, as during the lifetime of these two great rulers. The chief sources of our information as to Adrian are the Life in the "Liber Pontificalis", and his letters to Charlemagne, preserved by the latter in his "Codex Carolinus". Estimates of Adrian's work and character by modern historians differ with the varying views of writers regarding the temporal sovereignty of the popes, of which Adrian I must be considered the real founder.

*Source: catholic.com*

# 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*