

March 2, 2023

Good Morning!

Catholic Book Club Meeting, 3:00 or 6:30 Parish Office  
This month's book is the *7 Secrets of Confession*.

1. Today's Readings: [Thursday of the First Week in Lent | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Our next 2 popes complete the history of the papacy in the 600's and begin the 700's. One of them is noted for adding the Agnus Dei to the Mass.

3. Meditation of the Day: Antonio Cardinal Bacci

Catholic Action

~ Catholic action is the participation of the laity, or more correctly their co-operation, in the hierarchical apostolate of the Church. It is not really an innovation. It is as old as the Church herself, although it is only on account of the peculiar circumstances of our times that it has come to be organised in a special manner. From the beginning of Christianity, the laity of both sexes worked energetically alongside the Apostles for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. When St. Paul was writing to the Philippians he urged them to assist those Christian women who had done so much to spread the Gospel, as well as Clement and his other fellow-workers. "Help them, for they have toiled with me in the Gospel, as have Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers whose names are in the book of life." It is evident that even at that time there were laymen and women working in cooperation with the apostolic hierarchy. Every Christian, moreover, should feel the need to do this. Anyone who has the true faith and is on fire with the love of God and of his neighbour cannot but exert himself so that all men may reach the truth and live in accordance with it, that is, in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel. Anyone who is not motivated by this desire cannot claim to be a genuine and enthusiastic Christian.

~ The need for a lay apostolate has grown tremendously in our day. The scarcity of priests is not the only reason for this. It is true that their numbers are entirely inadequate in many places to meet the spiritual needs of the people. But there is the additional factor that certain spheres cannot easily be penetrated by the clergy. There are many people who never even enter a church. They never have any contact with the priest, who finds it difficult to approach them. He needs a "long arm" which will bear the light where he cannot carry it himself. The lay apostolate can be this "long arm." Catholic workmen can do an amount of good among their fellow workers by word and by example. So can teachers, clerks, doctors, journalists, and the rest. This kind of environmental apostolate is very valuable today. It must be built up into a system of blood-vessels which will carry the stream of Christian life from its heart, which is the priesthood, to the farthest extremities of society. Let Christian laymen recognise that this is an honourable vocation which they

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have received, for it is a participation in the priestly office. Everyone should feel summoned to do everything possible in his own environment to lead souls to Christ

~ Spiritual formation is necessary for this task. The layman must be a sincere and earnest Christian. Otherwise, he will not be able to transmit to others what he has not got himself. He must live the life of the Church and help it to fulfil its saving mission. To say that he must cooperate with the priest is the same as saying that he must cooperate with Christ, for the priest must be another Christ. So it is a high honour which the layman assumes when he dedicates himself to the apostolate and he will enjoy many consolations. If anyone deliberately refuses to undertake this apostolate, his faith is neither alive nor active. If our faith is to be sincere and effective, we must first of all undergo a strenuous spiritual training, nourished by prayer and by divine grace. As a consequence, we shall work generously to bring about the triumph of the life of Christ in other souls also.

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

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## **Popes of the late 600's and early 700's**

### **84. St. Sergius I (687-701)**

The date of St. Sergius I's birth is unknown. He was consecrated probably on 15 December, 687 and died on 8 Sept., 701. While Pope Conon lay dying, the archdeacon Pascal offered the exarch a large sum to bring about his election as his successor. Through the exarch's influence the archdeacon was accordingly elected by a number of people; about the same time another faction elected the archpriest Theodore. The mass of clergy and people, however, set them both aside and chose Sergius, who was duly consecrated. Sergius, the son of Tiberius, was a native of Antioch; he was educated in Sicily, and ordained by [St.] Leo II. The new pope had numerous relations with England and the English. He received [St.] Caedwalla, King of the West Saxons, and baptized him (689); and, as he died in Rome, caused him to be buried in St. Peter's. He ordered St. Wilfrid to be restored to his see, greatly favored St. Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, and is credited with endeavoring to secure the Venerable Bede as his adviser. Finally he consecrated the Englishman [St.] Willibrord bishop, and sent him to preach Christianity to the Frisians. The cruel Emperor Justinian wanted him to sign the decrees of the so-called Quinisext or Trullan Council of 692, in which the Greeks allowed priests and deacons to keep the wives they had married before their ordination, and which aimed at placing the Patriarch of Constantinople on a level with the Pope of Rome. When Sergius refused to acknowledge this synod, the emperor sent an officer to bring him to Constantinople. But the people protected the pope, and Justinian himself was soon afterwards deposed (695). Sergius succeeded in extinguishing the last remnants of the Schism of the Three Chapters in Aquileia. He repaired and adorned many basilicas, added the Agnus Dei to the Mass, and instituted processions to various churches.

*Source: newadvent.org*

### **85. John VI (701-05)**

A Greek, the date of whose birth is unknown; d. 11 January, 705. He ascended the papal throne 30 October, 701. Sometime during his reign there came to Rome from Sicily Theophylactus, "chamberlain, patricius, and exarch of Italy".

After the treatment which some of his predecessors in the exarchate had meted out to the popes, the Italian people suspected that his visit boded no good to John VI. Accordingly, from all parts the local militias hurriedly marched to Rome, and, encamping without the walls, made manifest their dislike of the exarch. To avoid bloodshed, John sent a number of priests to them, and succeeded in pacifying them; as far at least as the exarch himself was concerned. Before the militias would disband, however, they insisted that certain informers, whose denunciations had put the wealth of some of the citizens into the hands of the grasping officials, should be handed over to them for punishment. Taking advantage of this want of harmony between the exarch and the native Italians attached to the pope, the Lombards renewed their attacks on such parts of Italy as had hitherto resisted them. Several towns belonging to the Duchy of Rome were seized, Gisulf advanced as far as "Horrea" Puteoli — or perhaps the "fundus Horrea" at the fifth milestone on the Via Latina. As "there was no one who had power to resist him by force of arms", the pope, distressed at the sufferings of the people, sent a number of priests furnished with money into the camp of the Lombard duke. Not only did they ransom all the captives whom Gisulf had taken, but they persuaded him to retire to his own territories. John VI was one of the popes before whom St. Wilfrid of York carried his appeals. Pointing out that the action of the Apostolic See was wont to be consistent, the saint adjured him to confirm in his behalf the decisions of his predecessors (704). This John did and sent him back to England with letters for King Ethelred and others. It was not, however, till the following year that the papal mandates were obeyed. John sent the pallium to Brithwald, whom "he confirmed as Archbishop of Canterbury ". He was buried in St. Peter's.

*Source: catholic.org*