

March 22, 2023

Good Morning!

Adoration following the morning Mass till 4:00 PM

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

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: There were power struggles that wanted to control papal elections including that of Pope Eugene II. The struggles didn't end with the election. However, "Eugene is described by his biographer as simple and humble, learned and eloquent, handsome and generous, a lover of peace, and wholly occupied with the thought of doing what was pleasing to God."

We also include his successor, Pope Valentine, unanimously elected but who only reigned for 40 days.

3. Meditation of the Day: Based upon today's readings....

As the pathways of Lent draw ever closer to Calvary, the liturgy multiplies its images of the Messianic Age—the Kingdom of God—that is being inaugurated in the person of Jesus: in his preaching, in his healings and other "signs," and, ultimately, in his atoning death, vindicated in the Resurrection. Thus Isaiah in the Old Testament reading for today's Mass speaks of the "time of favor," the "day of salvation" that will extend God's covenant with Israel to those who will "come from afar" to enjoy the mercy and bounty of the Lord. Jesus, in his ongoing confrontation with those who object to him calling God his "Father," prophecies in today's gospel reading that "the hour is coming" when anyone who hears his word and "believes him who sent me" will have "eternal life" —and not as something that happens after death, but here and now, in the world and in history.

The Messianic Age is erupting into history in the person of Jesus, who seeks not his "own will but the will of him who sent me." Those who have entered into friendship with Jesus the Lord are thus empowered by their imitation of him to live, now, the eternal life he has shared with the Father from all ages. Disciples can live "in the Kingdom" now. They can, as St. Maximus the Confessor teaches in today's Office of Readings, "imitate him by [their] kindness and genuine love for one another," living "like our heavenly Father, holy, merciful and just."

Kingdom-living is life lived through the virtues. Thus today's liturgical readings, and the great station at the tomb of the apostle who taught the Church the "more excellent way" by which love completes faith and hope [see 1 Corinthians 12:32b-13:13], afford Lenten pilgrims an opportunity to reflect on the theological and cardinal virtues as the spiritual and moral framework of the New Life promised by Jesus and won by his Cross and

Daily Parish Communication

Resurrection.

—George Weigel, *Roman Pilgrimage: The Station Churches*, catholicculture.org

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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Popes of the 820s

100. Eugene II (824-27)

Elected 6 June, 824; died 27 Aug., 827. On the death of Pascal I (Feb.-May, 824) there took place a divided election. The late pope had wisely endeavored to curb the rapidly increasing power of the Roman nobility, who, to strengthen their positions against him, had turned for support to the Frankish power. When he died these nobles made strenuous efforts to replace him by a candidate of their own; and despite the fact that the clergy put forward a candidate likely to continue the policy of Paschal the nobles were successful in their attempt. They secured the consecration of Eugene, archpriest of S. Sabina on the Aventine, although by a decree of the Roman Council of 769, under Stephen IV, they had no right to a real share in a papal election. Their candidate is stated, in earlier editions of the "Liber Pontificalis" to have been the son of Boemund; but in the recent and better editions his father's name is not given. Whilst archpriest of the Roman Church he is credited with having fulfilled most conscientiously the duties of his position and after he became pope he beautified his ancient church of S. Sabina with mosaics and with metal work bearing his name, which were intact in the sixteenth century. Eugene is described by his biographer as simple and humble, learned and eloquent, handsome and generous, a lover of peace, and wholly occupied with the thought of doing what was pleasing to God.

The election of Eugene II was a triumph for the Franks, and they resolved to improve the occasion. Emperor Louis the Pious accordingly sent his son Lothair to Rome to strengthen the Frankish influence. Those of the Roman nobles who had been banished during the preceding reign, and who had fled to Frankland (Francia), were recalled, and their property was restored to them. A concordat or constitution was then agreed upon between the pope and the emperor (824). The "Constitutio Romana", in nine articles, was drawn up seemingly with a view of advancing the imperial pretensions in the city of Rome, but at the same time of checking the power of the nobles. It decreed that those who were under the special protection of the pope or emperor were to be inviolable, and that proper obedience be rendered to the pope and his officials; that church property be not plundered after the death of a pope; that only those to whom the right had been given by the deceased Stephen IV, in 769, should take part in papal elections; that

two commissioners (*missi*) were to be appointed, the one by the pope and the other by the emperor, who should report to them how justice was administered, so that any failure in the administration might be corrected by the pope, or, in the event of his not doing so, by the emperor; that the people should be judged according to the law (Roman, Salic, or Lombard) they had elected to live under; that its property be restored to the Church; that robbery with violence be put down; that when the emperor was in Rome the chief officials should appear before him to be admonished to do their duty; and, finally, that all must obey the Roman pontiff. By command of the pope and Lothair the people had to swear that, saving the fidelity they had promised the pope, they would obey the Emperors Louis and Lothair; would not allow a papal election to be made contrary to the canons; and would not suffer the pope-elect to be consecrated save in the presence of the emperor's envoys.

Seemingly before Lothair left Rome, there arrived ambassadors from Emperor Louis, and from the Greeks concerning the image-question. At first the Greek emperor, Michael II, showed himself tolerant towards the image-worshippers, and their great champion, Theodore the Studite, wrote to him to exhort him "to unite us [the Church of Constantinople] to the head of the Churches of God, viz. Rome, and through it with the three Patriarchs" (Epp., II, lxxiv); and in accordance with ancient custom to refer any doubtful points to the decision of Old Rome (II, lxxxvi; cf. II, cxxix). But Michael soon forgot his tolerance, bitterly persecuted the image-worshippers, and endeavoured to secure the co-operation of Louis the Pious. He also sent envoys to the pope to consult him on certain points connected with the worship of images (Einhard, Annales, 824). Before taking any steps to meet the wishes of Michael, Louis sent to ask the pope's permission for a number of his bishops to assemble, and make a selection of passages from the Fathers to elucidate the question the Greeks had put before them. The leave was granted, but the bishops who met at Paris (825) were incompetent for their work. Their collection of extracts from the Fathers was a mass of confused and ill-digested lore, and both their conclusions and the letters they wished the pope to forward to the Greeks were based on a complete misunderstanding of the decrees of the Second Council of Nicæa (cf. P.L., XCVIII, p. 1293 sqq.). Their labours do not appear to have accomplished much; nothing at any rate is known of their consequences.

In 826 Eugene held an important council at Rome of sixty-two bishops, in which thirty-eight disciplinary decrees were issued. One or two of its decrees are noteworthy as showing that Eugene had at heart the advance of learning. Not only were ignorant bishops and priests to be suspended till they had acquired sufficient learning to perform their sacred duties, but it was decreed that, as in some localities there were neither masters nor zeal for learning, masters were to be attached to the episcopal palaces, cathedral churches and other places, to give instruction in sacred and polite literature (can. xxxiv). To help in the work of the conversion of the North, Eugene wrote commending St. Ansgar, the Apostle of the Scandinavians, and his companions "to all the sons of the Catholic Church" (Jaffé, 2564). Coins of this pope are extant bearing his name and that of Emperor Louis. It is supposed, for no document records the fact, that, in accordance with the custom of the time, he was buried in St. Peter's.

Source: newadvent.org, Catholic encyclopedia

101. Valentine (827)

Valentine was by birth a Roman, belonging to the Via Lata district. While still a youth he entered the service of the Church. His biographer in the "Liber pontificalis" praises his piety and purity of morals, which won him the favor of Paschal I. Paschal ordained Valentine subdeacon and deacon, employed him at the Lateran palace, and placed him as archdeacon at the head of the Roman diaconate. Valentine retained his influential position during the pontificate of Eugene II, and after Eugene's death was unanimously elected his successor by the clergy, nobles, and people of Rome. The election had taken place at the Lateran whence the entire company proceeded to Santa Maria Maggiore, where Valentine was tarrying in prayer. He was led to the Lateran basilica and placed upon the papal throne. After this, probably on the succeeding Sunday, he was consecrated bishop at St. Peter's, and then enthroned as pope. No information has been preserved of his brief reign; he died after he had occupied the papal see forty days according to the "Liber pontificalis", and barely a month according to the testimony of the "Annales" of Einhard.

Source: catholic.com, Catholic encyclopedia