

March 24, 2023

Good Morning!

Lenten Dinner - Hosted by St. Joseph Catholic School and The Holy Family Group

Children's Stations of the Cross at 4:30 PM Deacon Chet will be leading this effort. We hope to see you there!

*Come join the Holy Family Group for a special*  
**Children's Stations of the Cross**  
**Friday, March 24th from 4:30-5:30**  
**Meet in the Narthex**



Confessions from 4:00-5:00  
Lenten Supper at 5:30  
Parish Stations at 7:00pm

Parish (Adult) Stations of the Cross 7:00 PM, Church

1. Today's Readings: [Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent | USCCB](#)
2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: More political intrigue buffeted the next popes. Gregory IV spent most of his papacy dealing with Louis of France and his sons. Sergius II also had to deal with the sons of Louis. If the internet had been available back then, what would the headlines have read? Reflecting on this can help us keep perspective on our own times.

3. Quotes of the Day:

~"Think of the Father as a spring of life begetting the Son like a river and the Holy Spirit like a sea, for the spring and the river and the sea are all one nature. Think of the Father as a root and of the Son as a branch and the Spirit as a fruit, for the substance in these three is one. The Father is a sun with the Son as rays and the Holy Spirit as heat." *St. John Damascene on the Holy Trinity*

~"Faith and love are like the blind man's guides. They will lead you along a path unknown to you, to the place where God is hidden." *St. John of the Cross*

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

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## Popes of the mid 800s, part 1

### 102. Gregory IV (827-44)

When Gregory was born is not known, but he was a Roman and the son of John. Before his election to the papacy he was the Cardinal-Priest of the Basilica of St. Mark, which he adorned with mosaics still visible. For his piety and learning he was ordained priest by Paschal I. This man, of distinguished appearance and high birth, was raised to the chair of Peter, despite his protestations of unfitness, mainly by the instrumentality of the secular nobility of Rome who were then securing a preponderating influence in papal elections. But the representatives in Rome of the Emperor Louis the Pious would not allow him to be consecrated until his election had been approved by their master. This interference caused such delay that it was not, seemingly, till about March, 828, that he began to govern the Church.

Throughout the greater part of his pontificate Gregory was involved in the quarrels between Louis and his sons which were to prove fatal to the domination of the Franks. By a solemn deed, confirmed by Paschal I, Louis had made a division of the empire in favor of the three sons of his first wife, Lothario I, Pepin, and Louis the German. But on her death, he married the young and ambitious Judith, and was soon induced by her to devote himself wholly to furthering the interests of their son. The brothers, however, soon disagreed among themselves and Louis was restored to power by a diet at Nimwegen, and, by a decision of the pope, to his wife from whom he had been separated by force. Untaught by experience, Louis continued his policy of favoring his youngest son. The brothers again flew to arms, and the eldest, Lothair (who was ruling Italy), induced Gregory to accompany him across the Alps. The appearance of the pope in the camp of the rebels made it appear that he was in their favor. Hence the bishops who remained faithful to the emperor, suspicious of the pope's good faith, would not come to him when he summoned them to his presence. It was to no purpose that Gregory repelled their accusations. When at length he met Louis himself, he found that Louis also did not trust him. While these negotiations were in progress, Lothair, who was false to everyone, was suborning the allegiance of his father's soldiers. Betrayed in consequence, Louis once again fell into the hands of his sons. Lothair seized the empire, allowed Gregory to return to Rome a sadder and a wiser man, and degraded his father. But next year witnessed a second fraternal quarrel, and a second restoration of Louis, who was weak enough to allow Lothair to retain the Kingdom of Italy. The result of his mistaken acts of clemency was not only that

he had to protect the pope against Lothair's aggressions but that he had to face another rebellion of one of his sons. In marching to put it down, he died.

His death put Lothair in possession of the imperial name. To be emperor in fact, he resolved to crush his brothers. The terrible battle of Fontenay, resulted not only in the defeat of Lothair, but in the practical annihilation of the Frankish people, and in the end of their empire. While the empire was collapsing, the Saracens were pushing forward their conquests. During Gregory's pontificate they possessed Sicily, and had been invited into Italy to take part in the wars of the petty princes of South Italy. To do what he could for the safety of Rome, the pope fortified the ancient Ostia by the erection of a stronghold called after himself Gregoriopolis. Gregory repaired aqueducts and churches and founded "farm colonies" in the Campagna. He seconded the heroic efforts which St. Anaschar, the Apostle of the North, was making for the conversion of Sweden, authorizing his consecration as the first Archbishop of Hamburg, sending him the pallium, giving him "full authority to preach the Gospel" and making him his legate "among the Swedes, Danes and Slavs."

Gregory gave the pallium to the Archbishops of Salzburg, Canterbury, and Grado, and favored the latter against the encroachments of the Patriarch of Aquileia. He also supported Aldric, Bishop of Le Mans, who got into difficulties through his loyal support of Louis against his rebellious sons. To oblige Louis, Gregory caused some of his ecclesiastics to be trained in music in Rome, and he instructed him to proclaim the observance of the feast of All Saints throughout the empire. Gregory was buried in St. Peter's.

*Source: excerpted from newadvent.org, Catholic encyclopedia*

### **103. Sergius II (844-47)**

He was of noble birth, and belonged to a family which gave two other popes to the Church. Educated in the *schola cantorum*, he was patronized by several popes, and was ordained Cardinal-priest of the Church of Sts. Martin and Sylvester by Paschal. Under Gregory IV, whom he succeeded, he became archpriest. At a preliminary meeting to designate a successor to Gregory, the name of Sergius was accepted by the majority; but a mob endeavored by force to place a deacon, John, upon the pontifical throne. He was, however, shut up in a monastery, and Sergius was duly consecrated. From one obviously very partial edition of the "Liber Pontificalis" it would appear that Sergius, owing to devotion to the pleasures of the

table, had no taste for business, and entrusted the management of affairs to his brother Benedict; and that, owing to attacks of gout, he was helpless in body and irritable in mind. His brother usurped all power, and made the getting of money his one concern. As all this is in sharp contrast with the character given to Sergius by the other editions of the "Liber Pontificalis", there can be no doubt about its gross exaggeration. As Sergius was, after a disputed election, consecrated without any reference to the Emperor Lothaire, the latter was indignant, and sent his son Louis with an army to examine into the validity of the election. But Sergius succeeded in pacifying Louis, whom he crowned king, but to whom he would not take an oath of fealty. He also made the king's adviser, Drogo, Bishop of Metz, his legate for France and Germany. Before he died he witnessed a terrible raid of the Saracens on the Roman territory, which nearly resulted in the capture of the City. Despite the resistance of the scholae of the foreigners at Rome, the pirates sacked the basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, and were only prevented by its strong walls from plundering Rome itself. Churches, aqueducts, and the Lateran Basilica were improved by Sergius, who, on his death, was buried in St. Peter's.

*Source: newadvent.org, Catholic encyclopedia*