

April 20, 2023

Good Morning!

Phone installation is all done and phones are working fine!

1. Today's Readings: [Thursday of the Second Week of Easter | USCCB](#)
2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Our next 3 popes are John X, Leo VI and Stephen VIII. As with Pope Sergius III, so too with John X, historians must be careful as to their sources since rumors can often become "fact".
3. Meditation of the Day: Antonio Cardinal Bacci

#### The Mercy of God

~God is the Being Who is infinitely true, beautiful, and good. His goodness is manifested in His infinite love for all the creatures which He has made, but it is in His relations with sinners in particular that we call Him merciful. He loves all things which He has created and directs them towards Himself, their beginning and their end. When He is dealing, however, with beings endowed with free will, who can separate themselves from Him and even offend Him, He tries while respecting the liberty which He has given them to recall them to Himself by the influence of His love and of His grace. It is this supernatural outpouring of love towards sinners which we call mercy.

The mercy of God shines forth in all the pages of Sacred Scripture. In the Old Testament there is promised and foreshadowed in many ways the coming of the Saviour of the sinful human race. In the New Testament Jesus appears, made man for our salvation, meek and humble of heart, and merciful towards the unfortunate, especially towards sinners. For them He offers His life and His Precious Blood, dying on the Cross with His arms outstretched, as if in an embrace of forgiveness. He tells us that He has not come to call the just, but sinners, (Luke 5:32) and that He has not come to those who are in health, but to those who are sick; (Mark 2:17) He assures us that if we ask the Father for anything in His name, it will be given to us. (John 16:23) So much goodness should move and soften our hearts. Even if we are unfaithful servants and are covered with the leprosy of sin, let us go to Him and He will heal us. Even if we have deserved Hell a thousand times, let us shed tears of repentance at His feet as Magdalen did, and He will give us His forgiveness and His peace.

~Let us meditate in particular on certain passages in the Gospel in which God's mercy for sinners stands out most vividly and appealingly. There is the incident of the adulteress who is brought before Our Lord by the hypocritical Pharisees. According to the law she should have been stoned to death. Jesus looks at her accusers, who harbour in the secrecy of their own hearts God knows how many abominations but strut about in public with the mien of stern and impeccable judges. Then He rivets His gaze upon the shamefaced woman who is looking like a soiled rag thrown away on a dust-heap. When

Jesus addresses her relentless judges His voice is steady: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." When they all drift away with lowered heads, Jesus says pityingly to the woman: "Has no one condemned thee?... Neither will I condemn thee. Go thy way, and from now on sin no more." (Cf. John 8:3-11) Elsewhere Jesus is called "the good shepherd" who knows His sheep and calls them to Himself one by one. If a poor sheep is lost, He leaves the other ninety-nine of His flock and searches for it, nor does He rest until it has been found. When He sees that it has been injured, He carries it back to the fold upon His shoulders. Who could forget the touching parable of the prodigal son? He had left the house of his aging father and had gone to a distant country where he had squandered his inheritance in the course of a low and worldly life of pleasure. When all his money had been spent he was very much alone, and was reduced to such circumstances that he took a job looking after unclean animals. One day when he was weeping over his fate, he made a sudden resolution. "I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am no longer worthy to be called thy son." His father had been waiting for him for many years. He met and embraced him and gave him the kiss of pardon. Then he held a great feast because his son had repented and come home. He "was dead and has come to life, he was lost and is found." (Cf. Luke 15:11-32) No matter how great our faults may be, let us trust in the infinite mercy of God, and when we go to Him He will grant us forgiveness and peace.

~Remember, however, that if God's mercy is infinite so is His justice. When we realise that we have fallen into serious sin, we should not give way to despair as Judas did, but should turn to Jesus trustingly and contritely, saying with the Psalmist: "My refuge and my fortress, my stronghold, my deliverer, my shield, in whom I trust." (Ps. 143:2) We shall certainly be forgiven. It would be the highest form of ingratitude to abuse God's goodness and mercy. Let our repentance be sincere and effective. In return for the infinite goodness of God let us give Him our love, limited indeed but willing and constant.

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

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## Popes of the early 900s, part 2

### 123. John X (914-28)

John X was born at Tossignano, Romagna and enthroned in 914. First a deacon at Bologna, he became Archbishop of Ravenna about 905, as successor of Kailo. In a document dated February 5, 914, he still appears as archbishop. Shortly afterwards, owing to the influence of the nobles dominant in Rome, he was made pope in succession to Lando. The real head of this aristocratical faction was the elder Theodora, wife of Senator Theophylactus. Liutprand of Cremona affirms that Theodora supported John's election in order to cover more easily her illicit relations with him. This statement is, however, generally and rightly rejected as a calumny. Liutprand wrote his history some fifty years later, and constantly slandered the Romans, whom he hated. At the time of John's election Theodora was advanced in years and is highly lauded by other writers. John was a relative of Theodora's family, and this explains sufficiently why she secured his election. The new pope was an active and energetic ruler and exerted himself especially to put an end to the Saracen invasions. He brought about an alliance between Prince Landolph of Beneventum, Berengarius of Friuli, King of the Lombards, and other Italian rulers, and, when Berengarius came to Rome in 915, the pope crowned him emperor. John himself led against the Saracens a large army gathered by the allied Italian princes. The Saracens had built fortresses on the river Garigliano, but in August, 916, John completely routed them near the mouth of that river.

Concerning the ecclesiastical administration of this pope we possess many particulars. He sent to Germany his trusted friend Petrus, Bishop of Orte, who held in 916 a synod at Hohenaltheim (near Nordlingen), and entered into friendly relations with King Conrad. John also concerned himself with affairs in France, where Count Heribert of Aquitaine held King Charles a prisoner, and demanded the election of his five-year-old son, Hugh of Vermandois, as Archbishop of Reims. John unhappily confirmed this choice after Heribert had promised the king's release. He further sought to bring the Slavs of Dalmatia into closer relations with Rome, and strove to induce the Archbishop of Spalato to adopt Latin as the liturgical language. His efforts to promote a more intimate union between the Bulgarians and Rome were frustrated by the opposition of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Another opportunity offered, when later the Byzantine patriarch, Nicolaus Mysticus, sought the aid of the pope. The patriarch had been deposed by a synod because he would not recognize the fourth marriage of Emperor Leo VI. Before his

death, however, Leo restored Nicolaus to his office, and the new emperor (Alexander) was also on his side. But many bishops were yet opposed to the patriarch on account of his deposition by the earlier synod. Under these circumstances Nicolaus wished to have the decree of deposition declared invalid by another council, and towards this end desired the assistance of John. But John remained true to the discipline of the Western Church, which permitted as valid even a fourth marriage. Meanwhile, he was active in the political life of Italy. After the murder of King Berengarius in 924 the pope supported Hugh of Burgundy, and, when the latter landed in Pisa, John sent his legate to meet him and form an alliance. The dominant Roman faction disliked these measures. Foremost among them was the elder Marozia, daughter of Theophylactus and Theodora. After the death of her first husband Alberic, Marozia had married Guido, the powerful Mar, grave of Tuscany. The alliance of John and Hugh of Burgundy seemed to endanger her power in Rome, and so with her husband's aid she decided to remove John. Petrus, Prefect of Rome and brother of the pope, was murdered in June, 928. The pontiff himself was seized and cast into prison, where he died shortly after. According to a rumor recorded by Liutprand, and thus little to be relied on, he was smothered in his bed. Flodoard of Reims asserts that he died of anxiety. He was probably buried in the Lateran, for the restoration of which he had been particularly zealous.

*Source: catholic.com*

#### **124. Leo VI (928)**

The exact dates of the election and death of Leo VI are uncertain, but it is clear that he was pope during the latter half of 928. If, as some suppose, he was elected in June, 928, then he died in February, 929, as he reigned seven months and five days. Others, however, believe he became pope before the month of June. He was a Roman, the son of the *primicerius*, Christopher, who had been prime minister of John VIII. When Leo became pope, he was Cardinal-Priest of St. Susanna. His immediate predecessor, John X, had been engaged in settling questions of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Dalmatia; some of these were decided by Leo VI, and there is extant a Bull of his in which he states that he has granted the pallium to Archbishop John of Spalato, orders all the bishops of Dalmatia to obey him, and to confine their operations within the limits of their own dioceses, and instructs Bishop Gregory to be content with the Diocese of Scodra. The only other item of

information regarding Leo which has reached us is that "according to most writers he was buried in St. Peter's".

*Source: newadvent.org*

### **125. Stephen VIII (929-31)**

Stephen's date of birth is unknown; he died in February or March, 931. He became pope either at the end of 928 or at the beginning of 929. Except that he was a Roman, the son of Teudemund, and sometime cardinal-priest of St. Anastasia, and that when pope he issued certain privileges for monasteries in France and Italy, and was buried in St. Peter's, nothing more is known of him.

*Source: catholic.com*