

Daily Parish Communication

March 30, 2023

Good Morning!

Catholic Book Club 3:00 pm or 6:30 pm

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

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Are you noticing that life has never been easy for the popes? Whether it has been kings, emperors, armies or even cardinals and bishops within the Church, problems have always existed. So too, with our next 2 popes, John VIII and Marinus I. Both dealt with the Saracens. Pope John was killed in office, supposedly poisoned and then bludgeoned to death. The name Marinus is sometimes confused with Martinus which has led to some historical confusion.

3. Quote of the Day:

“We trust ourselves to a doctor because we suppose he knows his business. He orders an operation which involves cutting away part of our body and we accept it. We are grateful to him and pay him a large fee because we judge he would not act as he does unless the remedy were necessary, and we must rely on his skill. Yet we are unwilling to treat God in the same way! It looks as if we do not trust His wisdom and are afraid He cannot do His job properly. We allow ourselves to be operated on by a man who may easily make a mistake—a mistake which may cost us our life—and protest when God sets to work on us. If we could see all He sees we would unhesitatingly wish all He wishes.” Fr. Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure

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

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## **Popes of the late 800s, part 1**

### **108. John VIII (872-82)**

Pope John was a native of Rome, born in the first quarter of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, some say in 816. His father was known as Gundus. As a young man, John witnessed the sack of Rome by the Saracens. During that battle, the enemy partly destroyed Old St. Peter's Basilica and St. Paul Outside the Walls. The attackers did not get past the Aurelian walls into the city itself. But this must have been a horror to the young people living there, causing apprehension of the Saracens for the remainder of their lives.

John was an archdeacon in the city of Rome. This is a recorded fact in 853 and 869. And he was an archdeacon at his election, 14 December 872, within days of Pope Adrian's passing. Throughout his reign, Pope John had significant problems. Some historians declare him awesome because he was able to progress through the problems. Some say he was a poor handler of the problems since there were so many.

Before John was consecrated, the brothers, Sts. Cyril and Methodius were evangelizers to the Slavic people. They were in Rome when Cyril died in 869. Pope Adrian sent Methodius back to Moravia as archbishop to continue his evangelization, with permission to use the Slavonic language in the liturgy. German princes and bishops were very upset and jailed Methodius in 871. Pope John did not hear of this until 873, when he received an appeal from Methodius. He immediately prohibited the use of the Slavonic liturgy and demanded the release of Methodius, who was called to Rome. John questioned the archbishop as to his orthodoxy. Satisfied with the answers, the old archbishop was sent back to Moravia where he continued his work of conversion until his death in 885. Although the country's rulers were against such a change, several Slavic tribes placed themselves under the protection of the Holy See, others rejected papal jurisdiction and followed the patriarch of Constantinople, leading later to heresy and schism.

The Saracens were still troubling. They were moving into the southern part of the peninsula. Knowing what they could do, the pope wanted them out. He tried to unite the principalities to fight. Fearful, he fortified the walls of St. Paul Outside the Walls. He built a navy and personally commanded it, patrolling the coastline. At one point, he was obligated to pay tribute to the Saracens.

Because of the Saracens, Pope John was always looking for help and protection. He turned to the Franks. Unknown to him, Louis II was supporting his local enemies, even though he seemed a nice enough man. He died before being able to help. Charles the Bald was not good at adapting the means to the ends. Pope John crowned him Emperor. Then he offered to help with the Saracens but failed. His second attempt left him dead. Charles the Fat was crowned successor to Charles the Bald in February 881, also by Pope John. He did not fare well with the Saracens either.

Unfortunately, John had not been popular with his own people. His arguments with the Vatican clerics were not satisfied via lawsuits. Some clerics took off with much of the Church gold. His expenses in dealing with all these varieties of problems sapped the Vatican finances. The Carolingians were not supporting him. He did not stop the Saracens. On 16 December 882, John was poisoned by his own clerics, then bludgeoned to death. He was buried in Old St. Peter's Basilica.

*Source: catholic365.com*

### **109. Marinus I (882-84)**

Pope Marinus I, mistakenly referred to as Pope Martinus II (which has caused errors in lists of popes), had a short, but controversial papacy. The man, Marinus, must have been an intellectual of some repute, considering the responsibilities and assignments he was given.

Born in Gallese, in the province of Viterbo, north of Italy, his father, Palumbo, was a priest. Marinus was placed into the hands of the Church at the age of 12. He was ordained a subdeacon by Pope Leo IV (847-855). Given that subdeacons are usually young at the time of their ordination, one would assume that Marinus was probably born in the 820s-early 830s. He was consequently ordained a deacon by Pope Nicholas I (858-867).

Within a few years, Marinus was assigned to be a papal legate to Constantinople, by Pope Nicholas. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, had defended Eastern tradition against the Roman Church and, it was said, had been elected uncanonically. The legates were to investigate in 861. By the time they arrived, Photius was well-ensconced, and they accepted this as a fait accompli. That is not what Nicholas wanted. Two years later a local synod deposed Photius.

This led to a schism between Rome and Constantinople. In 869, it had gotten so bad that Marinus was sent to the 4<sup>th</sup> Council of Constantinople, by Pope Adrian. He represented the pope as Photius tried to excommunicate Adrian! Marinus was imprisoned for a time for following orders. Eventually Pope John VIII excommunicated Photius, leading to serious factions in Rome, itself.

During all of this, Marinus was given rewards for his work. He became bishop of Caere and became treasurer of the Church. He also served as legate for Pope John, again, when he was sent to Naples to warn Duke Athanasius to not trade with the Muslims who were moving into southern Italy. This was, obviously, not something the Muslims accepted.

When Pope John died, Marinus was elected over the complaints of many, probably within days. There was a law, written in Canon 15 of the Council of Nicaea, that a bishop could not move to another see. He was already bishop of Caere. His election was to the See of Rome. And his election was challenged in both Eastern and Western Europe.

Once elected, in order to reduce the factions that were threatening to disrupt Rome, Pope Marinus abandoned some of the actions of Pope John. He restored the questionable Formosus, who, had been a troublemaker for some time, as cardinal bishop of Portus. But he upheld John's decision to not support Photius, anathematizing him.

On his own, the new pope granted the request of King Alfred of England to free the Anglo-Saxon students of the Schola Anglorum from paying tribute and taxes to the Vatican. Out of respect to the king, he sent him a piece of the True Cross.

In March, 883, the pope sent the pallium to Fulk, making him archbishop of Reims. This may have been partly at the request of King Alfred, who was supported by Fulk in his attempt to Christianize the Anglo-Saxons.

Possibly as a result of Pope John's request to the duke of Naples to not trade with the Muslims, in 883, they attacked and burned Monte Cassino, the great Benedictine establishment. The abbey was abandoned until the mid-900s.

Pope Marinus did not reign very long, dying around May 15, 884. He was buried in the portico at old St. Peter's Basilica.

*Source: catholic365.com*