

Daily Parish Communication

May 11, 2023

Good Morning!

First Communion Practice, Church 6:45 – 7:45 PM

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

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Today we come to the end of Pope Benedict IX, who three times between 1032 and 1048 reigned as pope. His godfather, who became Gregory VI, is noted for being an upright man who tried to restore the papacy from Benedict IX.

3. Quotes of the Day: More papal thoughts....

~This world and the world to come are two enemies. We cannot therefore be friends to both, but we must decide." *Pope St. Clement I*

~This Apostolic Church never turned from the way of truth nor held any kind of error. It is imperative that nothing of the truths which have been defined be lessened, nothing altered, nothing added, but that they be preserved intact in word and meaning. This is the true rule of faith." *Pope St. Agatho the Wonderworker*

~The Church is rich with heavenly doctrine ... sailing like a ship on the high seas of this world, preserving those who come to her safe and sound, while the world outside perishes." *Bl. Pope Pius IX*

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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Popes of the mid 1000s, part 2

149. Gregory VI (1045-46)

John Gratian's date of birth is unknown. He was elected May 1, 1045; abdicated at Sutri, December 20, 1046. He died probably at Cologne, in the beginning of 1048. In 1045 the youthful libertine Benedict IX occupied the chair of Peter. Anxious, in order, so it is said, that he might marry, to vacate a position into which, though wholly unfit, he had been thrust by his family, he consulted his godfather, John Gratian, the Archpriest of St. John "ad portam Latinam", a man of great reputation for uprightness of character, as to whether he could resign the supreme pontificate. When he was convinced that he might do so, he offered to give up the papacy into the hands of his godfather for a large sum of money. Desirous of ridding the See of Rome of such an unworthy pontiff, John Gratian in all good faith and simplicity paid him the money and was recognized as pope in his stead. Unfortunately the accession of Gratian, who took the name of Gregory VI, though it was hailed with joy even by such a strict upholder of the right as St. Peter Damian, did not bring peace to the Church. When Benedict left the city after selling the papacy, there was already another aspirant to the See of Peter in the field. John, Bishop of Sabina, had been saluted as Pope Sylvester III by that faction of the nobility which had driven Benedict IX from Rome in 1044, and had then installed him in his stead. Though the expelled pontiff (Benedict IX) soon returned, and forced John to retire to his See of Sabina, that pretender never gave up his claims, and through his party contrived apparently to keep some hold on a portion of Rome. Benedict, also unable, it seems, to obtain the bride on whom he had set his heart, soon repented of his resignation, again claimed the papacy, and in his turn is thought to have succeeded in acquiring dominion over a part of the city.

With an empty exchequer (no money) and a clergy that had largely lost the savor of righteousness, Gregory was confronted by an almost hopeless task. Nevertheless, with the aid of his chaplain, Hildebrand, destined to be the great Pope Gregory VII, he essayed to bring about civil and religious order. He strove to affect the latter by letters and by councils, and the former by force of arms. But the factions of the antipopes were too strong to be put down by him, and the confusion only increased. Convinced that nothing would meet the case but German intervention, a number of influential clergy and laity separated themselves from communion with Gregory or either of the two would-be popes and implored the

warlike King Henry III to cross the Alps and restore order. Nothing loath, Henry descended into Italy in the autumn of 1046. Strong in the conviction of his innocence, Gregory went north to meet him. He was received by the king with all the honor due to a pope, and in accordance with the royal request, summoned a council to meet at Sutri. Of the antipopes, Sylvester alone presented himself at the synod, which was opened December 20, 1046. Both his claim to the papacy and that of Benedict were soon disposed of. Deprived of all clerical rank and considered a usurper from the beginning, Sylvester was condemned to be confined in a monastery for the rest of his life. Benedict's case also presented no difficulty. He had now no claim to the papacy, as he had voluntarily resigned it. But it was different with Gregory. However, when the bishops of the synod had convinced him that the act by which he had become supreme pontiff was in itself simoniacal, and had called upon him to resign, Gregory, seeing that little choice was left him, of his own accord laid down his office. A German, Suidger, Bishop of Bamberg (Clement II), was then elected to replace him. Accompanied by Hildebrand, Gregory was taken by Henry to Germany (May, 1047), where he soon died.

Source: catholic.com

150. Clement II (1046-47)

The papal chair was declared vacant after Gregory stepped down. As King Henry was not yet crowned emperor, he had no canonical right to take part in the new election; but the Romans had no candidate to propose and begged the monarch to suggest a worthy subject.

Henry's first choice, the powerful Adalbert, Archbishop of Bremen, positively refused to accept the burden and suggested his friend Suidger, Bishop of Bamberg. In spite of the latter's protests, the king took him by the hand and presented him to the acclaiming clergy and people as their spiritual chief. Suidger's reluctance was finally overcome, though he insisted upon retaining the bishopric of his beloved see. He might be pardoned for fearing that the turbulent Romans would before long send him back to Bamberg. Moreover, since the king refused to give back to the Roman See its possessions usurped by the nobles and the Normans, the pope was forced to look to his German bishopric for financial support. He was enthroned in St. Peter's on Christmas Day and took the name of Clement II. He was born in Saxony of noble parentage, was first a canon in Halberstadt,

then chaplain at the court of King Henry, who appointed him to that important see. He was a man of strictest integrity and severe morality. His first pontifical act was to place the imperial crown upon his benefactor and the queen-consort, Agnes of Aquitaine. The new emperor received from the Romans and the pope the title and diadem of a Roman *Patricius*, a dignity which, since the tenth century, owing to the uncanonical pretensions of the Roman aristocracy, was commonly supposed to give the bearer the right of appointing the pope, or, more exactly speaking, of indicating the person to be chosen. Had not God given His Church the inalienable right of freedom and independence, and sent her champions determined to enforce this right, she would now have simply exchanged the tyranny of Roman factions for the more serious thralldom to a foreign power. The fact that Henry had protected the Roman Church and rescued her from her enemies gave him no just claim to become her lord and master. Short-sighted reformers, even men like St. Peter Damiani who saw in this surrender of the freedom of papal elections to the arbitrary will of the emperor the opening of a new era, lived long enough to regret the mistake that was made. With due recognition of the prominent part taken by the Germans in the reformation of the eleventh century, we cannot forget that neither Henry III nor his bishops understood the importance of absolute independence in the election of the officers of the Church. This lesson was taught them by Hildebrand, the young chaplain of Gregory VI. Henry III, the sworn enemy of simony, never took a penny from any of his appointees, but he claimed a right of appointment which virtually made him head of the Church and paved the way for intolerable abuses under his unworthy successors.

Clement lost no time in beginning the work of reform. At a great synod in Rome, January, 1047, the buying and selling of things spiritual was punished with excommunication; anyone who should knowingly accept ordination at the hands of a prelate guilty of simony was ordered to do canonical penance for forty days. A dispute for precedence between the Sees of Ravenna, Milan, and Aquileia was settled in favor of Ravenna, the bishop of which was, in the absence of the emperor, to take his station at the pope's right. Clement accompanied the emperor in a triumphal progress through Southern Italy and placed Benevento under an interdict for refusing to open its gates to them. Proceeding with Henry to Germany, he canonized Wiborada, a nun of St. Gall, martyred by the Huns in 925. On his way back to Rome he died near Pesaro. That he was poisoned by the partisans of Benedict IX is a mere suspicion without proof. He bequeathed his

mortal remains to Bamberg, in the great cathedral of which his marble sarcophagus is to be seen at the present day. He is the only pope buried in Germany.

Source: newadvent.org

151. Benedict IX (1047-48) (again)— On the death of Clement II, July, 1047, the Tusculan faction reasserted its power in Rome, and, with the secret aid of Boniface, Margrave of Tuscany, restored its wretched creature Benedict IX, who continued in his wonted manner to disgrace the papacy for a further period of eight months before disappearing entirely from history.

152. Damasus II (1048) (That lasted only a few months, also, when Benedict came back to Rome.

A native of Bavaria and the third German to be elevated to the See of Peter. On Christmas Day, 1047, an embassy sent by the Roman people brought the tidings of Clement's death to Henry III, at Pölthe in Saxony, and besought the emperor as *Patricius* of the Romans to appoint a worthy successor. The envoys, according to their instructions, suggested as a suitable candidate, Halinard, Archbishop of Lyons, who had a perfect command of the Italian tongue and was popular in Rome. Henry, however, in January, 1048, appointed Poppo, Bishop of Brixen, in Tyrol, and at once directed the Margrave Boniface to conduct the pope-designate to Rome. Boniface at first refused, alleging the installation of Benedict, but Henry's decisive threat soon reduced him to obedience. After Benedict's removal, the Bishop of Brixen at length entered the city and was enthroned at the Lateran as Damasus II, 17 July, 1048. His pontificate, however, was of short duration. After the brief space of twenty-three days, he died — a victim of malaria — at Palestrina, whither he had gone shortly after the installation to escape the summer heat of Rome. The pope was buried in S. Lorenzo fuori le mura.

Source: newadvent.org