

May 17, 2023

Good Morning!

Adoration following the morning Mass till 4:00 PM

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

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Our next 2 popes are Victor II and Stephen X. Both continued the reforms begun by St. Leo IX. They were assisted by Cardinal Hildebrand, later to become Pope St. Gregory VII.

3. Meditation of the Day: Living the Gospel, *Antonio Cardinal Bacci*

~ The Gospel teaches perfection. It teaches the perfection of the interior life as well as the exterior life, of private as well as of domestic and social life.

There is no problem in the universe which has not been solved in the Gospel. In regard to the spiritual life, its command is clear. "You are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:48) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Mt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27) "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12) "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) "Blessed are the poor in spirit... the clean of heart... the peacemakers ..." (Mt. 5:3-10) "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." (Mt. 19:21) "Our Father who art in heaven... thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt. 6:10) "Father... not my will but thine be done." (Luke 22:42) Anyone who identifies himself with these maxims rises above the level of a man to that of an angel. His interior life soars to such a peak that he seems to be leading a heavenly rather than an earthly existence. If he is living the Gospel, moreover, his external behaviour will be a faithful mirror of his interior life, for it is not enough to say "Lord, Lord," but a man must also do the will of the Father. (Cf. Mt. 7:21) A man's domestic and social life will follow the pattern of his private life. When he has reached the summit of perfection, an invisible force will emanate from him, the force of good example. This force will transform everything within him and around him. Like Mary and the Saints, he will become the loyal and powerful co-worker of Christ in the redemption of the human race and in the Christian transformation of society. Redemption and restoration can come only through the Gospel. Other theories are always bound up with and impeded by human egoism. The doctrine of the Gospel is reinforced by the love of God and of our neighbour. In the Gospel public and private justice is transformed into the charity of Christ which cannot be impeded by any earthly difficulty nor by any human barrier, not even by death. "Who shall separate us from the charity of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35) asks St. Paul. Let us meditate on this.

~ The doctrine of the Gospel is so sublime that no generation has yet been able to practice it fully. Only the Blessed Virgin and the Saints have approached the peak of perfection indicated by Christ.

## Daily Parish Communication

“You are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Mt. 5:48) How far have we advanced? We are not expected, obviously, to achieve the absolute perfection of our heavenly Father. But we are obliged to strive towards it with the help of the grace of God. It may be that our particular circumstances excuse us from fulfilling the evangelical counsels, but we have no option but to obey the precepts of the Gospel. We are under no obligation to sell all our possessions and give the money to the poor, but it is too bad for us if our hearts are not detached from earthly things and in contact with God. We must be prepared to face the consequences if we do not observe the precepts of justice and charity towards God and our neighbour. We are especially obliged to help those who are in need of any kind with whatever we have to spare in the way of material assistance or advice. It is our own misfortune, too, if we do not mortify ourselves, accept the will of God even in suffering, and empty our hearts of worldly attachments in order to fill them with spiritual preoccupations. Let us remember that we belong to God. All our thoughts and desires should, therefore, be directed towards God alone.

~ Most Holy Mary, you sought always to reflect in your own soul the beauty and sanctity of your divine Son by obeying His teaching in a heroic manner. Obtain for me the grace to be detached from worldly affairs, especially from sin. Let me be prepared to make any sacrifice which is necessary in order to follow the Gospel precepts, so that the image of our divine Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, may be faithfully imprinted upon my soul, even as it was so wonderfully portrayed in yours. Amen.

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

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## Popes of the mid 1000s, part 4

### 154. Victor II (1055-57)

Victor was born about 1018 and died at Arezzo, July 28, 1057. The papal catalogues make him a native of the Bavarian Nordgau, while most German sources designate Swabia as his birthplace. His parents were Count Hartwig and Countess Baliza; the Emperor Henry III recognized him as a collateral kinsman, and he was a nephew of Bishop Gebhard III of Ratisbon, who at the court Diet of Goslar presented him to Henry III as a candidate for the episcopal see of Eichstatt. The emperor hesitated at first because Gebhard was only twenty-four years old, but, on the advice of the aged Archbishop Bardo of Mainz, he finally consented to invest him with this important see. Gebhard proved to be a good bishop and a prudent statesman. He was in the emperor's retinue when the latter was crowned at Rome in 1046; he took part in the synod presided over by Leo IX at Mainz in October, 1049, and in the consultations between the pope and the emperor at Ratisbon and Bamberg in 1052. By this time, he had become the most influential councilor of Henry III. It was upon his advice that in 1053 a German army, which was on its way to join Leo IX in his war against the Normans, was recalled, an advice which he is said to have regretted when he was pope. Early in the same year he became regent of Bavaria for the three-year old Henry IV. In this capacity he had occasion to prove his loyalty towards the emperor by defending the rights of the empire against dukes, counts and his own uncle.

After the death of Leo IX (April 19, 1054) Cardinal-subdeacon Hildebrand came to the emperor at the head of a Roman legation with the urgent request to designate Gebhard as pope. At the Diet of Mainz, in September, 1054, the emperor granted this request, but Gebhard refused to accept the papal dignity. At a court Diet held at Ratisbon in March, 1055, he finally accepted the papacy, but only on condition that the emperor restored to the Apostolic See all the possessions that had been taken from it. The emperor consented to this condition and Gebhard accompanied Hildebrand to Rome, where he was formally elected and solemnly enthroned on April 13, 1055, taking the name of Victor II. Even as pope he retained the Diocese of Eichstatt. Victor II was a worthy successor of Leo IX. With untiring zeal, he combated, like his predecessor, against simony and clerical concubinage. Being well supported by the emperor, he often succeeded where Leo IX had failed. On Pentecost Sunday, June 4, 1055, he held a large synod at Florence, in presence of

the emperor and 120 bishops, where former decrees against simony and incontinence were confirmed and several offending bishops deposed. To King Ferdinand of Spain he sent messengers with threats of excommunication if he should continue in his refusal to acknowledge Henry III as Roman Emperor. Ferdinand submitted to the papal demands. Before the emperor returned to Germany he transferred to the pope the duchies of Spoleto and Camerino. Early in 1056 Victor II sent Hildebrand back to France to resume his labors against simony and concubinage, which he had begun under Leo IX. Late in the summer of the same year he accepted the urgent invitation of the emperor to come to Germany, arriving at Goslar on September 8. He accompanied Henry III to Botfeld in the Hartz Mountains where on October 5 he witnessed the untimely death of the emperor. Before his death, the emperor entrusted his six-year-old successor, Henry IV, and the regency of the kingdom to the pope. On October 28, after burying the emperor in the cathedral at Speyer, he secured the imperial succession of Henry IV by having him solemnly enthroned at Aachen. He still further strengthened the position of the boy-king by recommending him to the loyalty of the princes at the imperial Diet which he convened at Cologne early in December, and at the court Diet of Ratisbon on Christmas Day.

Leaving the regency of Germany in the hands of Agnes, mother of Henry IV, Victor returned to Rome in February, 1057, where he presided over a council at the Lateran on April 18. On June 14 he created Frederick, whom he had a month previously helped to the abbacy of Monte Cassino, Cardinal-priest of San Crisogono, thus gaining the friendship of the powerful Duke Godfrey of Lorraine, a brother of the new cardinal. He then went to Tuscany, where he settled (July 23) a jurisdictional dispute between the Bishops of Arezzo and Siena at a synod held in the palace of St. Donatus near Arezzo; five days later he died. His attendants wished to bring his remains to the cathedral at Eichstatt for burial. On their way thither, the remains were forcibly taken from them by some citizens of Ravenna and buried there in the Church of Santa Maria Rotonda, the burial-place of Theodoric the Great.

*Source: catholic.com*

### **155. Stephen X (1057-58)**

Frederick, destined to become Pope Stephen X, was the son of Gozelon, Duke of Lower Lorraine and of Junca, the daughter of Berengarius II, King of Italy. As he

advanced in years he became as distinguished for character and learning as he was for his birth. It was seemingly while he was a canon of Liège that his cousin Leo IX met him and made him chancellor and librarian of the Roman Church (c. 1051). He accompanied Leo IX in his apostolic journeyings throughout Europe, and was sent by him on the famous embassy to Constantinople (1054) which terminated in the final separation of the Eastern and Western Churches. On his return from the East he was robbed by the Count of Teate, and, to avoid falling into the hands of the Emperor Henry III, the Black (who seems to have distrusted him as the brother of the rebellious Godfrey the Bearded, Duke of Lorraine), he became a monk at Monte Cassino (1055), and, after the death of the Emperor Henry, its abbot (1057). He was made cardinal-priest of St. Chrysogonus by Victor II, and, on the latter's death, he was freely chosen his successor, and consecrated on the following day (August 3, 1057). As pope, he carried on the work of reformation which had been inaugurated by St. Leo IX. To show how much he was in earnest, he at once made cardinals of both that zealous champion of reform, St. Peter Damian, and the quondam monk Humbert, his own uncompromising companion on the embassy to Constantinople. He also made no little use of Cardinal Hildebrand (afterwards St. Gregory VII), the soul of the reforming party. He sent him to Milan to effect an improvement in the morals of its clergy with instructions to proceed to Germany and to induce the regent, the empress-mother Agnes, to accept his election which had been made without any reference to her. It was further arranged that Hildebrand was then to go on to France. Stephen was preparing to reopen negotiations with the Greek Church, and to try to stop the advance of the Normans in southern Italy, when he died, exhorting the cardinals to await the return of Hildebrand before electing his successor. He was buried in the Church of St. Reparata.

*Source: catholic.com*