

May 9, 2023

Good Morning!

Rosary Guild, Office 12:30-2:00

VBS Planning Meeting, Office 1:00-2:00

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

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Rumored to have been 12 when elected, Pope Benedict IX was probably in his late 20s. As we see from our history, the later age did not help any. Benedict is shown on the list of popes 3 times because he was deposed and restored twice. Between the first two of these is Sylvester III whom some consider an antipope.

3. Meditation of the Day: *Antonio Cardinal Bacci*

### My Life is Christ

~St. Paul reached such a degree of union with Christ that he could exclaim: "To me to live is Christ." (Phil. 1:21) Elsewhere he says: "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20) This is a characteristic of the Saints. They live their own lives no longer, for they live the life of Christ. That is to say, their minds and hearts are always fixed on Jesus. They love the Lord more than all things, and more than themselves. God is the object of all their desires, affections and actions. As a result, the soul is transfigured and is infused with divine life, so that it does nothing which is not activated by grace. In the Saints, then, there is reflected something heavenly which attracts and stimulates one to virtue. The Saints preached effectively in simple, unadorned language, as in the case of the Curé of Ars. But their most effective sermon was the example of their lives. They could say with St. Paul: "To me to live is Christ." They could repeat the thought of St. Jerome: "Christ is the breath of my lips." Like St. John Chrysostom they could say: "My heart is the heart of Christ." They could say with St. Augustine: "I am only an instrument in the service of Christ," and with St. Anselm: "My eyes are the eyes of Christ." When we meditate on these words, which signify the height of sanctity, we feel very small, shabby, and far from the Christian perfection to which we should aspire. Perhaps we are still immersed in sin; or perhaps we are wavering between the things of this world and the things of God; or perhaps, as yet, we have not given up our egoism and complacent mediocrity in order to offer ourselves entirely to God. Real Christianity demands that we renounce ourselves, live the life of Christ, and make every effort to acquire perfection.

~Through the work of the Incarnation and Redemption, Jesus assumed not only a human body and soul so that He might be loved more and so that He might redeem us, but He

also assumed a mystical body, which is composed of all men in the state of grace. The mystical body is the Church, of which Christ is the head. We should all desire to be members of this mystical body. To do so we must live the life of Christ, which is His grace. If we are separated from the life of Christ, we are no longer Christians. We are merely dead and rotten limbs, to use the metaphor of the vine tree and the branches. "I am the vine," says Jesus, "you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him," He continues, "he bears much fruit. If anyone does not abide in me," He adds, "he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither; and they shall gather them up and cast them into fire, and they shall burn." (Cf. John 15:4-5)

"For the branch," says St. Augustine, "there can be no half-measures. Either it remains united with the vine, or it is thrown into the fire." The same holds true for each of us. We must choose either close union with Jesus, or separation and spiritual death. We must decide between a life of fervour in Christ, or a life of tepidity and sin.

~Am I determined to live the life of Christ by striving to be indissolubly united with Him through divine grace? Am I prepared to say with St. Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:35-39) But in order to bring this about it is necessary for me to fly from every sin and to look for God in all things and in all actions. I must love God with my whole heart and nurture the divine life within me by prayer, recollection and frequent Communion. If I fail to put these resolutions into practice, I shall become a barren branch, fit only for eternal fire.

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

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## Popes of the mid 1000s, part 1

**146. Benedict IX (1032-45)** *He appears on this list three separate times, because he was twice deposed and restored*

Benedict IX Rumored to have been 12 at the time he became pope, Benedict IX was probably in his late 20's when his family's position and money put him on the papal throne in 1032. Born Theophylactus, the pope led a dissolute life, and the Roman people drove him from the city in 1044 and elected Sylvester II pope or anti-pope. Benedict regained the papacy in the following year and sold it a month later to John Gratian, who became Gregory VI. Holy Roman Emperor Henry III convoked a synod at Sutri, which deposed all three claimants and elected Clement II, who died in 1047. Benedict held Rome at the time and retained rule until July 1048, when he was ousted in favor of Damasus II. Benedict retired to a family estate and refused to appear before a synod when charged with simony in 1049. He was excommunicated; Leo IX may have lifted the ban before Benedict's death in 1055/56.

*Source: catholic.org*

**147. Sylvester III (1045)** *Considered by some to be an antipope*

There was once a time when distant cousins vied for the papacy. This was no small family squabble. This included major politics and murder. The two families were the Crescenti and the Tusculum counts.

Giovanni de Crescenti-Ottaviani was born in about 1000, while his part of the family held sway on the throne of Peter. By the time of his majority, the Tusculum branch had taken that privilege away. Giovanni became a priest and a bishop. His see was Sabina, in the Sabine hills north of Rome.

Pope John XIX, Giovanni's distant cousin, died in 1032. There was much vying between rival groups for the privilege of controlling the new pope. This led to Pope John's surviving younger brother, Alberic III of Tusculum, to use his immense wealth to his political advantage. He bribed enough people to "buy" the papacy for his 20-year-old son, Theophylact.

Theophylact, taking the name of Benedict IX, had neither the sense nor the education to be a pope. His life of debauchery was only surpassed by the Romans' disgust. He was run out of town in late 1044.

Again, there was bitter infighting between Roman nobles. Giovanni, bishop of Sabina, was elected the new pope and took the name Sylvester III. It was only a matter of weeks before Benedict, in exile, excommunicated Sylvester. Returning to Rome, he expelled Pope Sylvester from the Lateran on March 10. Sylvester may have stayed around for a while to see what was going to happen next. Soon he returned to Sabina to take up his responsibilities as bishop, again.

Although some people looked on Sylvester III as an antipope, he continues to be listed as an official pope in Vatican lists.

*Source: catholic 365.com*

**148. Benedict IX (1045)—see pope #146**