

COLUMNISTS

St. Leo IX a worthy example of church leadership

In the midst of what is surely the greatest crisis the Catholic Church has faced in modern times, Catholics might reflect for a moment on the pastoral leadership provided by Leo IX (1049-54), a relatively obscure Alsatian-born pope whose feast day is this Friday, April 19.

Leo IX was one of five popes to have been proclaimed a saint over the entire course of the second Christian millennium. That accounts for only 4 percent of the 123 occupants of the Chair of Peter during that period of time. The others were Gregory VII (1073-85), Celestine V (1294), Pius V (1566-72) and Pius X (1903-14).

Leo was the third and best of the German popes who were imposed on the church by the German emperor Henry III. Born in 1002, exactly 1,000 years ago, he was baptized Bruno and was known before his papal election as Bruno of Egisheim. He was later educated at Toul, then a center of monastic reform, and became a canon of its cathedral.

After serving as a member of the emperor's court, Bruno was appointed bishop of Toul in 1027 and remained in that ministry for some 20 years, establishing a reputation as an energetic reformer of clerical and monastic life.

When Pope Damasus II, a Bavarian,



essays in theology

BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

died in August 1049, after less than a month in office, Bruno accepted the emperor's nomination to the papacy, but only on the condition that the appointment be subsequently ratified by the clergy and laity of Rome. (Unlike present practice, bishops — including the Bishop of Rome — were elected by, not imposed upon, their future flocks.)

Bruno traveled to Rome in the simple garb of a pilgrim and was greeted there with acclaim. He was crowned as pope (a custom that continued until Pope John Paul I put an end to it in 1978) on February 12 and took the name Leo to recall the ancient, still uncorrupted church.

Two months later he convened a synod in Rome that denounced simony (the buying and selling of spiritual offices and benefits) and violations of clerical

celibacy, such as we have today. Leo removed several simoniacal bishops from office and reaffirmed the penances that had been imposed by his predecessor, Pope Clement II, on priests who were knowingly ordained by such bishops.

He gathered a "kitchen cabinet" of distinguished church leaders (including two future popes, Gregory VII and Stephen IX) to help in the reorganization of the Roman Curia. He also sought the advice of Hugh, the abbot of the great monastery of Cluny (in Burgundy), and of Peter Damian. Both were leading reformers of the day and both have since been recognized by the church as saints.

Leo traveled so extensively throughout Europe to promote his reforms that he was called the "Apostolic Pilgrim." He held at least a dozen synods in Italy and Germany, all the while insisting that bishops be elected by the local clergy and laity, and abbots by their monks.

Unfortunately, Leo IX's last years in office were tarnished by his personal involvement in a military campaign against the Norman invaders in southern Italy. In fact, he was held captive for several months. While still a prisoner, he sent a delegation to Constantinople to try to heal the growing rift between the Eastern and Western churches. The negotia-

tions went badly, and three months after the pope's death, the leaders on both sides excommunicated one another.

Leo's last days were marked by illness as well as deep regret over these events. He even placed his bed next to his coffin in St. Peter's Basilica and died there on April 19, 1054. It is said that within 40 years some 70 cures were attributed to his intercession. He was soon acclaimed a saint, and in 1087 his relics were enshrined (which in those days was tantamount to canonization).

One can only speculate about the subsequent turn of events in church history, especially the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Had Leo IX's courageous, reform-minded leadership been emulated by the various pre-Reformation popes, would such a disastrous shattering of church unity have occurred?

As the current pontificate draws slowly to its end, questions inevitably surface, more often in private than in public, about likely successors. Given the types of challenges facing the church in our time, the cardinal-electors would do well to elect someone with the vision and character of Pope St. Leo IX.

Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

The Good Shepherd calls us to follow his example

4th Sunday of Easter (April 21): (R3) John 10:1-10; (R1) Acts 2:14, 36-41; (R2) 1 Peter 2:20-25.

Sunday is Good Shepherd Sunday. Being a shepherd is a thankless job. Imagine dealing with dumb, smelly sheep all day. In Palestine, flocks of sheep dot the countryside, clutter up highways and crowd the streets of towns and villages. The shepherd walks in front of his flock and his sheep follow him. In fact, they crowd around so closely they hamper the shepherd's movement.

The life of a shepherd was very hard. He was never off duty. There being little grass, the sheep were bound to wander, and since there were no protecting walls, the sheep had to be watched constantly. On either side of the narrow plateau, the ground dipped sharply down to the craggy deserts and the sheep were always liable to stray and get lost. The shepherd's task was not only constant but dangerous, for he had to guard the flock against wolves and thieves. With little pay and little human contact, being a shepherd had little to recommend it.

Yet Christ portrayed himself as shepherd. The most familiar image we have of Christ is that of a shepherd holding a lamb in his arms.



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

A certain bonding takes place between the shepherd and his sheep. As Jesus said, "... the sheep hear his voice." Sheep-calling contests are common in Palestine. Several flocks are mixed together in an enclosure. Then shepherds whistle a distinctive tune or shout in a peculiar manner. Some shepherds use a pipe with a particular pitch. Each shepherd's signal is understood by his own sheep and they respond immediately. They make their way through the crowded enclosure to where their shepherd is waiting. The shepherd who collects a given number of sheep in the shortest time is the winner of the contest.

And the good shepherd knows his sheep. To the untrained eye all sheep in a flock look alike. A good shepherd,

however, can tell them apart. A shepherd once explained it to his Christian friend who expressed surprise at his familiarity with each animal. "See that sheep over there?" he asked. "Notice how it toes in a little. The one behind it has a squint, the next one has a patch of wool off its back; ahead is one with a distinguishing black mark, while the one closest to us has a small piece torn out of its ear." Observing them, the Christian thought about Christ, the Chief Shepherd, who also knows each of us with all our weaknesses and failings and watches over us with discerning love and understanding.

Christ, the Good Shepherd, takes the thankless job of watching over his sheep, taking the trouble to know them by name. Can you imagine that? There have always been people with a good memory for names: Napoleon knew thousands of his soldiers by name; James Farley knew 50,000 people by name; Charles Schwab knew the names of all 8,000 of his employees at Homestead Mill. But can you imagine Christ knowing all his sheep by name? That's millions and millions of people over 2,000 years. No wonder we call him Master, Lord, Savior. Watching over his flock, calling them by name. But what we need to remember is

that Christ calls us each to follow his example.

Our Lord's job is thankless too. He's always there to help us and seldom do we say "Thanks."

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, April 22
Acts 11:1-18; Psalms 42:2-3, 43:3-4;
John 10:1-10

Tuesday, April 23
Acts 11:19-26; Psalms 87:1-7;
John 10:22-30

Wednesday, April 24
Acts 12:24-13:5A; Psalms 67:2-3,
5-6, 8; John 12:44-50

Thursday, April 25
1 Peter 5:5B-14; Psalms 89:2-3, 6-7,
16-17; Mark 16:15-20

Friday, April 26
Acts 13:26-33; Psalms 2:6-11;
John 14:1-6

Saturday, April 27
Acts 13:44-52; Psalms 98:1-4;
John 14:7-14

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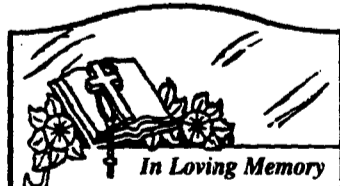
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of the Lord shall be saved" RM 10:13

**Kids' Chronicle
Answers from 12:**

**Matthew
Romans
Galatians
John
Ephesians
Acts**