The Popes of the Century

In its inception and in its history St. Nazianz has been undividedly Catholic, the life of the whole community centered around the parish church of St. Gregory of Nazianz. Their spiritual loyalty under God has been dedicated unswervingly to His true Church on earth, in obedience and love of Christ's vicar on earth, six of whom have occupied the Chair of Peter in Rome during the past century.

PIUS IX (1846-1878) "Remember, the Catholic Church is immortal."

The turbulent affairs of nineteenth-century Europe which brought the first settlers to St. Nazianz crushed their full weight upon the Vicar of Christ. Despite generous efforts to meet the demands of a changing world, Pius IX was robbed of the Papal States by the Italian nationalists and became a voluntary prisoner in the Vatican Palace, an example followed by his successors until 1929. The Kulturkampf in Germany, state restriction and suppression of the Church, saddened the later days of his pontificate.

On December 8, 1854, he solemnly defined that the Blessed Virgin Mary was, in the first instant of her conception, preserved free from all stain of original sin. His Syllabus of 1864 condemned errors of thought and religion which have reached their greatest power in our day. In the twentieth General Council (1869-70) Pius IX gathered the bishops of the world to discuss matters of Catholic faith and discipline. This, the Vatican Council, proclaimed that in defining a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church, the Roman Pontiff cannot err.

LEO XIII (1878-1903) "I love you all, but I am tired, and glad to go."

Through the courage, principle, and tact of Leo XIII the German persecution of the Church was brought to an end, and the same qualities won a lessening of opposition to the Church in England, France, and Russia. In Italy, however, the strain between Church and State continued.

Leo XIII was especially aware of the growth of the Church in the United States of America. With his urging and blessing the Catholic University of America was founded in Washington, D.C.

An outstanding event of his pontificate and of all times was Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, in 1891. This document condemned the injustices that the growing industrial powers of the world were forcing upon the laboring man. Long before their time, for even today the full tenor of the Pope's teaching has not been effected, his social doctrines demanded a living wage, the right to form labor unions, and state legislation for the protection of the workingman.

During his reign Father Francis Jordan founded the Society of the Divine Savior (1881) and received first Papal recognition for the Salvatorian Fathers.
ST. PIUS X (1903-1914) "I was born poor; I have lived poor and I wish to die poor."

Though he remained more aloof in his dealings with temporal rulers, by his cautious and friendly attitude Pius X began to bring about the eventual reconciliation between the Vatican and Italy. With a firm hand he dealt with atheistic socialists in France, Spain, and Portugal who were usurping the rights and property of the Church.

Pius X is especially remembered and loved as the Pope of little children, for not only did he love to receive them in audience but he decreed that they should be allowed to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament when they were old enough to know the doctrine of His presence in the Eucharist. He is also remembered as the Pontiff to restore the practice of the early Church of frequent, even daily reception of Holy Communion. He also brought about changes in the training of candidates for the priesthood, in liturgical ceremonies, and in Church music.

The Pope saw the rising clouds of the first World War long before others. All his efforts to avert the crisis failed, and he died on the very day that the German army entered Brussels, the capital of Belgium. Physicians wrote bronchitis as the cause of his death; but his friends knew it was heart-break.

Pius X was beatified in the jubilee year of 1950, and declared a saint in this centennial, Marian year, May 30, 1954.

BENEDICT XV (1914-1922) "We offer our life to God on behalf of the peace of the world."

The First World War Pope drove the straight and narrow road of peacemaker during those four bloody years, but was still criticized by extremists on both sides because of his impartiality. Early in the war he organized relief agencies, and through his efforts millions of dollars were contributed to save multitudes in Eastern and Central Europe. The Vatican arranged the exchange of vast numbers of prisoners of war, better hospitalization for the wounded, and an information service to bring to the families of all belligerents news of their sons and husbands.

Benedict continually called upon the nations to bring the bloody holocaust to an end. In 1917 the Pontiff outlined a peace plan that was not heeded; in fact, Italy extracted from her allies the promise that the Pope would be excluded from all negotiations on the settlement of the war. Oddly, only a non-Christian nation appreciated Benedict's labor for mankind; Mohammedan Turkey erected a statue to honor him during his lifetime.

Even with the armistice the unhappy Pope had to see the continuation of strife down to his death, with civil struggles raging in Russia, Poland, Greece, Ireland, Syria, and Hungary.

PIUS XI (1922-1939) "Peace . . . , the peace of Jesus."

The new Pope saw the rise and growth of the age of the modern totalitarian dictator. Though to safeguard the Church he signed concordats with both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, his seventeen-year reign was devoted to restraining and struggling against the greed and injustice of both Fascism and Communism. In the Lateran Treaty of 1929 Italy gave the papacy a small independent state within the limits of Rome. Hitler's anti-Semitism, Mussolini's aggression against Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War after the Communists had seized the government—these were but the major catastrophes in the long series of evil and sorrow that the dictators were bringing upon the world.

Despite these political worries Pius XI devoted himself strenuously to the revivification of the spiritual life of Christ's Church. In all he issued thirty-seven encyclicals on a variety of subjects. He encouraged Catholic Action, lay associations for religious activities under the direction of the hierarchy; he repeated and expanded the social teachings of Leo XIII; his encyclicals on Christian marriage, Catholic education, and the priesthood will never lose their immediacy for right living.

Even as he lay in death, the Second World War, which he had long foreseen, had already begun.
His Excellency, the Most Reverend John B. Grellinger, Auxiliary Bishop of Green Bay Diocese
THE MOST REVEREND JOHN MARTIN HENNI (1854-1881).
Consecrated first bishop of Milwaukee, March 19, 1844.
Created archbishop of Milwaukee, February 11, 1875.
Confirmed 109 persons in Holy Ghost Convent chapel, 1860.
Visited at St. Nazianz for a day and a half on this occasion.
Laid cornerstone of the new St. Gregory's Church, June 9.
Visited at St. Nazianz for a day and a half on this occasion.
Dedicated the new St. Gregory Church, November 10, 1868.
Confirmed 156 persons in St. Gregory's Church, September 24, 1875.
Died, September 7, 1881.

THE MOST REVEREND MICHAEL HEISS (1880-1890).
Consecrated bishop of La Crosse, September 6, 1868.
Appointed coadjutor archbishop of Milwaukee, March 14, 1880.
Confirmed 180 persons in St. Gregory's Church, July 6, 1880.
Confirmed 140 persons in St. Gregory's Church, June 26, 1884.
Confirmed 126 persons in St. Gregory's Church, September 18, 1888.
Died, March 26, 1890.

THE MOST REVEREND FREDERICK XAVIER KATZER (1891-1903).
Consecrated bishop of Green Bay, September 21, 1886.
Created archbishop of Milwaukee, January 30, 1891.
Confirmed 119 persons in St. Gregory's Church, May 25, 1892.
Confirmed 114 persons in St. Gregory's Church, September 23, 1896.
Confirmed 79 persons in St. Gregory's Church, May 31, 1899.
Died, July 20, 1903.
THE MOST REVEREND SEBASTIAN GEBHARD MESSMER (1903-1905)
Attend golden jubilee celebration of the founding of St. Nazianz, 1904.
Manitowoc County territory transferred to Green Bay diocese, July, 1905.
Officiated at burial of Father Ferdinand Raess in St. Gregory’s cemetery, June 11, 1919.

THE RIGHT REVEREND JOSEPH J. FOX (1905-1914)
Consecrated bishop of Green Bay, July 25, 1904.
Confirmed 92 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, May 24, 1906.
Confirmed 69 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, May 11, 1909.
Confirmed 119 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, May 22, 1912.
Resigned as bishop of Green Bay, December 4, 1914.
Died, March 14, 1915.

THE MOST REVEREND PAUL PETER RHODE (1915-1945)
Consecrated auxiliary to the archbishop of Chicago, July 29, 1908.
Transferred to the diocese of Green Bay, July 5, 1915.
Confirmed 116 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, May 2, 1916.
Confirmed 87 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, May 11, 1919.
Ordained the first American Salvatorians, August 28, 1921.
Confirmed 101 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, June 24, 1923.
Confirmed 102 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, September 4, 1927.
Confirmed 82 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, August 15, 1930.
Confirmed 91 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, July 2, 1933.
Confirmed 117 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, October 4, 1936.
Confirmed 118 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, June 13, 1939.
— Also dedicated the new Salvatorian Seminary on this occasion.
Confirmed 103 persons in St. Gregory’s Church, April 21, 1942.
Died, March 3, 1945.
Our vocation is not to gain earthly riches. . . . We are only pilgrims on this earth, and time is given to us by God only to prepare ourselves for heaven. . . . We have nothing to lose in this world; we live only for God's honor. . . .

*From Father Oschwald's Last New Year's Sermon*