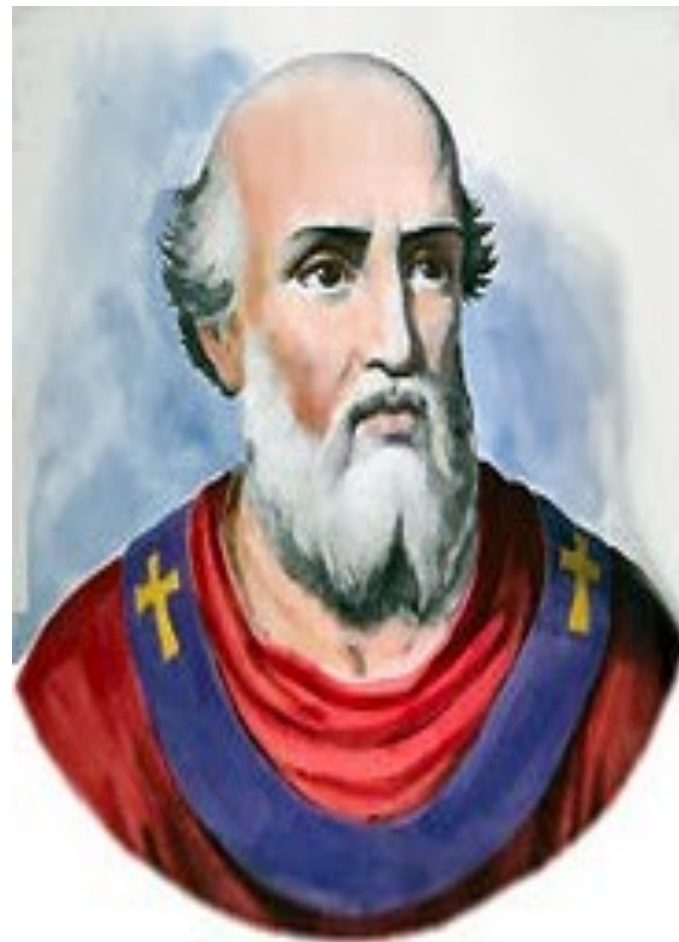


Saint Pope John I

Feast Day: May 18 (ordinary time)
May 27-Latin Calendar



Martyr

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Saint Pope John I

Pope Saint John I (c. 470 – 18 May 526) was Pope from 523 to 526. He was a native of Siena (or the "Castello di Serena"), near Chiusdino. He is the first pope known to have visited Constantinople while in office.

While a deacon in Rome, he is known to have been a partisan of the Antipope Laurentius, for in a *libellus* written to Pope Symmachus in 506, John confessed his error in opposing him, anathematized Peter of Altinum and Laurentius, and begged pardon of Symmachus. He would then be the deacon John who signed the *acta* of the Roman synod of 499 and 502; the fact the Roman church only had seven deacons at the time makes identifying him with this person very likely.^[1] He may also be the deacon John to whom Boethius dedicated three of his five religious tractates written between 512 and 520.^[2]

John was very frail when he was elected to the papacy. Despite his protests, he was sent by the Arian King Theodoric the Great of the Ostrogoths to Constantinople to secure a moderation of Emperor Justin's decree of 523 against the Arians. Theodoric threatened that if John should fail in his mission, there would be reprisals against the orthodox Catholics in the West. John proceeded to Constantinople with a considerable entourage: his religious companions included bishop Ecclesius of Ravenna, bishop Eusebius of Fanum Fortunae, and Sabinus of Campania.^[3] His secular companions were the senators Flavius Theodorus, Inportunus, Agapitus, and the patrician Agapitus.^[4]

Emperor Justin is recorded as receiving John honorably and promised to do everything the embassy asked of him, with the exception of restoring converts from Arianism to Catholicism to their original beliefs.^[5] Although Pope John was successful in his mission, when he returned to Ravenna, Theodoric's capital, Theodoric had John arrested on the suspicion of having conspired with Emperor Justin. He was imprisoned at Ravenna, where he died of neglect and ill treatment. His body was transported to Rome and buried in the Basilica of St. Peter.

The *Liber Pontificalis* credits John with making repairs to the cemetery of the martyrs Nereus and Achilleus on the Via Ardeatina, that of Saints Felix and Adauctus, and the cemetery of Priscilla.^[6]

Pope John I is depicted in art as looking through the bars of a prison or imprisoned with a deacon and a subdeacon. He is venerated at Ravenna and in Tuscany. His feast day is 18 May, the anniversary of the day of his death (whereas it had formerly been 27 May).^[7]

* (excerpted from : en Wikipedia.org)