

Cassino, was elected as Stephen X. In the autumn of 1057, after much resistance from Damian, Stephen created Damian a cardinal. He was consecrated Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia on 30 Nov., 1057. In addition he was appointed administrator of the Diocese of Gubbio. About the end of the year 1059 Peter was sent as legate to Milan by Nicholas II, where simony and incontinence was rampant. After much persuasion, Peter proved to clerics of Milan, who said Rome had no authority over Milan, the authority of the Holy See over such matters. Unfortunately, on the death of Nicholas II, the same dispute broke out again; and was not settled until the martyrdom of St. Ariald in 1066.

In July, 1061, the pope died and a schism ensued resulting in an antipope Calalous. Finally Hanno, the Regent of Germany, summoned a council at Augsburg at which Peter read a long argument that resulted in Alexander II becoming pope. In 1063 the pope held a synod at Rome, at which Peter was appointed to settle between the Abbey of Cluny and the Bishop of Mâcon. He proceeded to France, summoned a council at Châlon-sur-Saône, proved the justice of the contentions of Cluny, settled other questions in the Church of France, and returned in the autumn to Fonte-Avellana. While in France the antipope Cadalous had again become active in his attempts to gain Rome. The matter was settled by the pope. In 1069 Damian went as the pope's legate to Germany to prevent King Henry from repudiating his wife Bertha. This task was accomplished at a council at Frankfort and he returned to Fonte-Avallana.

Early in 1072 he was sent to Ravenna to reconcile its inhabitants to the Holy See, they having been excommunicated for supporting their archbishop in his adhesion to the schism of Cadalous. On his return he was seized with fever near Faenza. He lay ill for a week at the monastery of Santa Maria degl'Angeli, now Santa Maria Vecchia. On the night preceding the feast of the Chair of St. Peter at Antioch, he ordered the office of the feast to be recited and at the end of Lauds he died. He was buried in the monastery church. Eventually his remains were translated to a chapel dedicated to him in the cathedral of Faenza in 1898. No formal canonization ever took place. In 1823 Leo XII extended his feast (Feb 23) to the whole church and pronounced him a doctor of the Church. The saint is represented in art as a cardinal bearing a discipline in his hand; also sometimes he is depicted as a pilgrim holding a papal Bull, to signify his many legations.

**(excerpted from: //www.newadvent.org)*

****COMMENT:** Peter was a reformer and if he were alive today would no doubt encourage the renewal started by Vatican II. He would also applaud the greater emphasis on prayer that is shown by the growing number of priests, religious and lay persons who gather regularly for prayer, as well as the special houses of prayer recently established by many religious communities. *** (excerpted from: saint of the day)*

QUOTE: " ...Let us faithfully transmit to posterity the example of virtue which we have received from our forefathers... " St. Peter Damian

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Saint Peter Damian

Feast Day February 23



..." Do not be depressed.

Do not let your weakness make you impatient.

Instead, let the serenity of your spirit shine through your face.

Let the joy of your mind burst forth."

St. Peter Damian

St. Peter Damian

*St. Peter Damian (or Damian), is a Doctor of the Church. The Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, he was born at Ravenna, Italy "five years after the death of the Emperor Otto III," in 1007; he died at Faenza, Italy on February 21, 1072.

Damian was the youngest of a large family; his parents were noble, but poor. At his birth an elder brother protested against this new charge on the resources of the family with such effect that his mother refused to suckle him and the babe nearly died. A family retainer, however, fed the starving child and by example and reproaches recalled his mother to her duty. Left an orphan in early years, he was at first adopted by an elder brother, who ill-treated and under-fed him while employing him as a swineherd. The child showed signs of piety and of remarkable intellectual gifts, and after some years of this servitude another brother, who was archpriest at Ravenna, had pity on him, and took him away to be educated, this brother was called Damian and it was generally accepted that St. Peter added this name to his own in grateful recognition of his brother's kindness. He made rapid progress in his studies, first at Ravenna, then at Faenza, finally at the University of Parma, and when about twenty-five years old was already a famous teacher at Parma and Ravenna. Even though he fasted often and performed many other mortifications, he could not endure the scandals and distractions of university life and decided (about 1035) to retire from the world. While meditating on his resolution he encountered two hermits of Fonte-Avellana, was charmed with their spirituality and detachment, and desired to join them. Encouraged by them, Peter, after a forty days' retreat in a small cell, left his friends secretly and made his way to the hermitage of Fonte-Avellana. Here he was received, and, to his surprise, clothed at once with the monastic habit.

Both as novice and as professed religious, his fervor was remarkable and led him to such extremes of penance that, for a time, his health was affected. He occupied his convalescence with a thorough study of Holy Scripture and, on his recovery, was appointed to lecture to his fellow-monks. At the request of Guy of Pomposa and other heads of neighboring monasteries, for two or three years he lectured to their subjects also, and (about 1042) wrote the life of St. Romuald for the monks of Pietrapertosa. Soon after his return to Fonte-Avellana he was appointed economus of the house by the prior, who also pointed him out as his successor. This, in fact, he became in 1043, and he remained prior of Fonte-Avellana until his death. His priorate was characterized by a wise moderation of the rule, as well as by the foundation of subject-hermitages at San Severino, Gamugno, Acerata, Murciana, San Salvatore, Siritia, and Ocri. It was remarkable, too, for the introduction of the

regular use of the discipline, a penitential exercise which he induced the great abbey of Monte Cassino to imitate. There was much opposition outside his own circle to this practice, but Peter's persistent advocacy ensured its acceptance to such an extent that he was obliged later to moderate the imprudent zeal of some of his own hermits. Another innovation was that of a daily siesta, to make up for the fatigue of the night office. During his tenure of the priorate a cloister was built, silver chalices and a silver processional cross were purchased, and many books added to the library.

Although living in seclusion of the cloister, Peter Damian watched closely the fortunes of the Church, and like his friend Hildebrand, the future Gregory VII, he strove for her purification in those deplorable times. In 1045 when Benedict IX resigned the supreme pontificate into the hands of the archpriest John Gratian (Gregory VI), Peter hailed the change with joy and wrote to the pope, urging him to deal with the scandals of the church in Italy, especially with the evil bishops of Pesaro, of Città di Castello, and of Fano. He was present in Rome when Clement II crowned Henry III and his wife Agnes, and he also attended a synod held at the Lateran in the first days of 1047, in which decrees were passed against simony (paying for sacraments). After this he returned to his hermitage. Pope St. Leo IX was solemnly enthroned at Rome, 12 Feb., 1049, to succeed Damasus II, and about two years later Peter published his treatise on the vices of the clergy, the "Liber Gomorrhianus", dedicating it to the pope. It caused a great stir and aroused enmity toward Peter. Even the pope, who had first praised the work, was persuaded to write a vigorous letter of protest. Meanwhile the question arose as to the validity of the ordination of simoniacal clerics, the prior of Fonte-Avellana was appealed to, and wrote (about 1053) a treatise, the "Liber Gratissimus", in favor of their validity, a work which, though much combatted at the time, was potent in deciding the question in their favor before the end of the 12th century. In June, 1055, during the pontificate of Victor II, Damian attended a synod held at Florence, where simony and clerical incontinence were once more condemned. About two years later he fell ill at Fonte-Avellana and nearly died, but suddenly, after seven weeks of pain, recovered, as he believed, through a miracle.

During his illness the pope died, and Frederic, abbot of Monte