

The Last Popes

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Introduction

This past week has seen the selection of a new Pope, Joseph Ratzinger of Germany, who has chosen the name Pope Benedict XVI. On this occasion, it is natural to recall the prophecy of St. Malachy concerning the number of popes there will be prior to the "end of the world," i.e., the end of the current age. I have just moved from Zambia back to my home in the United States and have access to some of my library. I consulted several of my books on "end-times" prophecy, to recall just what St. Malachy prophesied. This note presents passages from these works, and a few concluding comments of my own.

St. Malachy's Predictions about the Popes

Here follow four passages on St. Malachy's prophecies.

John Hogue

From *The Millennium Book of Prophecy* by John Hogue (Harper Collins, 1994):

The Last Popes

St. Malachy left Ireland on a pilgrimage to Rome in 1139. On first sighting the Eternal City stretched out below him and bathed in the warm light of a summer's eve, he immediately fell to the ground in an ecstatic trance. St. Malachy began murmuring cryptic Latin phrases, which his servant recorded for posterity. Each of Malachy's 111 phrases signifies either the name, heraldic device, or background of all the popes, from his contemporary, Celestinus II, until Judgment Day. His predictions were an accurate pointer to future pontiffs. Here are a few examples from our century: Benedict XV (1914-1922) is called *Religio Depopulata* or "religion depopulated." During his reign, the Christian flock lost thirty-seven million to the slaughter of World War I and the Spanish Influenza, plus two hundred million Russian Christians who converted to the atheistic cult of Communism. John XXIII (1958-1963) is called *Pastor et Nauta* – "pastor and sailor." The former Patriarch of Venice (a city famous for its sailors) navigated his Catholic flock toward revolutionary reform. *Flos Florum* – flower of flowers – denotes the fleur-de-lis symbol seen on the family coat of arms of Paul VI (1963-2978). Malachy calls John Paul I *De Medietate Lunae* – "the middle moon," or "from the half-moon." His short reign ended in sudden death on 28 September 1978, roughly halfway through a lunar cycle. John Paul II is *De*

Labore Solis – "from the Sun's labor." What are some of the sun's labors? Rising in the morning, eclipses. No one can objectively prove whether Malachy is stacking a lot of meaning in a few Latin words or his interpreters are trying to squeeze as much juice out of the phrase as they can. However, the potential for interpretations of the phrase representing Pope John Paul II are rich indeed! J. R. Jochmans, author of the prophetic classic *Rolling Thunder*, squeezes the meaning "Rising Sun" out of *De Labore Solis*, reminding us that John Paul II, like the sun, comes from the East. He is the first pontiff ever to come from Eastern Europe. Astrologer Doris Kay wrings one more drop of meaning from Malachy, interpreting the motto to read, "to enter from the eclipsing Sun." She reminds us that John Paul II was born on 18 May 1920 – the date of a total eclipse.

After John Paul II, Malachy's list is reduced to two. Given the average reign of Holy Fathers – less than ten years – this could bring us the coronation of the last pontiff around 2000. After John Paul II comes *Gloria Olivae* – "glory of the olive." Another prophet-monk from eighteenth-century Padua believes this pope will take Leo XVI for his name and that he will be an agent of peace between Israelis and Arabs (the olive is also a symbol of Israel). Regarding the final pope, Malachy says:

During the last persecution of the Holy Roman Church, there shall sit *Petrus Romanus* [Peter of Rome], who shall feed the sheep amid great tribulations, and when these have passed, the City of the Seven Hills shall be utterly destroyed, and the awful Judge will judge the people.

Hogue also presents the following biographical notes for St. Malachy and the Monk of Padua:

St. Malachy (1094-1148), also known as Mael Maedoc Ua Morgair. Born in Armagh, Ireland, reportedly from noble lineage on his father's side, he was the product of the island's deeply ingrained legacy of Celtic mystery and clairvoyance.

Most of our information concerning this Irish abbot comes from his biographer and close friend, St. Bernard of Clairvaux. In 1139, Malachy set forth from Ireland on a harrowing pilgrimage to Rome. According to another Malachy biographer, the Abbé Cucherat, while seeing the Holy City for the first time, Malachy experienced his famous vision prediction the future succession of 111 popes unto doomsday.

Malachy stayed in Rome between 1139 and 1140 and received the title of Bishop and Papal Legate (ambassador). He returned to minister to the faithful in Ireland, where he ruffled the feathers of many conservatives by introducing the foreign custom of building an oratory in stone rather than wood.

He fell ill while on his second pilgrimage to Rome and died at the monastery at Clairvaux, in the arms of his good friend St. Bernard.

The Monk of Padua, an eighteenth-century monk whose prophecies parallel those of St. Malachy; however, they only concern themselves with the last twenty popes before Judgment Day. Accounts of this monk's predictions surfaced in print around 1740. They correctly named a few twentieth-century popes and described their reigns in much more detail than did St. Malachy.

[End of Hogue quote.]

A. T. Mann

The following selection is from the book, *Millennium Prophecies* by A. T. Mann (Element Books, 1992):

The Papal Prophecies of Malachy

Malachy O'Morgair was born in the eleventh century. He was considered to be a holy man, having performed miracles, including healing the sick, levitating and making prophecies. When he died in 1184, while on a visit to St. Bernard of Clairvaux, he left among his effects a series of short, enigmatic statements regarding the identity of the sequence of popes from his time until the end of the twentieth century. He was subsequently canonized as St. Malachy.

The peculiar prophecies left by Malachy are mysterious and wonderfully apt descriptions of the popes. For example, Pope Alexander IV had been Cardinal of Ostia, and he was named '*Signum Ostiensis*'. The description of the nineteenth century Pope Leo XIII was '*Lumen in Caelo*' (Light in Heaven), extremely appropriate for a man whose family crest was a comet. Pope John XXIII, who had originally been Patriarch of Venice, was called '*Pastor et Nauta*' (Pastor of the Sea). Pope Paul VI, whose coat of arms carried the fleur-de-lys, was called '*Flos Florum*' (Flower of Flowers). John Paul I, whose reign only lasted thirty-three days, was '*De Medietate Lunae*' (of the Half Moon), and he met his death in the middle of the lunar month, one month after taking office.

Some of the others include:

Alexander VII (1655-67)	' <i>Montium Custos</i> ' (Guardian of the Hills)
Clement XIII (1758-69)	' <i>Rosa Umbriae</i> ' (Rose of Umbria)
Clement XIV (1769-75)	' <i>Ursus Velox</i> ' (Swift Bear)
Pius VI (1775-99)	' <i>Peregrinus Apostolicus</i> ' (Apostolic wanderer)
Gregory XVI (1831-46)	' <i>De Balneis Etruriae</i> ' (From the Baths of Etruria)

The present Pope John Paul II is '*De Labore Solis*' (Labour of the Sun) and, due to the waning popularity of Roman Catholicism, this could also be translated as 'from the Lonely Labour.' Malachy lists two more popes to follow the present John Paul II, '*Gloriae Olivae*'; and, lastly, '*Petrus Romanus*', or 'Peter of Rome'. At that point, the Last Judgment will happen. Using Malachy's timing, it has always been assumed that the end of the papacy will occur around the Millennium year 2000, a date which agrees with Nostradamus. [End of Mann quote.]

James Manning

From the book, *Prophecies for the New Millennium* by James Manning (Harper Collins, 1997):

Judgment Day: St. Malachy and the Last Pope

Maul Maedoc Ua Morgain, known as St Malachy, was born in Armagh, Ireland, in 1095. He became a priest at the age of 25 and was made Bishop of Connor at 30, and later Bishop of Down. He correctly predicted the date of his own death – All Souls Day, 1148 – and became the first Irishman to be canonized, in 1190.

In 1139, he traveled to Rome where he presented Pope Innocent II with a list of all future popes until the end of the world. However, it was not until 1595 that Dom Arnold de Wyon, a

Benedictine historian, discovered the list in the Vatican archives and published it. The forecasts are in the form of 112 Latin epigrams which identify all the popes from Celestine II (1143-44), the pope who succeeded Innocent II, to the last pope of all. After John Paul II, the list gives only two popes.

Malachy associated the penultimate pope with the slogan "Gloria Olivae," meaning "The Glory of the Olive." This could mean that he will be a peacemaker and draw all the different strands of Christianity together. Alternatively, the Benedictines are known as the Olivetans, which could suggest that the next pope will come from that order. St. Benedict, their founder, once predicted that a Benedictine would become Pope before the end of the world, and that he would lead the forces of Catholicism to a great victory over the forces of evil.

Malachy's last pope will be "Petrus Romanus," "Peter of Rome," thus demonstrating that the first shall be last and the last first. John Paul II is neither a young nor a healthy man, and if his successor should suddenly die, will Peter of Rome be sitting on the papal throne in time for the Armageddon year A.D. 2000? [End of Manning quote.]

Noel Tyl

The following paragraphs are from the book, *Predictions for a New Millennium*, by Noel Tyl (Llewellyn Publications, 1996).

A Prophetic Voice from the Past

On the periphery of this enormous struggle between tradition and change and the lone position of John Paul II, working for global politics at the expense of extraordinary problems within the Catholic infrastructure, caught between tradition and modernization, appearing ineffective to the consensus of critics, there is another voice from the distant past still heard in the Vatican's present, for its future: the voice of St. Malachy (Mael Maedoc Ua Morgair) who lived 1095-1148 in Armagh, Ireland. While this string of events told here is discounted by parts of the Church, it must be included in the same spirit perhaps as the emphatic Fatima dimension presented above as so important to understanding John Paul's reign.

Malachy O'More was the son of a school teacher. He was ordained a priest when he was twenty-five and faced turbulent challenges in his rise to status as powerful bishop and then as papal legate to Ireland. Though credited with many miracles, including the healing of the gravely ill son of King David of Scotland, and apparently constantly caught up in politics and travel, Malachy wanted to lead a meditative life as a monk.

During a trip from England, from King Stephen there, back to Rome in 1148, Malachy stopped off to see St. Bernard in Clairvaux. He was "stricken there" and died in Bernard's arms. At his requiem Mass, Bernard then proclaimed Malachy a saint, which action was formally confirmed by Pope Innocent III in 1190. It was the first canonization of an Irish saint. (Footnote: The "Patron Saint of Ireland," Saint Patrick, predated Malachy by 700 years. He converted most of Ireland to Catholicism in the middle of the fifth century and is credited with establishing the practice of education in Ireland and harmonizing civil laws with Church doctrine. He became the center of legends that flourish still. There is no formal date of his canonization. See Delaney [John J. Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints*, Doubleday, 1980].)

Important for our analysis of the Vatican now is that Malachy was also a *clairvoyant*. He created – projected – a list of Popes which began with Celestine II (d. 1144) and extended "to the end of

the world." Malachy described each successive pope in symbolic terms, with accuracy that was extraordinary through 1590, but less specifically thereafter.

For example, for the modern period, Malachy predicted – in succession – *Pastor et Nauta* for the papal time filled by Pope John XXIII (1958-1963, 810 years into the future) as "shepherd and navigator" of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Then *Flos Florum*, referring to John's successor, Paul VI (1963-1978), whose coat of arms was indeed *flos florum*, the fleur-de-lys.

Only four more Popes were noted to complete Malachy's list, and his keys for the two popes who have followed Pope Paul VI are not (yet?) immediately clear: *De Medietate Lunae*, "From the Half Moon," surely referring to the Middle East, to persecutions of the Church and to the pope falling victim to his enemies. Could there have been some covert force behind the sudden death of John Paul I, Paul's successor, whose term lasted just thirty-three days? His successor then, John Paul II, was the target of an attempted assassination by occluded Middle-East forces, on May 13, 1981, by Turkish terrorist and murderer Mehmet Ali Agca.

De Labore Solis, "From the toil of the sun," Malachy's reference to the next pope, must then relate to Pope John Paul II, but it too is not a clear reference. Malachy suggested that this pope would take the name Gregory XVII! This may refer to the *succession* of Gregorys, i.e., honoring their work: Gregory XIII (1502-1585), for example, promoted the counter-reformation through his pledge to execute the decrees of the Council of Trent which refined Church doctrine. Gregory XVI (1765-1846) strengthened the papacy by aligning it with Austria under Metternich.

Fascinatingly, in John Paul's latest Encyclical (see above), May 30, 1995 – surely his last major philosophical pronouncement to guide the Church – he says, "In the beautiful expression of Pope Saint Gregory the Great [540-604, reorganizing vast spread-out papal states], my ministry is that of *servus servorum Dei* (servant of the servants of God). This designation is the best possible safeguard against the risk of separating power from ministry."

Pope John Paul II has been the most visibly hard-working pope of recent times, toiling in the public light, making over forty trips to more than fifty countries of the world, the first pope to publish a book, promoting the Ecumenical decrees of Vatican II. John Paul II's reign occurs at a time of waning popularity for Roman Catholicism, and Malachy's symbolic Latin label could be also be translated "from the Lonely Labour." (Footnote: Mann, 80 [A. T. Mann, *Millennium Prophecies*, Element Books, 1992])

According to Malachy, there are two more popes to come: *Gloria Olivae*, "Glory of the Olive," will take the name Leo XIV (or follow in the tradition of Leos, i.e., Leo XIII (1810-1903) *reconciled Roman Catholicism with science and liberalism and applied Christian principles to the religious and social questions of his time*, most sensitively to the working-class movement. This next pope is to unite humanity under Christianity in one last brilliant explosion, clearly a reference to world community. The olive reference could mean peace or – if not a selection from the Third World – a specific region of Italy from which the next pope will come.

Then, *Petrus Romanus*, "Peter of Rome," is to preside over the destruction of Rome and the End of the Age. (Footnote: The paraphrased explanations of Malachy's prophecies come from *The People's Almanac*, David Wallechinsky and Irving Wallace; New York: Doubleday, 1975.)

After hundreds of years of accuracy, Malachy's prophecy for the present day papacy seems to break down in clarity, or we can not yet understand it. One theory is that these prophecies were forgeries of the conclave of 1590 to support the aspirations of one of the papal candidates, i.e.,

a list of arcane symbolisms with great retrospective accuracy created to project the immediate future as well and favor a particular candidate.

Another theory is that the list is a compilation of idle occult musings conjured up over the years in the papal archives by caretaking monks. Catholic academia considers the prophecies spurious. [End of Tyl quote.]

Some Remarks

Whether Malachy's characterization of Pope Benedict XVI is "on the mark" remains to be seen. The new pope, Pope Benedict XVI, is 78 years old, and not in good health. In 1991 he suffered a hemorrhagic stroke. He himself predicted a short reign in comments to cardinals just after his election. He is the oldest pope elected in 275 years, since Clement XII in 1730. It seems likely that he will not serve long. If, as Malachy suggests, Benedict will work for peace, he does not have much time to make his mark. In view of the high level of world attention to the Israel/Palestine dispute, it seems reasonable that he may spend time on this problem. In his book, *Nostradamus: Predictions of World War III* (Inner Light – Global Communications, 1996), author Jack Manuelian paraphrases Nostradamus: "In a short time the physician of great evil and the leech of unequal order (an evil person working behind the scenes) will put the Olive Branch (the pope after John Paul) on fire. The post of the pope will be moved from one coast to another, and by so great fire their empire will be accosted that the heat will evaporate the saliva in the mouth." (Secondary quote from material posted at "The Mind of James Donahue, Fall of Catholicism, Prophecy of the Last Two Popes," at <http://perdurabo10.tripod.com/id1225.html>).

In any event, a person aged 78 who is not in good health does not have a long life expectancy. In Benedict, the College of Cardinals has elected a "transitory" pope. In view of his short life expectancy, Malachy's prophecy would indicate that we will soon see the last pope on the throne of St. Peter. Pope Benedict is the 265th pope over a two-thousand-year timespan, so that the average reign of a pope is about seven and one-half years. Seven years from now is 2012. So St. Malachy's suggestion of two more popes until the end of the age suggests that the current age will end in 2012. This is interesting in that it corresponds exactly to the end of the Mayan Calendar (December 21, 2012).

Now, what do I make of all of this? Well, as you know, although my professional background is in physical science (PhD in mathematical statistics), I have an interest in spiritual science, and I take note of the parallels and complementarities between them. According to the theories of M. King Hubbert (Hubbert's Curve, Hubbert's Peak), global oil production will peak this decade (2001-2010), and global oil reserves will be exhausted by 2050. As soon as global oil production peaks, global human population will begin to decline, and global war will ensue. Many geologists agree that global oil production is peaking or about to peak, say within two years. So, it is my view, based on scientific theory, that the industrial world as we know it will soon be ending. That has nothing at all to do with prophecy – Biblical prophecy, or St. Malachy, or Nostradamus, or the Mayans, or anyone else. The industrial world will soon collapse because we are running out of oil, and there is nothing comparable to replace it. (A more important reason is that we (i.e., large human numbers and industrial activity) are destroying the biosphere at a horrific rate (with an estimated 30,000 species being made extinct each year). Whereas people are in total denial over this cause of "the end of the world," they cannot deny that global oil is running out.)

What is interesting is that St. Malachy, the Mayan Calendar, and Hubbert's Peak all predict the same thing, at the same time. In this matter, there is strong accord between physical science

and spiritual science. From both points of view, the world as we know it is about to end. We are at the end of an age.

(Note: I agree with Sir Isaac Newton (*Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John* (ISBN 0-942487-02-8, Arthur B. Robinson, Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, 1991) that those who state specific dates for future events do so at their peril. "The folly of Interpreters has been, to foretell times and things by this Prophecy, as if God designed to make them Prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the Prophecy into contempt." My specification of dates in the preceding discussion is presented simply as a matter of interesting coincidence, and not as prophecy. The industrial world will collapse soon because global oil production on which it crucially depends will soon start to decline. Human society has long been in an "overshoot" condition, and the imminent collapse will be catastrophic. This is not "prophecy," but simply a realistic assessment of the current situation. Whether the collapse will take place in a specific year (e.g., 2012), or over a specific span of years (e.g., 2003-2012) is anybody's guess. What is very clear is that mankind's destruction of the biosphere cannot continue indefinitely; that high levels of human population have been enabled by the availability of fossil fuels; and that those high population levels and global industrial society cannot continue for much longer either because of the decline in petroleum production or because of the biospheric destruction caused by large human numbers and industrial activity.)